King County

Metropolitan King County Council

Budget and Fiscal Management Committee

Panel 2 – Law and Justice

October 15, 2025 – 9:00 a.m.

Councilmembers:

Jorge Barón, Chair;

Claudia Balducci, Rod Dembowski, Teresa Mosqueda, Sarah Perry, and De'Sean Quinn

Lead Staff: Nick Bowman, 206-477-7607

Committee Clerk: Marka Steadman, 206-477-0887

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Briefing on Proposed 2026-2027 Biennial Budget – Law and Justice

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FACILITIES MANAGEMENT DIVISION

ANALYST: BRANDI PARIBELLO

	Expenditures	Revenues	FTEs	TLTs
2025 Revised Budget, Biennialized	$227,881,468	$207,910,630	355.5	14.0
2026-2027 Base Budget Adjust.	$3,739,107	$0	(3.0)	0.0
2026-2027 Decision Packages	($6,155,425)	$17,664,036	(9.0)	5.0
2026-2027 Proposed Budget	**$225,466,000**	**$225,575,000**	**343.5**	**19.0**
% Change from prior biennium, biennialized	(1.1%)			
Dec. Pkg. as % of prior biennium, biennialized	2.7%			
Major Revenue Sources: FMD Internal Service Rate (81%), Charges for Services				

DESCRIPTION

The Facilities Management Division (FMD) of the Department of Executive Services oversees and maintains the county's real property assets. The division is comprised of four sections:

- **Building Services:** Provides custodial services, maintenance, and building operations as well as building security;
- **Major Projects and Capital Planning:** Delivers large-scale projects in alignment with county policy directives and facility needs;
- **Operations and Finance:** Manages administrative duties including business planning, updating rate models, negotiating Service Level Agreements with county agencies. The section also oversees the county's Print Shop; and
- **Real Estate Services:** Manages acquisition, sales, and leasing of real properties; and processes utility permits, reviews and processes requests for easements, rights-of-way construction permits, and utility franchise agreements.

FMD is an internal service agency and is supported by an internal service rate that is charged to all County departments and agencies that utilize its services.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET AND CHANGES

The 2026-2027 proposed budget would make notable changes detailed below.

Continuous Improvement Program – $600,000
The proposed budget would also include $600,000 for consultant services support for the Continuous Improvement program. According to Executive staff, consultant services

will continue to provide analysis of current financial data processes and work with FMD staff to develop recommendations for streamlined processes with a focus on data integrity. FMD hopes to complete its consultant-supported process work in the 2026-2027 biennium.

Dexter Horton Building - $1.5 million

Lastly of note, the Executive proposes to appropriate $1.5 million to Dexter Horton property management operations and FMD support. According to Executive staff, the collaboration with the third-party property management firm has been effective for both successful transition to County ownership and day-to-day management. To date, the County has made the following investments in this property:

- Acquisition: $38,556,575
- Property management:
  - 2024: $229,979 (6 months)
  - 2025: $309,699 (YTD August)
- Tenant Improvement Projects
  - $22,000 for removing a wall between two conference rooms, minor electrical, drywall, touch up paint, installing a card reader and setting up 12 workstations related to moving King County's OLEO, Ombudsman, and some DPD staff to the 5th floor of the Dexter Horton Building. The prior private tenant vacated the space earlier this year and left their furniture in the building, which will be repurposed for County staff, limiting the TI costs.
- Capital Projects in the Executive's proposed budget:
  - $865,243 for FMD Dexter Horton Camera & Access Control Upgrade.
  - $4,500,000 FMD Dexter Horton Heat Pumps Replacement.

FTE and TLT Changes - 5.0 NEW FTEs, 1.0 TLT to FTE conversion, 5.0 NEW TLTs, 15.0 FTEs transfer; net total ($3,218,209)

Position	Duties
Add 1.0 FTE Property Manager III	Oversee FMD's asset management program. According to budget materials, the program will allow FMD to better track routine maintenance and make decisions based on entire building systems, instead of one individual aspect at a time.
Add 1.0 FTE Property Manager III	Provide distributive antennae system maintenance and annual testing per fire code.
Add 1.0 FTE Contract Specialist II	Ensure favorable contract terms are secured, ensure contract compliance, manage the contract lifecycles, assist with identifying new opportunities for goods and service contracts,

	and to contribute to the overall operation efficiency and cost savings of the Building Operations Section.
Add 1.0 TLT Record Digitization Graduate Intern	Support the digitization of real estate and capital project records.
Convert 1.0 FTE Capital Project Manager III (TLT Capital Project Manager II Conversion) Add 2.0 TLTs CS FMCs	Address increased workload related to Health through Housing sites 1010 E Republican, ESA Federal Way, La Quinta Kirkland, and Haven Heights Redmond coming online.
Transfer 15.0 FTEs Harborview Construction and Infrastructure	Move FTEs related to Harborview capital projects from FMD to the new Harborview Construction and Infrastructure Division.
Add: 1.0 FTE Administrator I 1.0 TLT Administrator I 1.0 TLT Special Projects Manager IV	Provide support for FMD's Continuous Improvement program, including security and identification for facility access; capital project delivery standard work and process improvement efforts; P-Card management and labor reporting processes; and capital spending plan improvements.

KEY ISSUES

Staff have not identified any key issues for this appropriation unit.

RESPONSE TO COUNCIL INQUIRIES

QUESTION 1: WHAT IS THE STRATEGIC PLAN OR PHILOSOPHY FOR FMD? WHAT ARE THE INTENTIONS FOR ASSETS AND LIABILITIES??

ANSWER: The Real Property Asset Management Plan (RAMP) sets out policies and a strategic plan for how the County manages facilities. The most recent adopted version of the RAMP was via Ordinance 19062. An updated version has been transmitted to Council and is Proposed Ordinance 2025-0270.

QUESTION 2: WHAT IS THE GF IMPACT OF THE DEXTER HORTON BUILDING? WHAT REVENUE IS THE COUNTY DERIVING FROM THAT FACILITY?

ANSWER: In the 2026-2027 Executive Proposed Budget, GF agencies are estimated to pay $7.7M for space in the Dexter Horton building. Estimated revenue from private tenants in the 2026-2027 biennium is estimated to be $3.7M.

KCIT SERVICES

ANALYST: BRANDI PARIBELLO

	Expenditures	Revenues	FTEs	TLTs
2025 Revised Budget, Biennialized	$320,338,060	$331,653,008	393.0	19.0
2026-2027 Base Budget Adjust.	$8,879,424	($2,920,000)	0.0	0.0
2026-2027 Decision Packages	$15,985,082	$16,027,572	20.0	(8.0)
2026-2027 Proposed Budget	**$345,202,000**	**$344,760,000**	**413.0**	**11.0**
% Change from prior biennium, biennialized	7.5%			
Dec. Pkg. as % of prior biennium, biennialized	2.8%			

Major Revenue Sources: Internal service charges to County agencies

DESCRIPTION

The King County Department of Information Technology (KCIT) provides technology services across the County government. KCIT manages the County's information technology (IT) infrastructure, resources, and investments, including but not limited to support of the County's network, IT equipment replacement (e.g., employee laptops), and the central help desk. Other services are provided for interested agencies based on their specific needs (e.g., assistance selecting or providing project management support for new or replacement software that targets unique agency needs, etc.). The KCIT budget is supported by internal service charges to County agencies.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET AND CHANGES

The proposed operating budget for KCIT would make several notable appropriations in three major areas: cybersecurity, licensing fees for various technology tools, and position additions. Table 1 below details these changes.

Table 1. Notable KCIT Appropriations

Area	Total Proposed Appropriation & Details
Cybersecurity	Total $5,392,541 – • $680,541 for cybersecurity tools license costs and maintenance. • $4,280,000 for an externally managed security operations center (SOC), enabling 24/7 monitoring and rapid incident response. • $432,000 for increased support for 24/7 incident response and recovery services from Microsoft's Detection and Response Team (DART).

Increased and New Licensing Fees	Total $5,575,328- • $624,000 for annual renewal of Qlik and Denodo licensing and support, paid by Metro Transit Department. • $420,340 for increasing the LeanIX license count from 600 to 1,600, supports enterprise IT management and strategic planning. • $857,869 for Microsoft Copilot AI tool licenses. • $2,079,219 for an increase in existing cloud and on-premises storage software licenses and support costs. • $1,593,900 for Entra AD licenses which will modernize identity and access management by making it cloud-based.
FTEs and TLTs	Net Total – $3,266,757, 4.0 NEW FTEs, 16.0 TLT to FTE conversions, 11.0 NEW TLTs • ($5,137,700) and (11.0) FTEs Related to transferring positions focused on GIS development, data management, and O&M projects, from the KCIT Services Fund to the GIS Fund where the staff workload is currently managed. • $3,347,070, 6.0 TLT to FTE conversions, and 9.0 NEW TLTs To support capital projects and agency-specific programs. Agencies and projects supported include Metro, DNRP, DCHS, I-Net, and PTAS. • 7.0 TLT to FTE conversions To support countywide audio visual, telecom, and general IT services. • $2,026,604 and 8.0 NEW FTEs To support countywide cybersecurity functions, improve asset management, and support the transition to modern security frameworks. • $1,775,729, 3.0 NEW FTEs, 1.0 TLT to FTE conversion, and 1.0 NEW TLT To support countywide data management and IT operations mandated by law. • $1,313,541 and 3.0 NEW FTEs To support the countywide expansion of IT equipment, wireless-first connectivity, and fiber infrastructure. • 2.0 TLT to FTE conversions To ensure that countywide web content and mobile applications meet the new Title II ADA regulations. • $846,513, 1.0 NEW FTE, and 1.0 NEW TLT To support the new Microsoft Copilot AI tool. • ($905,000)

	Vacancy rate adjustment.

KEY ISSUES

ISSUE 1 – NEW FTES AND TLT CONVERSIONS

The proposed budget includes a net total of 4.0 new FTEs and 16.0 TLT to FTE conversions which are funded by internal service rates to County agencies and offset by a transfer of several positions from KCIT to the GIS center where the work is managed. However, Councilmembers may choose to approve all, some, or none of these positions.

RESPONSE TO COUNCIL INQUIRIES

QUESTION 1: WHAT IS THE GF/NON-GF BREAKDOWN OF THE PROPOSED FTES?
ANSWER: The annual salaries and benefits for the labor requests are $8.6 million. The total annual cost to the General Fund is $989,560, or 11.5% of the total cost.

Annual Impact				
	GF Support	GF Portion of GFOH Agencies	Non-GF Support	Total
Labor Requests	$ 957,270	$ 32,290	$ 7,611,150	$ 8,600,711
Percentage of Requests	11.1%	0.4%	88.5%	100%

Of the position requests, $105,000 is allocated to agencies that are included in General Fund Overhead. $32,000 of the allocation is the net amount that the General Fund pays. $73,000 is the amount allocated to non-General Fund by General Fund Overhead.

General Fund Overhead (GFOH)			
GFOH	GF	Non-GF	Total
	$ 32,290.10	$ 73,062.61	$ 105,352.71

QUESTION 2: ON THE TLT CONVERSIONS, WHAT IS THE BUDGETARY IMPACT? IS THERE ADDITIONAL FUNDING OR JUST THE FTE AUTHORITY?
ANSWER: All the TLT conversions were funded by budgeted TLT salaries and benefits or contractual services. Executive staff state that the conversions have a net zero impact. Much of the cost associated with the conversions is offset by transferring GIS employees to the GIS fund. Attached to this document is a spreadsheet that provides very detailed information on each proposed FTE and TLT conversion.

QUESTION 3: WHAT IS THE RATIONALE FOR THESE CONVERSIONS AND WHAT IS THE IMPACT TO CONTINUITY?

ANSWER: Attached to this staff report is a spreadsheet that provides very detailed information on each proposed FTE and TLT conversion, including expected start dates, position duties, and rationale.

QUESTION 4: WHAT LAW MANDATES SOME OF THESE POSITIONS? IS IT A NEW LAW OR IS THE COUNTY PLAYING CATCH-UP?

ANSWER: The Ray Baum Act, which is a federal law signed into law in 2018. The law requires enterprises with multi-line telephone systems to provide sub-address dispatchable location data to 911 call takers. The position requested for conversion is to handle increased workload related to ongoing compliance with this law.

KCIT Section	GF Impact	GFOH Agencies Impact	Position	Annual Salaries and Benefits	# of Conversion	Total Annual Salaries and Benefits (Column C*Column D)	Change after conversion?	Budget Notes	Program / Project	Job Description / Justification
KCIT Solutions Engineering/Applications Solutions	$-	$-	Engineer Principal	$210,563	2	$421,126	No	Budgeted TLT position (1064006) and TLT budget (51120) are used to convert	Behavioral Health and Recovery Division (BHRD)	This request involves converting existing Term-Limited Temporary (TLT) positions that currently support the Behavioral Health and Recovery Division (BHRD) product team. These roles are critical to maintaining and enhancing BHRD's IT infrastructure and systems, which process data essential to core business operations. The positions contribute to application development and Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) transformations within the legacy software environment of the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) BHRD—an environment burdened by decades of technical debt. Additionally, they support the creation of new system components that deliver expanded functionality aligned with evolving business needs.
KCIT Solutions Engineering/Applications Solutions	$-	$-	IT Engineer Senior	$238,119	2	$476,238	No	Budgeted TLT positions (1063978 and 1064005) are used to convert	Behavioral Health and Recovery Division (BHRD)	EDI processing involves handling files in the industry-standard HIPAA format for eligibility, encounter, and claims transactions. These files are received from KCICN-contracted agencies and transmitted to the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA) and all five managed care organizations (MCOs).
Network Team	$-	$-	Solution Architect	$257,480	1	$257,480	No	Budgeted TLT IT Production Engineer Senior position (1063972) is used to convert	MTD	This request is to make a temporary position permanent to provide steady technical leadership for MTD's wide range of technology projects. The role helps make sure our technology meets MTD's business needs, works well with other systems, and follows KCIT's standards and security rules. The Solution Architect in this role is responsible for keeping technical plans and documents up to date, clearly defining who owns what parts of the system, and designing solutions that are reliable, easy to maintain, and can grow with future needs.
Network Team	$-	$-	IT Production Engineer Senior	$210,563	1	$210,563	No	Budgeted TLT position (1063987) is used to convert	I-Net	Over the past two years, the I-NET network has expanded significantly—adding 30 new schools, connecting 2 additional cities, and increasing internet capacity at 48 library branches. To help manage this growth, KCIT brought on a temporary team member to provide extra support. This proposal recommends turning that temporary role into a permanent position. Making this role permanent will ensure we have consistent support for day-to-day technical issues, system upgrades, after-hours needs, and future network improvements. It will also help us stay on track with the long-term goals outlined in the I-NET roadmap.
Software Quality Assurance team	Minimum - Primarily Capital projects recovery	Minimum - Primarily Capital projects recovery	Quality Assurance Engineer-Sr	$198,490	2	$396,981	No	Consultant Budget (53106) is used to convert. Previously, due to limited internal resources, SQA engaged external consultants—including LENORA SYSTEMS INC—to deliver quality assurance services for county capital projects and programs. Consultant budget is used to convert these positions.	Various	These positions are responsible for design automated testing frameworks, develop test cases, and write code to enhance software testability. They ensure seamless integration of quality assurance into the software development lifecycle, supporting rapid and reliable software delivery. These positions will be billed to agencies and projects based on the services provided.
Customer Support Services team	The cost associated with county-owned buildings are allocated to FMD. FMD includes this cost as part of their streamline rate	The cost associated with county-owned buildings are allocated to FMD. FMD includes this cost as part of their streamline rate	IT Services Supervisor	$198,490	1	$198,490	No	Budgeted TLT position (1063724) is used to convert	Countywide Audio Visual (AV) Program	This request proposes converting the existing IT Services Supervisor (TLT) supporting the Audio Visual (AV) program into a permanent position, recognizing their ongoing leadership of the AV engineering team, subject matter expertise in AV technologies, and active involvement in daily upgrade and maintenance tasks, including the replacement of aging AV infrastructure.
Customer Support Services team	The cost associated with county-owned buildings are allocated to FMD. FMD includes this cost as part of their streamline rate	The cost associated with county-owned buildings are allocated to FMD. FMD includes this cost as part of their streamline rate	IT Systems Specialist - Journey	$165,465	1	$165,465	No	Budgeted TLT position (1063725) is used to convert	Countywide Audio Visual (AV) Program	This request proposes converting the existing IT System Specialist Journey position supporting the AV program into a permanent role, responsible for AV equipment installations, lifecycle replacements, day-to-day operations, and user training.
Customer Support Services team	$44,569	$4,397	IT Systems Specialist - Senior	$179,686	1	$179,686	No	Existing TLT Budget (51120) is used to convert	Countywide Mobility Management	This request proposes converting the existing IT Systems Specialist position—responsible for telecom management and overseeing mobile device administration across all King County departments—into a permanent role to ensure continued support and operational stability.
Information Technology Service Management team	$80,341	$9,661	IT System Specialist - Master	$165,465	2	$330,930	No	Existing TLT Budget (51120) is used to convert	Countywide ITSM Program	This request seeks to convert current Term-Limited Temporary (TLT) positions into permanent roles that support KCIT's adoption of IT Service Management (ITSM) practices and oversee the execution of key ITSM functions, which encompass a structured set of policies, procedures, and practices designed to effectively design, deliver, manage, and improve IT services for customers.
Network Team	$44,237	$4,774	IT Production Engineer	$184,498	1	$184,498	No	Budgeted TLT position (1063988)is requested to convert into a permanent role	Enterprise Network	This request seeks to convert the existing Term-Limited Temporary (TLT) position into a permanent role to sustain critical operational support mandated by the Ray Baum Act.
Design and Civic Engagement team	Capital Pro	Capital Projects and non-	IT Engineer - Principal	$238,119	1	$238,119	No	TLT budget (51120) is used to convert to a permanent position	Countywide Web Content Management	This request proposes converting two existing Term-Limited Temporary (TLT) positions—one IT Engineer Principal and one Senior User Experience Designer— into permanent roles to support countywide ADA compliance efforts. These positions will ensure that web content and mobile applications meet the new Title II ADA regulations effective April 24, 2026, focusing on agencies with non-compliant applications, including DHR, DNRP, DPH, DLS, and MTD. They will also address technical debt from the Kingcounty.gov launch and support modernization of over 40 legacy applications, along with additional unidentified legacy systems. Funding for these roles is included in the FY2026-2027 Proposed ADA Compliance Capital Project (pending approval) and will be charged to County agencies as services are provided.
Design and Civic Engagement team	Capital Pro	Capital Projects and non-	User Experience Designer	$184,498	1	$184,498	No	TLT budget (51120) is used to convert to a permanent position	Countywide Web Content Management	

KCIT Section	GF Impact	GFOH Agencies Impact	Position	Annual Salaries and Benefits	# of Conversion	Total Annual Salaries and Benefits (Column C*Column D)	Change after conversion?	Budget Notes	Program / Project	Job Description / Justification
KCIT Solutions Engineering/Applications Solutions	$-	$-	IT Engineer Senior	$211,667	2	$423,333	N/A		Behavioral Health and Recovery Division (BHRD)	Additional TLTs are requested to develop and support the Core Administrative Processing System (CAPS), BHRD's primary IT system, which automates critical functions including program enrollment and eligibility, funding source determination, various payment processes, data integration from King County jail and HCA, population health analysis, service delivery monitoring, agency batch file handling, MCO clinical data exchange, and automated encounter generation.
KCIT Solutions Engineering/Applications Solutions	$-	$-	IT Engineer Senior	$211,667	1	$211,667	N/A		Property Tax Administration System (PTAS) project	An additional TLT is requested for a Finance and Operations application developer role to provide design oversight for the Property Tax Administration System (PTAS).
Software Quality Assurance team	$-	$-	Quality Assurance Engineer-Sr	$199,467	2	$398,933	N/A		Property Tax Administration System (PTAS) project	A new Term-Limited Temporary (TLT) Quality Assurance Lead is requested to support PTAS by executing test strategies, maintaining in-house testing expertise post-release, and ensuring effective regression testing for future patches and bug fixes.
Software Quality Assurance team	$-	$-	Quality Assurance Engineer-Sr	$199,467	1	$199,467	N/A		MTD	A new Term-Limited Temporary (TLT) Quality Assurance Lead is requested to support the MTD Enterprise Architecture Management System (EMAS) post go-live by executing test strategies, retaining critical in-house testing expertise, and ensuring robust regression testing for future patches and bug fixes.
Network team	$-	$-	IT Production Engineer Senior	$210,000	2	$420,000	N/A		MTD	A new temporary position, funded by MTD, will help manage and replace network equipment that supports MTD's specific services—not connected to Enterprise Services. This position will work closely with MTD to plan, budget, order, and coordinate the replacement of this equipment. The role is key to helping MTD stay ahead with proactive planning and regular hardware updates, so services continue running smoothly.
Office of CIO	$-	$-	Project Manager	$271,400	1	$271,400	N/A		DNRP	A new Term-Limited Temporary (TLT) position is proposed to support DNRP initiatives, including the upgrade of the Escrow Automation application, implementation of business-side AI tools, development of Data Lake infrastructure, coordination of Building Information Modeling (BIM), and management of the Electric Vehicle Charger infrastructure application.
Information Technology Service Management team	$40,171	$4,830	IT Systems Specialist - Master	$165,465	1	$165,465	N/A		Countywide ITSM Program	Approving this position gives us a complete, up-to-date list of every piece of software running county services, so when a security incident happens we can find and fix the problem in hours instead of days. It directly reduces outages and ransomware risk, saves money on unused/unsafe software, and keeps essential services—buses, courts, and public health—running safely for residents. A new full-time position is requested for a Software Asset Management Lead/IT Systems Specialist-Master within the Information Technology Service Management (ITSM) team to lead KCIT's adoption of ITSM practices, oversee execution of key ITSM functions, establish a Software Asset Management program in alignment with the Security, Privacy, Risk & Compliance (ISRC) Asset Management Policy, and provide ongoing operations and maintenance support.
IT Security Office	$116,163	$12,535	IT Production Engineer - Principal	$242,239	2	$484,478	N/A	Position State Date: 1/1/2027	Enterprise Security Program	IAM Engineers run the county's digital identity system—ensuring only the right people get the right access to the right systems. By enforcing "never trust by default, always verify" across our technology, they cut breach and ransomware risk, prevent accidental data exposure, and keep essential services running safely.Two new positions are requested for Identity and Access Management (IAM) Engineers to strengthen King County's cybersecurity posture by implementing and maintaining robust authentication, authorization, and access controls; these roles are essential for supporting Zero Trust principles and ensuring secure access to systems and data across the organization.
IT Security Office	$58,081	$6,268	IT Production Engineer - Principal	$242,239	1	$242,239	N/A	Position State Date: 1/1/2027	Enterprise Security Program	A Cloud Engineer is critical for ensuring the safety and security of our infrastructure-- we currently only have one dedicated cloud security architect. A significant portion of King County runs in the cloud—from email and case files to payment systems—this role prevents significant, costly data breaches and outages before they happen. One Cloud Engineer position is requested to support King County's growing cloud adoption, with a focus on designing secure cloud architectures, identifying and mitigating risks such as misconfigurations and unauthorized data access, and ensuring that security practices align with industry standards and King County's cloud policies.
IT Security Office	$116,163	$12,535	IT Production Engineer - Principal	$242,239	2	$484,478	N/A	Position State Date: 1/1/2027	Enterprise Security Program	King County's enterprise firewall is the front door to our infrastrucutre, maintaining the firewall is essential to preventing threat actors from attacking the County. Right now, King County has one firewall engineer and no backup—effectively,a single point of failure. Funding additional engineers eliminates that risk by providing comprehensive coverage and ensuring essential services stay online and protected. Two Firewall Engineer positions are requested to strengthen King County's network security by designing, implementing, and managing firewall rules and configurations that prevent unauthorized access and mitigate potential threats, while ensuring firewall policies adapt to emerging risks and evolving network architectures.
IT Security Office	$116,163	$12,535	IT Production Engineer - Principal	$242,239	2	$484,478	N/A	Position State Date: 1/1/2027	Enterprise Security Program	Two Security Engineer Generalist positions are requested to provide broad cybersecurity expertise across multiple domains--including assisting with preparing for and enabling response to AI security attacks. These positions will support diverse projects and ensure the effective implementation of foundational security practices, with flexibility to address evolving AI security threats.

Modern Workplace team	$45,010	$5,412	IT Production Engineer	$185,400	1	$185,400	N/A		Enterprise Telephony	This request proposes a Term-Limited Temporary (TLT) IT Production Engineer position to support ongoing operations, ensuring the reliability of Microsoft Teams devices and newly added Plain Old Telephone Service (POTS) line management; filling this role will enhance service continuity, enable rapid incident response, strengthen employee safety, and foster a more balanced and motivated team environment.
Data Services team	$62,457	$6,740	IT Manager - Senior	$260,488	1	$260,488	N/A		Enterprise Data Services	The requested position will lead and execute on enterprise data governance efforts with a specialization in metadata management and taxonomy. The position will contribute to critical initiatives to inventory, classify, and label data with a concentration on enabling improved security and privacy controls. In its 2019 data privacy audit, the King County Auditor's Office flagged as a high-risk finding our inability to trace Personally Identifiable Information (PII) across all County systems. KCIT does not currently staff subject matter experts in metadata management and taxonomy and will be unable to make lasting, meaningful progress in addressing this high-risk finding without some qualified, dedicated staff. Safeguarding PII helps to protect the privacy of potentially at-risk populations, contributing to ESJ. Lastly, data labeling is a foundational prerequisite for enabling secure, privacy protecting AI deployment and use.
Application and Platform Support team	$14,707	$2,010	IT Production Engineer - Senior	$210,563	1	$210,563	N/A		Application O&M - Vendor Apps	One IT Engineer Senior position is requested for the Application Operation and Maintenance/Vendor Application team to manage vendor-provided software used by KCIT and partner agencies; this role is essential to maintaining mission-critical, 24/7 applications through timely upgrades, reducing technical debt, and ensuring systems remain on supportable versions.
Enterprise Architecture team	$61,736	$6,662	Solutions Architect	$257,480	1	$257,480	N/A		Enterprise Architecture	This request proposes to add a KCIT Special Duty position into a permanent Cloud Solution Architect role in KCIT, responsible for setting strategic direction, providing technical leadership, integrating emerging technologies, and defining roadmaps for both new deployments and ongoing improvements to KCIT's Cloud Services. The position plays a critical role in advancing King County's cloud strategy, supporting a mature Enterprise Architecture (EA) program, and driving modernization efforts to reduce technology debt and enhance the effectiveness of the county's core infrastructure.
Network team	$45,251	$4,883	IT Systems Specialist - Master	$188,728	1	$188,728	N/A		Enterprise Network	One IT Specialist position is requested to support the expanding Enterprise Network, which continues to grow with new facilities, services, technologies, and increasing agency demands. The KCIT Network team is currently operating beyond full capacity, and this additional resource will help ensure the delivery of high-quality work and responsive service. The position will be responsible for end-to-end management of network infrastructure equipment—including inventory, ordering, receiving, tagging, and documentation—while also supporting vendor renewals and contract oversight within the Network Services group. Adding this role will help reduce technical debt, improve project timelines, and maintain service excellence for King County agencies.
Network team	$50,486	$5,448	IT Production Engineer - Senior	$210,563	1	$210,563	N/A		Enterprise Network	One Senior IT Production Engineer position is requested to support King County's strategic shift toward a wireless-first connectivity model. This role will enhance KCIT Networks' ability to deliver high-quality support, streamline troubleshooting, and improve wireless services, helping users transition away from aging physical infrastructure. The position will be instrumental in driving growth, lifecycle management, and modernization of both public and private wireless networks, ensuring reliable connectivity and reducing long-term costs.
Network team	$61,736	$6,662	Solutions Architect	$257,480	1	$257,480	N/A		Enterprise Network	One Solution Architect position is requested to support fiber design and architecture for KCWAN and INET. Currently, a single architect manages all fiber-related responsibilities, resulting in an unsustainable workload and a growing backlog. This additional position will provide critical depth, reduce reliance on a single resource, and ensure timely delivery of fiber infrastructure projects. Responsibilities include gathering business requirements, collaborating with fiber partners to identify cost-effective paths, designing and overseeing build work, documenting fiber usage, responding to outages, and mentoring engineers in fiber testing. This role is essential to maintaining service continuity and aligning resource capacity with enterprise demands.

OFFICE OF EQUITY AND RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

ANALYST: JEFF MUHM

	Expenditures	Revenues	FTEs	TLTs
2025 Revised Budget Biennialized	$14,602,850	$500,000	18.0	0.0
2026-27 Base Budget Adjust.	($2,817,347)	($500,000)	0.0	0.0
2026-27 Decision Packages	$308,762	$0	(1.0)	0.0
2026-27 Proposed Budget	**$12,095,000**	**$0**	**17.0**	**0.0**
% Change from prior biennium, biennialized	(17.2%)			
Dec. Pkg. as % of prior biennium, biennialized	2.1%			

Major Revenue Sources: General Fund.

DESCRIPTION

The Office of Equity and Social and Racial Justice (OESRJ) leads the implementation of the Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan and serves as the main resources, strategic advisor, and coordinator of key County efforts to advance equity within the organization and community. OESRJ leads and supports the application of equity and social justice, racial equity, the inclusion of immigrant and refugee and other historically disenfranchised populations in County policies, practices, and procedures. The office meets these responsibilities through partnering with County departments, agencies, and the community. OESJ was established through the 2015-2016 biennial budget.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET AND CHANGES

The proposed 2026-2027 budget for the office of Equity and Racial and Social Justice is $12.1 million, a 17.2% decrease from 2025 (biennialized revised budget), with a reduction of 1.0 FTE. Notable proposed budget changes include:

- $50,000 to continue document translation services through the vendor SmartCart. Current funding provides document translation services from SmartCart through the first half of 202. This addition funding would extend those services through the entirety of 2025.

- $80,000 to conduct language proficiency testing for positions eligible for the new bilingual pay premium that is offered as a part of the 2026-2028 Coalition Labor Agreement.

- $80,000 in additional funding for external legal services to support civil rights investigations.

- Transfer the funding (reducing appropriation authority by $547,000) and 1.0 FTE authority for the now vacant Chief of Staff position to the Office of the Executive to support the position of Deputy General Counsel. The Chief of Staff position became vacant in March of 2025 when the person serving in the position was transferred to the Office of Executive to provide legal support to respond to policies and budgetary decisions implemented by the federal government. This change would make the transfer of March 2025 permanent. OESRJ has absorbed the duties of the Chief of Staff by promoting two specialist level positions to manager level positions.

KEY ISSUES

Staff have not identified any key issues for the appropriation unit.

RESPONSE TO COUNCIL INQUIRIES

QUESTION 1: WHAT SPECIFIC PROGRAMS WILL BE SCALED BACKED DUE TO THE 17% BUDGET REDUCTION?

ANSWER: According to the Executive, OERSJ eliminated the Outreach and Engagement Team in order to support the expansion needed to meet service expectations for the Americans with Disabilities Act, Language Access, and Civil rights operations. OERSJ will continue to provide core services necessary to fulfill its statutory duties under the County Code, but OERSJ will not be able to support additional outreach or training.

QUESTION 2: GIVEN THE CROSSCUTTING NATURE OF EQUITY WORK, WILL THE OFFICE STILL BE ABLE TO ADVANCE STRONG COLLABORATION WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS?

ANSWER: According to the Executive, OERSJ would be able to be a responsive resource but not able to be as proactive as preferred. A functional staff of 16 covering ADA, Language Access and Civil Rights investigations is able to be responsive to a growing resident and employee base, but not proactive.

QUESTION 3: ON THE TOPIC OF HATE AND BIAS, THERE WAS AN EFFORT IN A PRIOR BUDGET FROM THE KING COUNTY COALITION AGAINST HATE AND BIAS TO COME UP WITH PROPOSALS ON HOW TO ADDRESS CASES OF HATE AND BIAS. IS THAT FUNDED IN THIS PROPOSED BUDGET?

ANSWER: OERSJ launched the Stop Hate Hotline with Crisis Connections but no funding is provided in this budget to manage an action plan resulting from hotline reporting.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

ANALYST: NICK BOWMAN

	Expenditures	Revenues	FTEs	TLTs
2025 Revised Budget Biennialized	$583,044,046	$321,759,414	1,141.5	5.0
2026-2027 Base Budget Adjust.	$18,762,397	$360,258	0.0	(2.0)
2026-2027 Decision Packages	$35,298,716	$31,903,156	16.0	1.0
2026-2027 Proposed Budget	**$637,106,000**	**$354,023,000**	**1,157.5**	**4.0**
% Change from prior biennium, biennialized	9.3%			
Dec. Pkg. as % of prior biennium, biennialized	6.1%			

Major Revenue Sources: General Fund and Contract Services

DESCRIPTION

The King County Sheriff's Office (Sheriff's Office or KCSO) provides law enforcement services for unincorporated King County as well as multiple governmental agencies, including thirteen contracted cities.[1] In addition to providing patrol services, KCSO provides numerous specialty law enforcement services including an air support unit, marine unit, SWAT, major crime investigations, bomb disposal, major accident response and reconstruction, and arson investigations. KCSO also performs other functions such as emergency 9-1-1 call receiving and dispatching, service of court orders related to civil court filings, issuing concealed weapons permits, and sex offender registration.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET AND CHANGES

The Executive proposed 2026-2027 Sheriff's Office budget of about $637.1 million is an increase of $54.1 million (9.3%) over that of the 2025 revised budget biennialized; $24.5 million of which are the result of adjustments to the base budget and central rates. The remaining $29.6 million would cover costs associated with various decisions packages, many of which are discussed below. Expected revenues of about $354 million are an increase of about $32.3 million (10%) over the 2025 revised budget biennialized.

The increased expenditures in the base budget derive mainly from biennialization of the $8 million in on-going contract overtime approved by the Council in the 2025 1st Omnibus budget.[2] This on-going allocation results in a $16 million increase in the base budget for the 2026-2027 biennium. Offsetting revenues associated with the contract

[1] Beaux Arts Village, Burien, Carnation, Covington, Kenmore, Maple Valley, Newcastle, North Bend, Sammamish, SeaTac, Shoreline, Skykomish and Woodinville

[2] Ordinance 19956

overtime appropriation are represented in a $18 million revenue technical adjustment.[3] The remaining base budget increases are due to wage inflation and adjustments to retirement and benefits rates.

The $5.7 million appropriation for central rates is due to KCIT and Radio charges, each of which increased by about $2.5 million, as well as Fleet and Facilities charges, which increased about $1.5 million each.

Notable decision packages proposed in the 2026-2027 Sheriff's Office budget include:

Supply and Service Account – $12,200,000 [4,750,000 Revenue-Backed]

The proposed budget would appropriate $12.2 million in ongoing expenditures to correct deficits in non-labor supply and service accounts that have been historically covered with salary savings. The request is supported by $4.75 million in revenue from contract partners, resulting in a net impact of $7.45 million.

According to the Executive, aside from a partial increase in the 2023-2024 biennium, these accounts have not been adjusted for inflation in two decades. High inflation over the last several years has had particularly damaging effects, causing account deficits to reach $3.8 million in 2023 and $6.9 million in 2024. The proposed appropriation is intended to budget accurately for these predictable expense accounts rather than rely on salary savings which can have large swings over time.

Examples of some of the larger expenses included in these accounts are:

Supplies Miscellaneous (26-27 total - $3.2 million): Motorcycle helmets, hand cleaner, extension cords, TV wall mounts, K9 equipment/supplies, Bike Unit equipment, disposable gloves, photographic supplies, tasers, taser supplies, ammo, batteries, dive unit equipment.

Cloud Software subscription (26-27 total - $1.2 million): Cloud Service, axon/evidence.com storage, Sprout Social subscription, Records Mgmt. System, Qless, Airdata yearly subscription, SaaS Software service agreement, Cellebrite SaaS 140 Unlocks & Unlimited Extraction Subscription.

Service Repair Maintenance IT (26-27 total - $1.2 million): AFIS Maintenance Coverage, repairs at storefronts, marine slip hangars, janitorial, repair and maintenance of equipment, (e.g., forklifts).

Misc Operating Supplies (26-27 total - $829,000): Folding tables, tents, banners, jig saw, misc. hardware, 40mm less lethal rounds, treated lumber, evidence drying cabinet, hand trucks, Arsenal backpack trauma bag, backdrops, lightsticks, buckets, ranger gloves.

[3] TA_050 in the Executive's Budget Book

Hiring and Referral Incentives – $1,565,000 [$861,000 Revenue-Backed]

The proposed budget would authorize approximately $1.6 million in one-time expenditures to cover currently obligated and future hiring and referral incentive payments. The County's hiring and referral incentive program, which was first approved by the Council in 2022,[4] was set to end on December 31st, 2024. In early 2025 however, the program was partially amended and extended,[5] then amended again,[6] to where in-state lateral deputy hires can now receive a $40,000 payment upon completion of their probation period and out-of-state lateral deputy hires can receive a $25,000 payment. Eligible employees who successfully refer a new deputy are paid $5,000 after the referred employee completes their probation period.

According to the Executive, hiring incentives have a two-year encumbrance, as two separate payments usually cover two different budget years, while referral bonuses have a one-year delay in payment, as the referred employee must successfully complete a one-year probationary period. Of the proposed 2026-2027 request, $415,000 would cover encumbered payments for 2025 hires and $1,150,000 is allocated for projected new liabilities incurred during the biennium.

Comms Center Console Replacement – $1,143,703 [Fully Revenue-Backed]

The proposed budget would appropriate approximately $1.1 million in one-time expenditures to replace a total of 32 communication center dispatch consoles which are nearly 20 years old and are no longer able to meet the demands of emergency communications personnel. According to the Executive, this investment is necessary to maintain effective emergency operations and to provide dispatchers with safe, functional, and efficient workspaces that match the demands of their essential role in public safety.

This proposed request is fully revenue-backed, with KCSO drawing on the balance from its E911 PSAP escrow account to fund the project.

Partially Revenue-Backed FTE Adds – $1,138,608 [$487,650 Revenue-Backed] & 3.0 FTE

The proposed budget includes approximately $1.1 million in ongoing expenditures, $488,000 of which is revenue-backed, to support 3.0 new FTE positions, including:

- *$238,416 [$142,922 revenue-backed] for 1.0 FTE Property Management Unit (PMU) administrative support position*. This request would replace a TLT position eliminated in 2025 as part of broader cost saving measures. According to the

[4] Ordinance 19472 & 19492
[5] $5,000 Employee Referral Bonus Program (MOA# 000U0424) & KCSO Lateral Hire Deputy Bonus Program MOU
[6] KCSO In-State Lateral Hire Deputy Bonus Program MOU signed September 11, 2025.

Executive, the PMU continues to manage a high volume of essential ongoing administrative tasks that support internal operations and public-facing services. The proposed FTE position would handle front-desk responsibilities including appointment scheduling, phone coverage, and walk-in customer assistance. In addition, the position plays a key role in the legally sensitive gun disposal process and supports the ongoing digitization of property records.

- *$463,427 [$227,728 revenue-backed] for 1.0 FTE deputy position for the Special Assault Unit (SAU)*. According to the Executive, the SAU has seen a major increase in their workload due to the growing complexity of their cases, including a 67% increase in call outs since 2020. Additionally, the requested position would bolster the SAU's capacity as KCSO is expected to take on the increased workload associated with the new North Bend police services contract. Without this add, KCSO would use overtime to address the growing workload, which is currently unbudgeted and, according to the Executive, risks diminishing KCSO's ability to successfully investigate some of the worst types of crimes against persons.

- *$436,765 [$117,000 revenue-backed] for 1.0 FTE financial services administrator position.* This position would help with budget monitoring, assist the Sheriff's executive leadership team with strategic projects, and identify opportunities for process improvement in the Budget and Accounting Unit. According to the Executive, KCSO has a highly complex budget with five divisions, 85 cost centers not including grants, and the over $150 million annual contract program. Despite the complexity of the budget, KCSO only has two full-time positions to manage the workload. One of primary responsibilities for the requested position would be to assist with budget formulation and monitoring, including implementing and updating new budget monitoring plans which were established with temporary help from PSB staff early on in 2025.

Evictions Support and Staff – $1,149,000 & 1 FTE

The proposed budget would appropriate about $1.15 million in ongoing expenditures and 1.0 FTE to support a new administrative specialist position and provide overtime funding for existing Civil Unit staff tasked with processing evictions. According to the Executive, the requested administrative specialist position would help reduce the time it takes to process documents and for completion of protection orders, evictions, and extreme risk protection orders.

The overtime portion of the request would enable the Civil Unit to increase capacity by adding an additional weekly overtime shift. According to the Executive, despite efforts to maximize efficiency, the workload exceeds the capacity for the staff in the Civil Unit under a 40-hour work week. While working six days a week in the past, detectives had typically been servicing evictions within 40 days of receipt by the Sheriff's Office. When overtime usage was reduced to only one overtime shift a week as a cost saving

measure, time to service evictions increased to 60-70 days, which is approaching the statutory limit of 90 days. The proposed request would restore the cuts and return to offering two weekly overtime shifts dedicated to this work.

Recruitment Support – $500,000 [$250,000 Revenue-Backed]

The proposed budget would appropriate $500,000 in ongoing expenditures to augment KCSO's recruitment efforts including travel, overtime, and advertising. This request is supported by $250,000 in revenue through overhead in the KCSO contract cost model.

According to the Executive, KCSO has done very limited out-of-state recruitment in recent years and will be increasing these activities for both entry level and lateral recruitments. As an example, KSCO recruiters and background detectives will be traveling to military base concentration areas in Texas, San Diego and North Carolina in conjunction with their civilian transition and assistance programs. These travel recruitment efforts will be in tandem with a large digital marketing and advertising campaign planned to launch in 2026.

Computer Aided Dispatch IT Capital Project – $16,712,000

The Executive's proposed PSB General Fund Technology Capital Fund[7] includes approximately $16.7 million for the KCSO Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) replacement capital project.[8] The project is being discussed in this appropriation unit staff report to allow it to be considered in the context of other KCSO budget requests.

A CAD system is a software application that helps emergency response agencies and public safety organizations manage and dispatch resources. KCSO's existing CAD system was purchased in 2010, is a legacy system that requires third party products to meet security and Criminal Justice Information System requirements, and whose vendor will only accommodate critical change requests (as opposed to providing routine system maintenance). According to the Executive, over 1,000 officers as well as the 911 Center rely on this system, and it is no longer able to meet KCSO's operational needs.

The Council has previously appropriated $1.4 million to complete the final RFP and support project costs through vendor negotiations and agreement. The requested appropriation for the 2026-2027 biennium would support the final design, implementation, acquisition, and close-out phases of this project.

Total project costs were initially estimated at approximately $11 million, though Executive staff acknowledged at the time that this was a rough estimate and final estimates were likely to be higher. According to the Executive, the new $17 million total

[7] PSB General Fund Technology Capital Fund is used for technology-related capital projects sponsored by agencies supported by the general fund that do not have their own capital fund.
[8] The Executive's proposed bond authorization ordinance (PO 2025-0300) includes $17 million to finance the project's capital expenses which would be authorized under this request.

project cost reflects the most recent market estimate, which factors inflation, the potential for supply-chain tariffs and increased rates for resources, as well as more detailed information gathered over the last year on the full project costs associated with implementing a new CAD system that will meet KCSO's unique needs.

This project is proposed to be funded with bond proceeds and is included in the Executive's proposed bond authorization ordinance.[9] The requested appropriation would support the final design, implementation, acquisition, and close-out phases of this project. According to the Executive, this project will be in the implementation phase for the 2026-2027 biennium.

KCSO Payroll Reengineering IT Project – $5,071,000

The Executive's proposed PSB General Fund Technology Capital Fund includes approximately $5 million to replace KCSO's timekeeping and payroll system.[10] The project is being discussed in this appropriation unit staff report to allow it to be considered in the context of other KCSO budget requests.

KCSO's current payroll system, ATLAS, was implemented in 2016, with older and inflexible technology, that cannot accommodate the demands of the more complicated aspects of KCSO's payroll requirements. For example, ATLAS does not have an automated method to track holiday pay and thus requires KCSO to employ a manual process. Executive staff state that completing manual entries each pay period increases the likelihood of error and are time-consuming. KCSO has already received six individual grievances and two class action grievances regarding pay discrepancies and inaccuracies in recent years. Executive staff state further that a new system would mitigate the risk of expensive litigation from these grievances, ensure employees are paid accurately, and reduce labor costs.

The Council has previously appropriated $611,000 to support Phase 1 of the project, which included gathering business requirements and conducting options analysis including developing Request for Information (RFI) and Request for Proposal (RFP) on viable solutions.[11] The proposed request would fund Phase 2 of the project which includes releasing the RFP, awarding a contract, solution configuration, implementation, testing, change management, and maintenance by the selected vendor. Included in the request is a Business Resource Center TLT position that will support testing and integration of KCSO's new payroll system with other County-maintained software systems.

[9] PO 2025-0300
[10] The Executive's proposed bond authorization ordinance (PO 2025-0300) includes $6 million to finance the project's capital expenses which would be authorized under this request.
[11] Ordinance 19712 & Ordinance 19956

This project is proposed to be funded with bond proceeds and is included in the Executive's proposed bond authorization ordinance.[12] According to the Executive, the project is estimated to be complete by the end of 2027.

KEY ISSUES

ISSUE 1 – NORTH BEND POLICE SERVICES CONTRACT

The proposed budget would appropriate approximately $7.3 million [$6 million revenue-backed] and 12.0 FTE to support a new police services contract with the City of North Bend.[13] The positions are fully revenue-backed, however there are initial upfront costs of approximately $1.3 million that cover vehicles, uniforms, and supplies, which are borne by KCSO.

The new North Bend contract would have the same terms as KCSO's other city police contracts. However, the proposed budget request is broken into two separate types based on KCSO's ability to assign dedicated staff to the contract. In 2026, KCSO would provide a flex-services model without dedicated staff, meaning the 12 North Bend positions would be covered by KCSO's existing staff and funded through overtime. Beginning January 1, 2027, KCSO would provide North Bend with 12 dedicated officers wherein budgeted overtime will be replaced by salary, benefit, and equipment costs.

It should be noted that, regardless of the differing staffing models and budget types reflected in the proposed request, all position and service costs associated with the contract, except for the initial one-time costs described above, will be supported through revenue from the City of North Bend.

While the Executive anticipates the North Bend contract to begin on January 1, 2026, the exact starting date remains uncertain due to North Bend having signed a temporary contract with Snoqualmie that technically ends March 30, 2026, but also allows for termination with 60-days notice. This means Snoqualmie can decide to end the contract sooner and there is a risk KCSO may have to start providing police services in 2025. At present however, the Executive believes the most likely changeover date will be January 1, 2026, and therefore the budget request is based on that assumption.

In response to a Council Staff inquiry regarding any potential operational impacts of fulfilling the North Bend contract before dedicated staff are available, Executive staff provided the following response. Although the North Bend contract will marginally increase workload for the Special Assault Unit and other investigatory units, KCSO does not expect the contract would result in workload that would significantly exceed current capacity or diminish KCSO services. Additionally, KCSO does not anticipate that the North Bend contract would cause significant service impacts in unincorporated areas.

[12] PO 2025-0300
[13] The City of North Bend previously contract with KCSO for 30 years before entering into an agreement with Snoqualmie in 2012.

As of September 22nd, 2025, KSCO has 95 commissioned officer vacancies and 41.5 noncommissioned vacancies (including AFIS vacancies). The proposed request would add an additional 12 vacancies to that total.

As this Council has discussed before, with contract partners providing sufficient revenue, there isn't a negative impact to the General Fund when KCSO covers a contract vacancy with overtime. However, prolonged mandatory overtime does have a cost in staff morale. KCSO has identified recruitment as a top priority and has requested additional appropriations for hiring and referral incentive payments and additional recruitment efforts to help bring vacancies down and reduce reliance on overtime (see decision package narratives above).

ISSUE 2 – DRONE MANAGER AND DRONE AS FIRST RESPONDER PROGRAM

The proposed budget would appropriate $250,000 in ongoing expenditures to provide sufficient overtime funding to support a new drone manager post. This post would be responsible for managing KCSO's drone program, designing and implementing a pilot "Drones as First Responder" (DFR) program, and coordinating KCSO's mobile geospatial mapping program that shows were all KCSO's drones, helicopters, K9s and specialty team members are located on screen during deployment.

KCSO's drone program consists of 43 officers certified as drone pilots and 65 drones currently deployed by KCSO and its contract partners and is housed in the Air Support Unit of the Special Operations Division. KCSO utilizes drones to search for suspects, lost people, area checks, security checks, interior checks on crisis calls, and more. According to the Executive, the drone program is in full compliance with the FAA, has a public facing drone tracking platform allowing the public to see where and when a drone was flown,[14] and employs use policies[15] guided by the American Civil Liberties Union recommendations and safeguards on governmental use of drone aircraft.[16]

In June 2025, KCSO received approval from the FAA to utilize KCSO's own certified drone pilots to fly out of line of sight in a DFR program. This means King County can fly drones from a central location (office or command post) and the drone can be out of visual range of the operator. According to the Executive, a DRF program would be beneficial in a number of ways including responding to low-level area checks or residential alarms by arriving on-scene faster than an officer traveling in a vehicle without waiting in traffic and providing a live broadcast during critical incidents to other responding deputies rather than relying on information from witnesses transcribed by emergency dispatch receivers.

[14] https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/sheriff/courts-jails-legal-system/special-operations/air-support
[15] https://public.powerdms.com/KCSO/tree/documents/1774472
[16] https://www.aclu.org/publications/protecting-privacy-aerial-surveillance-recommendations-government-use-drone-aircraft & https://www.aclu.org/issues/privacy-technology/surveillance-technologies/domestic-drones

The proposed request is to develop a pilot DFR program. If deemed successful KCSO may request a dedicated FTE position in a future budget to manage a more permanent DFR program.

RESPONSE TO COUNCIL INQUIRIES

QUESTION 1: WITH CRIME RATES DOWN FROM RECENT YEARS, WHY ARE WE SEEING AN INCREASE IN SPENDING FOR THE BIENNIUM?

ANSWER: According to the Executive, "crime rates are not the sole contributor to costs in the department's budget. KCSO's costs are a function of calls for service, proactive responses, investigations, community expectations of police presence, and other duties the department's personnel are asked to perform. Similar to the fire service that prevents fires through education, outreach, and building codes, KCSO takes actions that can have the effect of reducing crime rates but may not reduce or initially reduce costs. While crime rates may be down today compared to recent highs, the crime rate does not necessarily drive KCSO costs.

Over the last several years, KCSO's budget has not kept up with increased expenditures, especially in non-labor and overtime accounts. The department has used salary savings to cover necessary overtime and supply costs that exceeded budget. At the same time, KCSO has continued to work on ways to reduce costs, for example through alternative call handling, working to limit deputy responses when other agencies have authority to respond to non-emergency and code enforcement calls for service, applying financial guidelines to reduce costs across the department, and implementing closer review and approval of department expenditures.

While there has been a downward trend in crime rates recently, this reduction followed an upward spike that began in 2020. As staffing did not grow during the spike, the current demand for KCSO services in the community is still a significant challenge to manage with the department's existing staffing level.

In addition, KCSO's cases tend to take longer to investigate than in previous years. This is driven in part by State requirements and legislation, community expectations, and case complexity. Detectives in the Special Assault Unit and the Major Crimes Unit work well beyond a standard work week on a continual basis with current workload and staffing."

QUESTION 2: WITH THIS PROPOSED BUDGET, ARE WE PUTTING FORWARD A BUDGET THAT WILL HOLD UKC HARMLESS REGARDLESS OF OTHER EXPENSES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR? WHAT ARE THE GUARDRAILS SO WE AREN'T REDUCING UKC TO MAKE UP OVERTIME COSTS?

ANSWER: According to the Director of the Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget, the Executive believes KCSO is budgeted adequately to avoid cuts in the

unincorporated area. Making the investment to true-up supplies and equipment budgets and increasing overtime were steps taken to avoid unincorporated area service cuts.

QUESTION 3: THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE HAS ALWAYS HAD A SOLID VACANCY RATE. ARE THE HIRING INCENTIVES BASED ON SUCCESS THAT WE'VE SEEN FOR OTHER INCENTIVES AND DO THEY WORK?

ANSWER: According to the Executive, the current hiring incentives were carefully considered and were informed by feedback KCSO staff received about recruiting qualified, experienced officers, also known as "lateral" hires. Lateral hires do not require as much training as new officers (entry-level), who must complete about 12 months of training before they can begin work on their own. During the time a recruit is being trained, King County pays the salary and other costs for the recruit while still paying any overtime costs to cover the work that the new recruit will eventually do.

Executive staff further report that the changes which have occurred with the incentive program have been in response to changing needs within the County and its contracting agencies and to changing labor market conditions specific to recruiting commissioned law enforcement personnel. Like many agencies in the region, KCSO has offered hiring bonuses to attract qualified candidates. KCSO offers both financial and non-financial incentives. Incentives are focused on laterals as they can begin work sooner than new recruits. The following summarizes the current incentives for lateral hires:

- **Pre-loaded leave**
    - Sick leave: 40 hours
    - Vacation leave: 40 hours
- **Ability to apply and compete for specialty assignments upon completion of initial training and while still on probation.**
- **Ability to select a duty location from among KCSO's available precincts and contract cities.**
- **Cash Bonus for Successful Candidates**
    - Out of State: $25,000
    - In State: $40,000

While KCSO is still collecting data, the department has seen a positive early response to these recent changes. After implementing the incentive program described above in late September, KCSO has received 21 lateral applications from experienced officers as of October 9th, far above typical levels over a similar period. Most of these applications resulted from word-of-mouth employee referrals, demonstrating the impact of having every employee be a recruiter through the employee recruiting bonus program.

QUESTION 4: HOW CAN WE HELP ALLEVIATE OVERTIME BURDEN? WHO ELSE IS DOING CREATIVE AND INNOVATING THINGS THAT WE CAN UTILIZE IN KING COUNTY

ANSWER: According to the Executive, the overtime burden could be reduced by supporting the resources proposed in the biennial budget for recruiting, considering the impact of adding specialized programs or projects on department staff, and considering resource impacts from emergent issues and responses that occur throughout the year.

The use of overtime affects both unincorporated and contract agency commissioned and non-commissioned personnel. Overtime work is a function of meeting the expected levels of service including but not limited to responding to calls for service, proactive and on view work, investigative work, special emphasis work, special projects, and other supportive work. Generally, adding to the level of service will either increase the overtime burden or require shifting personnel from other priorities without backfilling if possible.

Executive staff further stated that, KCSO can alleviate the overtime burden by shifting personnel when priorities change and backfill is not needed, by implementing and refining recruiting strategies, by improving the processes to review applicants, and by increasing successful completion of training by new hires, including probation. The department has also significantly limited discretionary overtime. KCSO further alleviates this burden by being a department that is effective at retaining qualified, experienced, and successful personnel. Lastly, KCSO has worked on developing other technologies and practices that improve efficiencies and reduce overtime that would have otherwise occurred.

QUESTION 5: REGARDING OVERTIME, WE HAD MANDATORY OVERTIME IN THE JAIL. IS ANY OF THE OVERTIME IN KCSO BEEN MANDATORY?

ANSWER: Yes, mandatory overtime represented 1.4% of all overtime in 2024 and is currently 1.3% of all overtime in 2025 for deputies and sergeants

QUESTION 6: WHEN DO WE STOP ASKING OUR STAFF TO WORK OVERTIME? WHAT IS THE EXECUTIVE'S PLAN TO ADDRESS THE CURRENT RELIANCE ON OVERTIME?

ANSWER: Regarding the Executive's plan to address KCSO's reliance on overtime, the Executive provided the following response:

"KCSO and the Executive share this concern about the impact overtime has on personnel and the budget. While eliminating overtime to meet the department's obligations is limited in part because of the nature of delivering law enforcement services, there are ways that KCSO is working to reduce the overtime burden. For example, KCSO is limiting discretionary overtime and providing direction that required training be close to an officer's primary assignment location when possible to reduce overtime and other costs. In addition to policy changes, the more significant ways KCSO has to reduce overtime are increasing commissioned and non- recruiting and retention for commissioned and non-commissioned staff and by managing and prioritizing workload.

KCSO has worked with the Executive's Office on recruitment and the County is offering new incentives for lateral applicants to facilitate recruiting qualified, experienced deputies who can be deployed into the field more quickly than new recruits, thereby

reducing overtime demands more quickly. A new incentive program has resulted in 21 new lateral applicants in fewer than three weeks.

A significant amount of the work KCSO does is required work related to community and deputy safety. Some of this work is unpredictable, emergent, and critical in nature and occurs outside of scheduled work hours requiring employees to work overtime. There is also work that fills a level of service that the community and leadership defines – sometimes this work can require or result in overtime."

QUESTION 7: REGARDING THE SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT APPROPRIATIONS, WHAT HAPPENS TO SALARY SAVINGS THAT WERE PREVIOUSLY USED TO COVER THOSE HISTORICAL DEFICITS? CAN THOSE SALARY SAVINGS BE REPROGRAMMED ELSEWHERE IN THIS BIENNIUM?

ANSWER: According to the Director of Performance, Strategy and Budget, in 2025, there were no salary savings because those funds were used to cover overtime and equipment and supply deficits.

QUESTION 8: IS THE INVESTMENT IN SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT THE APPROPRIATE INVESTMENT WE SHOULD BE MAKING OR SHOULD WE INVEST IN OTHER THINGS?

ANSWER: As discussed in the report submitted in response to Proviso P6 included in the 1st Omnibus Budget of 2025,[17] the Executive proposes to align supplies and services budgets with actual expected costs in the 2026-2027 Budget in several General Fund appropriation units. According to the Executive, for these agencies, non-discretionary supplies and services costs had increased due to inflation and changing needs while budgets in these accounts had remained largely flat. In the Sheriff's Office case, this meant reliance on salary savings to fund these expenses. However, in early 2025 KCSO projected these savings would be insufficient despite the high vacancy rate, so KCSO sought to generate additional labor savings by reducing patrol minimums in unincorporated King County. By fully funding non-labor costs, KCSO will be able to maintain service levels by allowing labor spending to flex between regular salary and overtime based on vacancy levels and operational needs. Any remaining savings at the end of the biennium would be returned to the General Fund balance. Additionally, Sheriff's Office contract partners are charged for non-labor costs based on budget, not actuals. To the extent that KCSO's non-labor costs were underbudgeted, the County was undercharging contract partners for the full cost of services.

[17] Ordinance 19956, Section 6, P6

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

ANALYST: OLIVIA BREY

	Expenditures	Revenues	FTEs	TLTs
2025 Revised Budget Biennialized	$56,485,816	$5,258,170	127.0	0.0
2026-2027 Base Budget Adjust.	$4,159,503	0	0.0	0.0
2026-2027 Decision Packages	$762,347	$715,180	4.0	0.0
2026-2027 Proposed Budget	**$61,408,000**	**$5,974,000**	**131.0**	**0.0**
% Change from prior biennium, biennialized	8.7%			
Dec. Pkg. as % of prior biennium, biennialized	1.3%			

Major Revenue Sources: General Fund Overhead[1] and Internal Service Funds

DESCRIPTION

The Department of Human Resources (DHR) develops and administers the County's personnel system, employment policies, countywide training, organizational development, workplace safety, and the County's benefits and worker's compensation programs.[2] The Human Resources Management (HRM) appropriation unit covers many of these DHR functions and responsibilities. There are three additional appropriation units within DHR: Employee Benefits, Safety and Claims Management, and Employee Deferred Compensation Administration.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET AND CHANGES

The proposed 2026-2027 biennial budget would increase HRM by 8.7% from the biennialized 2025 budget. Most of the increase (85% of the total increase) reflects base budget adjustments. Notable changes are summarized below.

NEOGOV System Administrators [$1,083,996 for 3.0 FTEs]. These positions, formerly TLTs, would support DHR's recruitment, onboarding, and training platform, NEOGOV. These positions are discussed further in the Key Issues section.

Origami Grievance and EEO System Administrator [$361,332 for 1.0 FTE]. This proposal would formally add a previously unbudgeted position that has been partially funded by DHR salary saving so support the grievance and equal employment opportunity tracking system. According to Executive staff, the system has been used for

[1] The General Fund overhead model is used to recover costs from all other funds. Costs supported by the General Fund overhead model are divided between General Fund support and support by all other funds.
[1] K.C.C. 2.16.036

grievance tracking countywide since 2021 and the system was developed, implemented, and maintained by a temporary position since initiation.

KEY ISSUES

ISSUE 1 – NEOGOV ADMINISTRATORS; CONVERTING 3.0 TLTS TO FTES

The proposal for 3.0 FTEs would address three unbudgeted special duty or TLT positions that have been used since 2021. Each position is responsible for a different module within the recruitment and retention system, which is used countywide, including applicant tracking, onboarding, and learning management. There are currently 2.0 FTE and 2 unbudgeted TLT NEOGOV Administrators, in addition to the positions requested. DHR has grown in recent years, including the addition of 7.0 FTEs (of which, 5.0 were TLT conversions focused on recruitment and outreach) in the 2025 annual budget.

The cost for each position is $361,322 and the total for all three positions is $1,083,996. Based on the proposed General Fund Overhead model, roughly $303,519 (28% of the total cost) would be funded by the General Fund, with the rest supported by other funds through General Fund overhead charges. The conversion of all three positions represents a policy choice for the council.

RESPONSE TO COUNCIL INQUIRIES

QUESTION 1: ARE ANY OF THE FTES REQUESTED FOR THE NEOGOV ADMINISTRATORS RELATED TO SUPPORTING THE METRO REGIONAL SAFETY TASKFORCE WORK? IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT ONE OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TASKFORCE IS ADDING TRAINING MODULES/PORTALS AND THAT IS BEING DONE IN NEOGOV. ARE THESE FTES RELATED TO THAT WORK?
ANSWER: Executive staff stated, "DHR is not currently involved in conversations regarding deliverables from this Taskforce. However, yes, this is an example of the types of requests that these positions support. DHR is the business owner of NEOGOV for the enterprise. NEOGOV is used for both enterprise wide and department specific training, onboarding, and recruitment."

QUESTION 2: THE CHART INDICATES THERE ARE NO TLTS. IF WE ARE CONVERTING TLTS TO FTES, SHOULDN'T THE CHART SHOW THEM AS NEGATIVE?
ANSWER: Executive staff stated, "these positions were unbudgeted TLTs that were funded through a combination of salary savings within DHR's general fund and agency contributions from other departments (e.g. Metro/DAJD/DNRP). Since they were not budgeted, they don't show up as a 1.0 in the TLT column and as part of these DP's there is no (1.0) recorded in the reports."

QUESTION 3: HAVE THE 4 TLTS THAT ARE PLANNED TO BE CONVERTED TO FTES ALREADY HIT THE 3-YEAR MAXIMUM FOR TLT USE?
ANSWER: Executive staff stated, "the actual employees have not hit the 3-year maximum for TLT use, but the bodies of work have. The support of these established systems is

now ongoing and should be performed by career service employees rather than TLTs or SDAs."

INTERNAL SUPPORT

ANALYST: WENDY SOO HOO

	Expenditures	Revenues	FTEs	TLTs
2025 Revised Budget Biennialized	$52,641,190	$0	0.0	0.0
2026-2027 Base Budget Adjust.	($11,800,000)	$0	0.0	0.0
2026-2027 Decision Packages	$3,474,776	$0	0.0	0.0
2026-2027 Proposed Budget	**$44,316,000**	**$0**	**0.0**	**0.0**
% Change from prior biennium, biennialized	(15.8%)			
Dec. Pkg. as % of prior biennium, biennialized	6.6%			
Major Revenue Sources: General Fund				

DESCRIPTION

The Internal Support appropriation unit includes charges that are paid centrally on behalf of General Fund agencies. For example, the costs associated with providing a Metro Transit bus pass for employees in General Fund departments are budgeted in Internal Support.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET AND CHANGES

The Internal Support appropriation unit is proposed to decrease by 15.8% to $44.3 million compared to the biennialized 2025 budget as one-time costs for 2025 were removed, including $3.1 million for a settlement payment on behalf of the Department of Public Defense and $2.8 million for the Arts and Cultural Development Fund for COVID-related expenditures.

Several new budget items are proposed for 2026-2027, including:

- **Harbor Island Studio rent: $1.5 million.** This request would support rent for 2026 only and will be discussed further under Key Issues.

- **Outside counsel: $500,000.** This request is based on projected need for outside counsel due to anticipated legal issues and litigation. This will be included in the General Fund overhead allocation, meaning about 28%, or $140,000, is supported by the General Fund and 72% is supported by other County funds.

- **Employee Transportation Program costs: $1.9 million.** This request reflects costs resulting from increased County employee ridership estimates.

KEY ISSUES

ISSUE 1 – HARBOR ISLAND STUDIO RENT: $1.5 MILLION

The Executive's proposed 2026-2027 budget for Internal Support includes $1.5 million in General Fund support for Harbor Island Studio rent. The rent would be paid to the Solid Waste Operating Fund, as the Solid Waste Division owns the property.

In its 2025 Adopted Budget, the Council removed the $1.5 million the Executive had proposed for the Harbor Island studio rent as roof repairs were being completed. Now that the work is completed, the Executive is proposing to resume rent payments in 2026. The Executive's proposed budget only includes one year of rent for the Harbor Island Studio 2026 due to the financial constraints facing the General Fund.[1]

In addition, to the rent proposed in the Internal Support appropriation, the Facilities Management Division budget includes approximately $240,000 for one year of General Fund support for Harbor Island Studio operating costs.

RESPONSE TO COUNCIL INQUIRIES

QUESTION 1: WHY IS HARBOR ISLAND STUDIO RENT BUDGETED IN INTERNAL SUPPORT RATHER THAN THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND CREATIVE ECONOMY?
ANSWER: According to the Director of the Office of Performance, Strategy, and Budget, it could be budgeted in either Internal Support or Office of Economic Opportunity and Creative Economy.

QUESTION 1: WHAT REVENUES ARE BEING GENERATED BY HARBOR ISLAND STUDIO?
ANSWER: According to Executive staff:

"The goal of this initiative has never been revenue generation. Rather, Harbor Island Studios is intended to be a job creator and offer affordable production space to under resourced and BIPOC filmmakers. We measure the ROI in the number of film workers who work in Harbor Island Studios. Additionally, film production work at Harbor Island Studios activates a small business supply chain throughout King County and we do not track this economic impact. Harbor Island Studios also offers multiple free community events including monthly hands-on training led by film union crews.

That said, Harbor Island Studios has generated, and FMD has collected, $29,950 in 2025, with an additional $19,850 that is due and incoming. So, sum total, Harbor Island Studios will have generated $49,800 January to October 2025."

[1] The Solid Waste Division budget includes two years of rent under the assumption that the space could have another revenue-generating function on the market if it is not being used for the Harbor Island Studio.

Executive staff also provided the following information on 2025 usage of Harbor Island Studio:

- 57 productions
- 368 studio use days (more than one production can use the studio at the same time)
- 777 unique crew members employed
- 1,260 community participants

DEPARTMENT OF ADULT AND JUVENILE DETENTION

ANALYST: LEAH KREKEL-ZOPPI

	Expenditures	Revenues	FTEs	TLTs
2025 Revised Budget Biennialized	$418,156,786	$51,325,630	934.0	3.0
2026-2027 Base Budget Adjust.	$7,667,402	($289,790)	0.0	(1.0)
2026-2027 Decision Packages	$27,227,848	$5,231,900	9.0	0.0
2026-2027 Proposed Budget	**$453,053,000**	**$56,259,000**	**944.0**	**2.0**
% Change from prior biennium, biennialized	8.3%			
Dec. Pkg. as % of prior biennium, biennialized	6.5%			

Major Revenue Sources: General Fund, contracts for services

DESCRIPTION

King County's Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention (DAJD) operates three detention facilities as well as community supervision programs.[1] King County's secure detention facilities are located at the King County Correctional Facility (KCCF) in downtown Seattle, the Maleng Regional Justice Center (MRJC) in Kent, and the Judge Patricia H. Clark Child and Family Justice Center (CCFJC) in Seattle's First Hill neighborhood, which houses juveniles.

The County's secure detention facilities house pre-trial individuals who have been arrested or had charges files and are awaiting adjudication of their cases in King County Superior Court or District Court, or who are awaiting state psychiatric competency restoration services. King County also houses post-trial individuals who have been sentenced to secure detention for less than a year. Individuals in the County's custody who receive sentences that exceed one year are transferred to the state correctional system. In 2024, annual bookings into adult detention were over 15,000, and the average daily population (ADP) was 1,407.[2]

DAJD also operates alternatives to detention for those eligible as determined by the courts. Alternatives to detention include community corrections programs and electronic home detention. Community corrections programs allow individuals to stay in community and access services while awaiting adjudication of their cases. The ADP for electronic home detention was 354 in 2024.

[1] Medical, dental, and psychiatric services for adults in secure detention are provided by Jail Health Services (JHS), a division of the Department of Public Health, and the costs of these services are reflected in the JHS budget. (The JHS budget is presented in a separate staff report).
[2] 2024-12-kc-dar-scorecard.pdf

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET AND CHANGES

The proposed 2026-2027 budget for DAJD represents an 8.6% increase over the biennialized 2025 budget, for a total of $453 million. Of the proposed increase, 1.8% are due to net pro forma changes, and the remaining 6.5% are proposed programmatic changes.

DAJD is funded mostly through the General Fund, with approximately 87% coming from the General Fund and the remaining 12% coming from contracts with cities and other jurisdictions in King Counties to house people charged with misdemeanors in those jurisdictions.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, DAJD experienced a significant number of vacant positions, with 122 correction officer (CO) vacancies in fall of 2022. DAJD implemented a number of hiring incentives and recruitment efforts, and hiring has steadily improved. As of September 2025, there were 61 vacant CO positions and eight vacant juvenile detention officer (JDO) and supervisor positions, for vacancy rates of 12% for COs and 8% for JDOs. The high vacancies in recent years challenged operations but also resulted in significant fiscal savings that were used to backfill cost growth in other areas of DAJD's budget and support programs in other parts of the General Fund. As a result of relying on salary savings, DAJD's non-labor and overtime costs were not adjusted to fully reflect cost growth through several budget cycles.

With less salary savings in DAJD's budget projected for 2026-2027, the Executive has made an effort to "true up" cost growth in other areas of DAJD's budget that had previously been supported by salary savings. This was seen through an increased appropriation for DAJD's food and supplies budget to account for actual expenditures in the July 2025 supplemental budget omnibus, which is now incorporated in DAJD's base budget. Reflected in the current DAJD proposed budget are additional technical adjustments totaling $24.5 million. Broken down, these "true up" technical adjustments include:

- $11 million for contracted services, which includes dozens of contracts for expenditures such as medical and mental healthcare at CCFJC,[3] electronic home monitoring equipment, resident programming and tablets, and more;
- $921,651 for food and supplies; and
- $12.5 million for overtime. An additional $4.3 million would be added to the overtime account to reflect general wage increases.

These increases would be partially offset by vacancy rate adjustments totaling $12.1 million. In effect, the proposed 2026-2027 budget will still see DAJD using salary savings from vacancies to partially offset overtime costs, but DAJD's budget will more accurately reflect the categories where expenditures are being made.

[3] Medical, mental health, and dental care for youth in detention is provided through contractors rather than Jail Health Services, which only serves the adult detention facilities.

An additional technical adjustment would increase central rate costs by $11.2 million over the biennium, with the biggest increase being insurance costs.

DAJD's budget also includes proposed savings totaling $2.9 million. These proposed reductions include:

- ($2.1 million) to discontinue contracting for laundry services and move laundry services in-house. While this move is projected to save $2.1 million, it would require adding 7 FTEs.
- ($622,000) to discontinue hiring incentives. DAJD's analysis of the market and feedback from DAJD applicants indicate the cost of offering the incentives is no longer justified.
- ($156,688 and 1 FTE) to eliminate a position to administer the behavioral health pretrial risk assessment since the tool is not currently being used by Superior Court.

DAJD's budget also includes the following proposed additions:

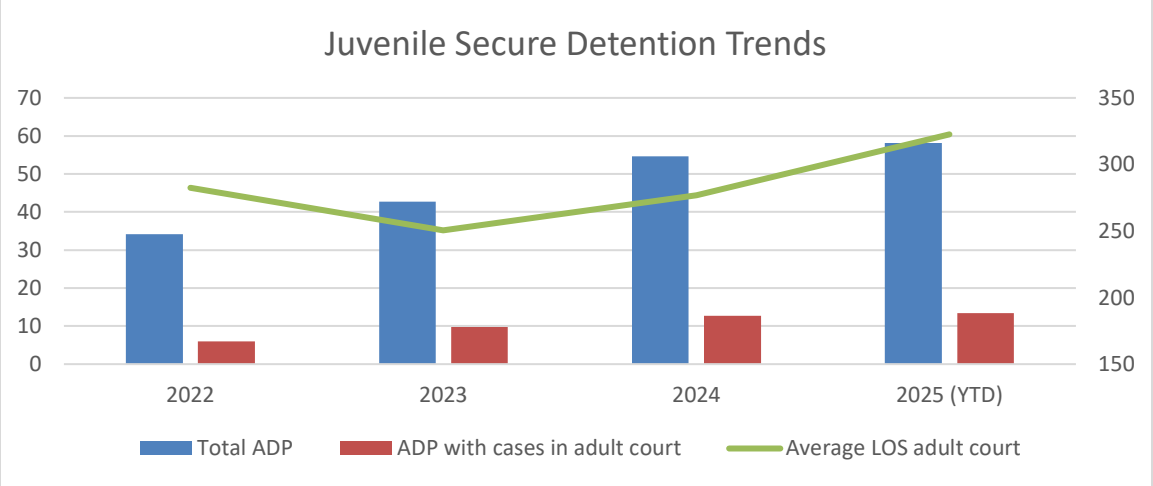
- $900,000 to shift the costs and responsibilities of coordinating community-based services contracts for youth on electronic home monitoring from the Department of Public Health to DAJD,
- $961,938 and 2 FTEs to provide ongoing funding to replace two previously grant-funded TLT positions providing adult reentry education and training, and
- $471,264 and 1 FTE to add a nursing supervisor at the CCFJC. The Juvenile Division piloted this position as a TLT in 2025 and found that the position increased efficiency and continuity of care.

DAJD proposed several additional programmatic changes that were not included in the Executive proposed budget due to lack of financial capacity in the General Fund or the need for further development of the proposals. See the Key Issues below for further discussion.

KEY ISSUES

ISSUE 1 – JUVENILE DETENTION OPERATING IMPROVEMENTS

In recent years, the juvenile secure detention average daily population (ADP) has been increasing, as has the number of youths being detained on serious violent offenses such as those declined to adult court. The average length of stay (LOS) for youth with cases in adult court has also increased. This mix of trends contributes to greater complexity of the needs of youth and detention.



During this time of increasing population and staffing shortages, the Juvenile Division has experienced operational challenges including a rise in youth detainee assaults on other youth and on staff, and an increase in the number of incidents of restrictive housing, which is a practice of confining a youth to their cell to prevent imminent physical harm.

In the DAJD agency proposed budget, DAJD proposed several budget additions intended to improve Juvenile Division operations, family supports, and behavior management. These proposals were not included in the Executive proposed budget because of general fund capacity constraints. The proposals included:

- $780,000 for a Juvenile Detention Personnel and Systems Improvement Initiative,
- $300,000 for Family Support for Youth in Detention, and
- $50,000 for Behavior Management Enhancements.

Juvenile Detention Personnel and Systems Improvements Initiative

Under the new leadership of Juvenile Division Director Chuck Parkins, confirmed earlier this year, the Juvenile Division proposed to respond to recent challenges with, “a coordinated initiative to strengthen internal systems and promote safety, consistency, and quality in the delivery of youth services.” The goal would be to establish a “consistent, trauma-responsive environment by embedding therapeutic practices into everyday operations.” The initiative would be modeled after initiatives in Wayne County, Michigan, South Carolina, and New York City, and would include:

- Incorporating Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), trauma-informed principles, and motivational interviewing and other best practices into training, behavioral management, and staff engagements with youth;
- Providing Forward Thinking journals to all youth to support CBT learning and group programming;
- Providing targeted programming for higher-risk youth such as Aggression Replacement Training (ART) or Thinking for Change (T4C);

- Bringing in two Engagement Coach consultants to work alongside facility staff; and
- Reviewing and aligning policies and behavior management approaches with best practices.

Family Support for Youth in Detention

This proposal would involve supporting families of justice system-involved youth by implementing a peer-parent program that provides mentoring and coaching to parents and caregivers to guide them through the legal process, connect them to community-based resources, and help prepare them for successful reintegration. The proposed funding would be used to provide stipends, training, and transportation to peer-parents and provide program materials and supplies.

Behavior Management Enhancements

Stemming from the work of the Juvenile Division's behavior management workgroup, which has been meeting biweekly to focus on enhancements to the behavioral management system, this proposal would fund staff training in motivational interviewing, de-escalation, and program facilitation.

ISSUE 2 – ADULT DETENTION ACCOUNTABILITY

An additional agency budget proposal that was not approved for the Executive's proposed budget was a request to add two captains and one major to staff the adult detention facilities, at a cost of $1.3 million and 3 FTE, to increase oversight and accountability. Specifically, the three additional leadership positions were requested to respond to the increasing workload around data collection and reviewing incident reports, as well as DAJD's initiative to reimplement a comprehensive performance management system, which has not been a formal part of DAJD operations. This proposal by DAJD was intended to support those bodies of work without reducing capacity for providing consistent coaching, mentoring, and feedback to COs and Sergeants, particularly with the growing cohort of new hires and new promotions.

This proposal was not included in the Executive proposed budget because of General Fund capacity constraints.

ISSUE 3 – JAIL SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

The Council included a proviso in the 2025 budget requiring the Executive to report on the status of safety improvements at adult detention facilities.[4] The two major unfunded safety projects identified in the report were replacing the duress alarm system worn by COs that allows them to summon immediate help, and implementation of body worn

[4] Motion 16863

cameras. In the report, replacing duress alarms was projected to cost $1.3 million for COs at MRJC where officers currently wear duress alarms, and an additional $3.1 million to expand duress alarms to officers at KCCF and CCFJC. Implementation of body worn cameras was projected to cost $1.5 million, for which DAJD was working with the Executive to identify grant funding opportunities.

The proposed budget does not include funding for these projects due to budget constraints and the need for further development. Because of the significant costs and resources necessary for these projects, DAJD is proposing to prioritize replacing duress alarms first rather than attempting to pursue both projects concurrently. Duress alarm replacement is recommended for prioritization because, "duress alarms can prevent or interrupt harm, whereas body worn cameras only provide a tool for reviewing an incident after it occurs." Additionally, anticipated federal grant funding for body worn cameras has been eliminated. DAJD is currently working to issue a request for proposals for the duress alarm replacement project in order to obtain more definitive information about the cost and scope of the project in anticipation of making a future budget request.

RESPONSE TO COUNCIL INQUIRIES

QUESTION 1: HOW MUCH IS DAJD RELYING ON OVERTIME FOR OPERATING DETENTION FACILITIES?

ANSWER: A response to this question was not provided in time for inclusion in the staff report. Analysis of this issue is ongoing.

QUESTION 2: WHAT ARE THE TIMEFRAME AND NEXT STEPS FOR ADVANCING THE DURESS ALARM REPLACEMENT PROJECT?

ANSWER: A response to this question was not provided in time for inclusion in the staff report. Analysis of this issue is ongoing.

JAIL HEALTH SERVICES

ANALYST: LEAH KREKEL-ZOPPI

	Expenditures	Revenues	FTEs	TLTs
2025 Revised Budget Biennialized	$134,823,646	$19,483,654	255.4	1.0
2026-2027 Base Budget Adjust.	$1,432,690	($1,041,006)	0.0	(1.0)
2026-2027 Decision Packages	$3,050,948	$1,201,273	2.0	0.0
2026-2027 Proposed Budget	**$139,308,000**	**$19,644,000**	**257.4**	**0.0**
% Change from prior biennium, biennialized	3.3%			
Dec. Pkg. as % of prior biennium, biennialized	2.3%			

Major Revenue Sources: General Fund, MIDD

DESCRIPTION

Jail Health Services (JHS), a division of the Department of Public Health, provides medical, psychiatric, behavioral health, dental services, and social services to people incarcerated in the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention's adult secure detention facilities. JHS staff provide an intake health screening for every person booked into detention in order to determine their health services needs while in custody. JHS also responds to medical requests and needs that emerge during a resident's time in detention. Additionally, JHS provides limited transitional health services to people released from detention. The JHS workload is driven by the number of adults in county jails, their constitutionally guaranteed right to health services, and the acuity of their health needs. JHS operates under multiple legal and regulatory mandates, including the National Commission for Correctional Health Care, the U.S. Department of Justice settlement agreement, the Washington State Board of Pharmacy regulations, and the "Hammer" Settlement Agreement.[1]

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET AND CHANGES

The proposed 2026-2027 budget for JHS is $139.3 million, which represents a 3.3% increase from the biennialized 2025 budget. Of the proposed 3.3% increase, 1% is due to base budget increases. Base budget cost growth was partially offset by the removal of limited term revenue-backed expenditures from the 2025 budget.

The major source of revenue for JHS is the General Fund. Additional projected revenues are $15.9 million from MIDD and other dedicated County funding sources, and $3.7 million from State grants, City of Seattle, and Medicaid Administrative Claiming.

[1] exhibit_a_hammer_final_operative_settlement_agreement_searchable.pdf

The proposed JHS budget would add two full-time equivalent positions. The proposed positions, totaling $628,560, would convert a disease research and intervention specialist from a TLT to an FTE and add a staffing analyst (see Issue 1).

The proposed budget would also make technical adjustments totaling $2.4 million. Key changes include adding approximately $570,000 to the overtime account to reflect the general wage increase and adding $1.1 million to cover projected sales tax liability due to Washington State's expansion of sales tax collections to include services. The $1.1 million technical adjustment reflects that JHS will need to begin paying sales tax on temporary labor contracts during the biennium.

KEY ISSUES

ISSUE 1 – STAFF VACANCIES AND USE OF TEMPORARY AGENCY STAFFING

As discussed in prior year budget deliberations, JHS has experienced a higher number of staff vacancies since the COVID pandemic. JHS staff vacancies totaled 33.5 in September 2025, representing a 7.6% vacancy rate. The largest categories of vacancies are nursing and social work positions. The number of vacancies declined by 23% compared to September 2024, and 7% compared to September 2022. The number of vacancies in registered nurse (RN) positions has declined steadily since 2022, with 8.9 RN vacancies in September 2025. JHS has used strategies such as pay increases, job reclassifications, and targeted recruiting to bring vacancies down.

Higher health staff vacancies at JHS in recent years have increased the reliance on temporary labor through agency contracts to provide the staffing necessary to comply with legal requirements for providing medical services to jail residents. Agency staff wage rates have increased significantly in recent years, and an expansion of State sales tax on services, which will take effect in October 2025, will further increase the cost of using agency staffing. As stated above, the proposed JHS budget would add a staffing analyst position. This position is intended by the Executive to help optimize JHS staffing in order to reduce reliance on temporary agency staff. The position would be used to analyze workloads and help design staffing plans in response to changing workload demands such as conforming to recently updated National Commission on Correctional Health Care standards, complying with the Department of Justice (DOJ) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance settlement (see Issue 2), implementing the recommendations of the King County Auditor's Jail Health Audit,[2] and potentially participating in the Medicaid Waiver Reentry Demonstration Initiative (see Issue 3).

[2] Jail Health: Behavioral Health Medications Reach Many Patients, but Gaps Remain for Some, issued June 10, 2025

ISSUE 2 – ADA COMPLIANCE SETTLEMENT COSTS

A recent settlement agreement with the DOJ over ADA compliance at King County adult detention facilities included changes to JHS policies for providing medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) and psychotropic medications.[3] The settlement provisions related to MOUD require JHS to offer all Federal Drug Administration approved MOUD medications to all jail residents with opioid use disorder (OUD). This will require JHS to significantly expand offerings of methadone treatment, including offering methadone induction, by the first quarter of 2026. Additional required changes to JHS policies are expected to necessitate additional staff training, increase workloads, and result in additional patients being offered the more expensive injectable form of buprenorphine. Implementation of the MOUD provisions of the settlement agreement is expected to increase JHS costs, as JHS is already providing MOUD to 19% of the jail population, and with the changes under the settlement this is expected to increase to between 25-30%. However, the Executive is still analyzing the costs of complying with the settlement agreement, so these costs are not included in the proposed JHS budget. To reserve funding for these needs, the proposed 2026-2027 MIDD budget includes a $5 million MOUD expansion reserve which will be proposed for programming in a supplemental budget request when implementation costs are finalized.

UPDATE: Councilmembers expressed concern about the impacts when people booked into jail experience delays accessing needed psychotropic drugs or MOUD. In addition to policy changes in the ADA compliance settlement agreement that touch on this issue, a June 10, 2025, jail health audit (referenced in Issue 1) looked at this issue and found that "behavioral health medications reach many patients, but gaps remain for some." The audit found that, in 2023, in 69% of cases, Jail Health ordered medication for patients within two days of their being booked into jail. However, in cases where patients needed to see a JHS psychiatric provider to obtain a prescription because JHS staff weren't able to verify an existing prescription, the median wait time was 35 days, with priority based on the severity of a patient's behavioral health needs. Since these findings, Jail Health has taken steps to increase psychiatric staffing. The audit recommended that JHS develop, document, and implement a plan to reduce psychiatric clinic wait times for patients in the general population at the King County Correctional Facility. JHS concurred with the recommendation and committed to implementing it by March 1, 2026.

ISSUE 3 – MEDICAID WAIVER REENTRY INITIATIVE

Councilmembers have long expressed interest in the potential for Medicaid reimbursement for the healthcare costs for Medicaid-eligible jail residents, however historically, healthcare provided in jails has been exempt from Medicaid reimbursement. In 2023 Washington State Health Care Authority was granted approval of a five-year Medicaid demonstration waiver that includes a Reentry Demonstration Initiative that

[3] The settlement agreement provisions regarding psychotropic medication continuity and discontinuation overlap with some recommendations in King County Auditor's Jail Health Audit.

would provide Medicaid coverage of prerelease services for Medicaid-eligible jail residents for up to 90 days before their release. Covered services include case management and medications, including a 30-day supply of medications and medical supplies at release.

In May 2025 JHS submitted an intent to participate in the Medicaid Reentry Demonstration Initiative, and on October 1, 2025, JHS submitted a capacity building application that included a proposal for use of State planning funds up to $5 million. While JHS and King County continue to move forward with the steps necessary to participate in the Reentry Demonstration Initiative, the feasibility of the County's participation is still under review. Participating in the initiative would require JHS to significantly expand prerelease service offerings, including large expansions in the number of residents who would receive the services and the supply of medication provided at release. While this expansion would allow the county to better support the health and social needs of jail residents transitioning to the community, it would also require space planning and expansion, hiring and training of new staff, and implementation of a Medicaid billing system. These costs are expected to only be partially covered by Medicaid reimbursement, and there is risk and uncertainty around the sustainability of the investments as the State has funding to pay for targeted pre-release services only through June 30, 2028.

Because JHS is still working with the State and other partners to understand the costs and resources that would be needed to participate in the Reentry Demonstration Initiative, no expenditures related to the project are included in the proposed JHS budget. Should the county participate, the program could go live as early as July 1, 2026, and associated revenues and expenditures would need to be approved through a supplemental budget request. Some of these costs may overlap with costs associated with JHS implementation of the ADA compliance settlement agreement, however the extent of the overlapping costs is still being analyzed.

UPDATE: Councilmembers asked about the range of services that would be covered by the Medicaid Waiver Reentry Demonstration Initiative, and potential funding sources for associated costs that would not be reimbursed by the Reentry Demonstration Initiative.

Should the County participate in the initiative, King County would be required to provide some services, while other services would be optional to provide. See the following table for details about covered services. JHS would be able to seek reimbursement for the listed services for Medicaid-eligible adults within 90 days of their release.

Services Covered by the Medicaid Waiver Reentry Demonstration Initiative

Service	Required vs Optional	Patient Population and Timeline
Medicaid eligibility determination and enrollment	**Required**	All adults within 24 hours of booking if stay is greater than 24 hours

Reentry Targeted Case Management (rTCM)	**Required**	All Medicaid-eligible adults within 90 days of release
SUD evaluation (screening, assessment, diagnoses, and referral to treatment)	**Required**	All Medicaid-eligible adults who have verbalized recent use of substance use and/or are showing symptoms of withdrawal
Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) and Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD)	**Required**	All Medicaid-eligible adults diagnosed with OUD or AUD
Reentry pharmacy: 30 days of medications at release (not limited to medications for SUD)	**Required**	All Medicaid-eligible adults in custody two or more days
Medicaid benefits for young adults 18-26 pre-adjudication	**Required**	Youth under age 21 and foster care alumni up to age 26
Clinical assessment and evaluation for young adults post-adjudication	**Required**	Youth under age 21 and foster care alumni up to age 26
Medications during the pre-release period	Optional	All Medicaid-eligible adults within 90 days of release
Lab and radiology	Optional	All Medicaid-eligible adults within 90 days of release
Services by people with lived experience	Optional	All Medicaid-eligible adults within 90 days of release
Physical and behavioral clinical consultations	Optional	All Medicaid-eligible adults within 90 days of release

In addition to seeking Medicaid reimbursement for the above services, JHS submitted capacity building applications to the Washington State Healthcare Authority (HCA) to cover some project planning costs including:

- Project management and oversight
- Term-limited and special duty positions in JHS, DAJD, DCHS, and other DPH divisions
- Electronic health record enhancements and upgrades needed to support Medicaid billing
- Stipends for people with lived expertise for their time and wisdom
- Backfill and overtime for front line staff to ensure patient care is not disrupted while they participate in planning workgroups
- Contracted technical assistance with subject matter experts

- Convenings to bring cross sector leaders together for continued support and consultation

A capacity building need that is not eligible for these funds is facility expansion. JHS does not have a timeline of when the HCA will review the application or notify JHS of any award.

Councilmembers asked about potential funding sources for Reentry Demonstration Initiative participation costs not covered by HCA and Medicaid reimbursement. The Executive stated that the proposed $5 million MOUD expansion reserve in MIDD is a potential funding source, since some of the costs of complying with MOUD expansion requirements in the ADA compliance settlement overlap with the Reentry Demonstration Initiative participation costs. Otherwise, the Executive has not yet identified a funding source (see full Executive response to Question 3 below).

Councilmembers also asked about the alignment between dedicated MIDD funding and expansion of MOUD services for jail residents. According to the Executive, use of the MIDD fund for MOUD expansion reflects policy alignment and is a programmatic fit. RCW 82.14.460 authorizes the use of MIDD for operating programs that provide chemical dependency or mental health treatment or therapeutic courts and treatment alternatives. In addition to operating costs, MIDD can be used to construct and modify facilities to support delivery of chemical dependency or mental health treatment programs, as well as provide components of coordinated treatment programs such as case management, transportation, and housing. The Executive also states that use of MIDD funding for MOUD expansion is consistent with current practices, as a current MIDD initiative includes $6.6 million for MOUD services.

RESPONSE TO COUNCIL INQUIRIES

QUESTION 1: WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL 2026-2027 MIDD APPROPRIATION WOULD BE SET ASIDE FOR THE $5 MILLION RESERVE FOR MOUD EXPANSION?
ANSWER: The $5 million MOUD expansion reserve is 2.5% of the 2026-2027 MIDD allocation.

QUESTION 2: CAN THE MEDICAID WAIVER BE USED FOR SERVICES IN ADDITION TO MOUD?
ANSWER: See the table above for the services that the Reentry Demonstration Initiative would require or support.

QUESTION 3: IS MIDD A SOURCE OF FUNDING FOR COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH PARTICIPATING IN THE MEDICAID WAIVER REENTRY DEMONSTRATION INITIATIVE THAT ARE NOT REIMBURSED BY THE STATE?
ANSWER: According to the Executive, MIDD is a potential funding source. The MOUD expansion reserve in the MIDD fund could possibly be used to fund some of these costs that overlap with MOUD expansion plans required by the ADA compliance settlement. However, a final determination cannot be made until cost estimates and activities for the

reentry initiative are better known. The General Fund is one alternative funding source, but according to the Executive, the Executive would likely want to consider other eligible sustainable local funding sources due to capacity constraints on the General Fund. The Executive has not yet identified any specific local funding sources to consider.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

ANALYST: MELISSA BAILEY

	Expenditures	Revenues	FTEs	TLTs
2025 Revised Budget Biennialized	$224,034,880	$69,703,368	551.5	0.0
2026-2027 Base Budget Adjust.	$9,250,395	($109,966)	0.1	0.0
2026-2027 Decision Packages	$5,113,076	($747,377)	9.0	0.0
2026-2027 Proposed Budget	**$238,399,000**	**$68,847,000**	**560.6**	**0.0**
% Change from prior biennium, biennialized	6.4%			
Dec. Pkg. as % of prior biennium, biennialized	2.3%			

Major Revenue Sources: General Fund, state and federal funds, charges for services, and revenue through DCHS (MIDD and BH-ASO).

DESCRIPTION

The Prosecuting Attorney's Office (PAO) is responsible for the prosecution of all felony and juvenile cases in King County and all misdemeanor cases generated in unincorporated King County. The PAO also manages or participates in several programs that provide alternatives to the mainstream criminal justice system. Under agreements with the State of Washington, the PAO establishes and enforces child support obligations and is part of the mental health civil commitment process.

Additionally, the PAO serves as legal counsel to the Council, the Executive, all executive agencies, Superior and District Courts, Elections, the County Assessor, and various independent boards and commissions.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET AND CHANGES

The proposed budget would appropriate $238.4 million to the PAO, which would be a 6.4% increase from the biennialized 2025 budget. The growth is largely due to increased personnel costs reflected in the base budget.[1] Proposed decision packages total a net increase of $5.1 million ($7.2 million in expenditure increases and $2.1 million in reductions). Reductions reflect a $1.7 million vacancy rate adjustment and the removal of a vacant multi-disciplinary team coordinator position that was backed by VSHSL moneys (totaling $359,000).[2]

[1] For the 2026-2027 proposed budget, the PAO's base budget breaks down as follows: 84.3% personnel costs, 12% central rates, and 3.8% for things like contracted services and supplies.

[2] According to Executive staff, this was a position in the Elder Abuse team. DCSH now contracts the work with Aging and Disability Services (ADS) – a division of the Seattle Human Services Department. They note the move to ADS was made because it is designated by the state as the Area Agency on Aging for King County.

Of the $7.2 million in expenditure increases, about $3.3 million is for a central rate adjustment driven by increased KCIT and FMD rates. The remaining $3.9 million would support the decision packages discussed below and would be backed by a mix of General Fund and other revenue.

General Fund Supported Proposal - $2,204,429, 8.0 FTE. The Executive's proposed budget includes $2.2 million and 8.0 FTEs to be added to the PAO's budget for victim support services, which represents a portion of what the PAO requested. According to Executive staff, the Executive's proposed budget book does not detail what specific victim services this appropriation and FTE authority should be used for out of deference to the Prosecuting Attorney. The appropriation and FTE amounts align with the PAO's request for eight victim advocates for violent crimes; however, the PAO is still assessing how best to use the appropriation and FTE authority given the other victim support services requested were not funded. Table 1 provides additional information about the PAO's requests for victim services.[3]

Table 1. Victim Support Services Requested by PAO (2026-2027)

	Description	Appropriation	FTE
1.	Child interview specialists for the Children's Justice Center of King County.[4]	$721,123	2.0
2.	Advocate to assist elderly and vulnerable victims in elder abuse cases.[5]	$275,770	1.0
3.	Advocate to assist victims of the existing Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity and Competency caseload.[6]	$275,770	1.0
4.	3 advocates in the PAO's Domestic Violence Protection Order Advocacy Program (POAP) to provide direct services and one POAP navigator to connect victims and survivors to additional community-based services.	$985,463	4.0
5.	Victim advocates for violent crimes to support all victims of violent crimes and bring caseloads closer to national best practice standards (four in Seattle, four in Kent).	$2,206,162	8.0
6.	Contract with King County Sexual Assault Resource Center (KCSARC)	$400,000	0.0
	Total	**$4,864,288**	**16.0**

[3] In addition to the revenue backed decision packages, the proposed budget includes a technical revenue adjustment that assumes a decrease of about $2.0 million in revenue over the 2026-2027 biennium. This is largely driven by a reduction in PAO civil central rate revenue from non-General Fund agencies. There is also a negative revenue adjustment in the base budget of $109,966 that accounts for things like the removal of one-time revenue in 2025 (for example, state revenue for work associated with the *Blake Decision*).

[4] The PAO states these are specially trained forensic interviewers who conduct over 500 child-friendly, trauma informed interviews per year with young children, adolescents, and witnesses with special needs who have experienced or witnessed sexual or physical abuse.

[5] The PAO reports that, in 2024, Washington Adult Protective Services received about 16,000 reports of suspected abandonment, abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of elderly adults in King County.

[6] Per the PAO, there are 376 pending felony cases where the defendant has raised concerns about their mental state.

The PAO's base budget includes $7.4 million and 25.6 FTE for victim support services. Additionally, the PAO is currently using non-labor budget savings of $275,000 for contracted services with KCSARC to support child abuse victims.

Revenue-Backed Proposals - $1,624,808, 2.0 FTE. The proposed budget also includes three revenue-backed proposals:

- *General Counsel for Department of Local Services (DLS) - $740,414, 1.0 FTE.* At DLS's request, the PAO would hire a General Counsel position to provide dedicated legal services to DLS. The position will be housed in and report to the PAO but embedded in DLS as part of DLS's senior leadership team. According to Executive staff, this is the same legal service model used by King County Metro and KCSO. The position would be paid for by DLS, and there is a corresponding decision package in the DLS budget.

- *General Counsel for Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) - $554,394, 1.0 FTE.* As part of the response to a recent audit, the Executive is proposing a General Counsel position dedicated to DCHS (budgeted starting July 30, 2026).[7] The position would also be housed in and report to the PAO but embedded in DCHS as part of the department's senior leadership team. DCHS would pay for the position, and there is a corresponding decision package in the DCHS budget.

- *Blake Decision Resources - $330,000, one-time*. The proposed budget would also provide appropriation authority to continue addressing cases affected by the *State v. Blake* decision.[8] This is a one-time, revenue-backed appropriation as costs are expected to be fully reimbursed by the state. Executive staff note that this work is expected to be completed in the 2026-2027 biennium.

Unfunded Requests. Also of note, the PAO requested an additional $21.8 million and 59.0 FTEs for the 2026-2027 biennium (this includes the unfunded requests discussed in Table 1).[9] Several of these requests were also made during 2025 budget deliberations and would add staffing for things such as:

- Increased homicide caseload in the PAO's Most Dangerous Offender Project (MDOP) Unit[10] - $2.0 million, 6 FTE;
- Increased workload associated with public records requests and police video evidence - $1.5 million, 5.0 FTE;

[7] King County Auditor. *DCHS Needs to Strengthen Financial Stewardship.* (August 26, 2025). [LINK]
[8] State v. Blake, 197 Wn.2d170 (2021) found that the state's felony drug possession law was unconstitutional. As a result of Blake, all pending possession cases must be dismissed, all warrants must be quashed, and all prior convictions impacted by Blake must be vacated.
[9] The full list is available upon request. See also Prosecutor Manion's letter to PSB Director Dwight Dively dated June 27, 2025 (emailed to councilmembers on June 30, 2025).
[10] Senior Deputies in MDOP are available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day to respond to every homicide scene in King County. The responding deputy works as part of an investigation team, which includes the detectives, medical examiner, and forensic scientists. The deputy responding to the homicide scene assumes immediate responsibility for the prosecution, preparing search warrants, coordinating the efforts of law enforcement and forensic scientists, and offering legal advice to investigators. This deputy's responsibility includes the charging decision and extends to all subsequent legal proceedings from arraignment through trial to sentencing.

- Increased workload for felony traffic cases related to vehicular homicide, vehicular assault, and hit and run cases resulting in death - $1.3 million, 4.0 FTE; and
- Case development specialists to work on commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking cases - $629,228, 2.0 FTE.[11]

According to Executive staff, the decision to exclude these requests was made based on the state of the General Fund and not on the merit of any proposal.

KEY ISSUES

Staff have not identified any key issues for this appropriation unit.

RESPONSE TO COUNCIL INQUIRIES

Question 1: Has the Prosecuting Attorney shared her highest priorities for the 2026-2027 Biennial Budget? Where does she see the highest return on investment?
Answer: The Prosecuting Attorney provided the following response:

Priority 1: Juvenile ERPOs – 4 FTEs
Here are just a few *recent* case summaries where the PAO's ERPO team successfully intervened when a juvenile had access to firearms and was also believed to be in danger of causing harm to self or others:

- A juvenile in King County acquired a firearm while in another state. The juvenile accidentally shot himself in the hand. Law enforcement (LE) sought an ERPO. The juvenile's father appeared in court and took the matter very seriously and the firearm, along with another firearm legally owned by the father were both secured/locked up.
- As part of the PAO's Safer Schools Initiative, a school district reached out to the PAO's Juvenile Division regarding concerns about a juvenile, and a Senior DPA connected with the school district's school resource officer (SRO). The SRO shared that this juvenile was on his radar screen because in 2024 he brought a loaded magazine to school. The SRO went to the father's home. Father admitted to having a firearm, but could not easily find it. CPS was contacted and the SRO stayed until the father found and secured his firearm. Flash forward to 2025, this same juvenile posted concerning statements online and changed his online profile to reference a mass shooting. Law enforcement got an ERPO that was served on the juvenile and the parents. The juvenile has been referred to services and counseling.

[11] While this request has been made in previous years, the PAO updated it this year by requesting case development specialists rather than attorney positions. The PAO states the change was made to lower the cost of the request and better reflect the needs of the program.

- Just this week a juvenile Unlawful Possession of a Firearm case came to local law enforcement's attention. They petitioned the court for an ERPO and a hearing was scheduled.
- Another local law enforcement agency learned of a young person in possession of a 3-D printer "lower receivers". LE sought an ERPO, the juvenile's mother came to court, thanked the judge, and is taking this matter seriously.
- Local LE is working on an ERPO petition for a juvenile who has been accused of kidnapping, but is not in custody. LE believes the juvenile has access to firearms. The ERPO, if granted, will be served on the juvenile's father who has admitted, in previous discussions with LE that he has a firearm.

For the juvenile ERPOs, school threats/violent ideology/threats of mass violence are of special concern. Since 2025, the PAO has received at least six ERPO petitions relating to mass violence/violent ideology/threats of mass violence. One case overlaps with one of the examples listed above – that case is highlighted in yellow.

- King County Sheriff's Office v. S
- Snoqualmie Police Department v. PO (search warrant also done for possession of explosives- no explosives recovered)
- Renton Police Department v. ODC (full ERPO pending with a hearing on Tuesday, September 30th)
- Bellevue Police Department v. ME (ERPO renewal filed this year- juvenile in possession of ammunition at school and concerning school search history)
- Bothell Police Department v. HI
- Bellevue PD v. U (anticipate filing this juvenile ERPO today, but we are still waiting for the ERPO petition from Bellevue PD)

As of September 30, there have been 106 ERPOs filed in 2025 (so far). The vast majority of the 106 have been for adult ERPOs. The PAO's juvenile ERPO pilot started in July. It has taken some weeks to get the word out to LE. In September there were 15 juvenile firearm referrals from law enforcement to the PAO, up from just three law enforcement referrals (for juvenile firearm cases) in August. The PAO's ERPO team is actively consulting with law enforcement on the September referrals to see if a juvenile ERPO is appropriate.

Here is the Juvenile ERPO request as it appears in the **PAO's 2026-27 Budget Submittal**:

Extreme Risk Protection Orders to Address Juvenile Gun Violence – 4 FTEs

For the first six months of 2025, there have been 140 juvenile referrals (to the PAO) from law enforcement where there is some indication that a firearm was involved. It is unlawful for juveniles to possess firearms, and when a juvenile is caught with a gun, it should prompt swift action and intervention. Under current state law, it takes *five* successful adjudications (i.e. convictions) of Unlawful Possession of a Firearm (UPFA)

before a juvenile is eligible for state Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) sanctions and intervention.

Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs) allow for swift, *civil* interventions to remove firearms from dangerous situations. With appropriate law enforcement or family reports, the PAO can quickly seek the removal of firearms from individuals, including children, who pose a risk to themselves or others. ERPOs involving juveniles are served on their parents/guardians to remove firearms from their homes.

The PAO respectfully requests one (1) investigator/paralegal, one (1) DPA, and two (2) King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) Deputies (added to the KCSO's budget) to allow the PAO, working in partnership with law enforcement, to seek an ERPO in all appropriate juvenile cases involving a firearm. ERPOs are meaningful tools that can help interrupt gun violence and help protect juveniles from becoming victims or perpetrators of harm.

Priority 2: Safer Schools Strategy – 1 FTE

The PAO's Safer Schools Strategy serves youth and families by creating safer learning environments in all parts of King County. It also serves to reduce juvenile gun violence in schools in all parts of King County by working directly with school districts to conduct individual threat assessments for school-based incidents involving firearms. In its first six months, Safer Schools addressed 100 concerning firearm incidents at schools throughout King County. It also works to improve school attendance, which is a critical protective factor in keeping juveniles out of the justice system. 85% of juveniles charged with firearm offenses have experienced disrupted school attendance. Keeping kids safely in school is a cost-effective crime prevention strategy and increases juvenile protective factors. For every 10% increase in high school graduation rates, there is a corresponding 9% reduction in arrest rates for young adults.

The Juvenile Division Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney (DPA) currently leading our Safer Schools Strategy also carries a caseload of 55 serious juvenile felony cases. The PAO respectfully requests 1 new, dedicated DPA to serve as the single point of contact, working directly with law enforcement and *all* 18 school districts in King County to assist with threat assessments, to staff high-risk cases, and to develop school safety plans in all parts of King County.

Here is the direct language from the PAO's 2026-27 Budget Submittal:

The PAO's "Safer Schools Strategy" serves to reduce juvenile gun violence and creates safer learning environments for all King County children. As part of Safer Schools, the PAO works directly with law enforcement and school districts to conduct individual threat assessments for school-based incidents involving firearms. In its first six months, Safer Schools addressed 100 concerning firearm incidents at schools throughout King County.

Safer Schools also works to improve attendance by fostering school-based interventions at multiple levels. 85% of juveniles charged with firearm offenses have experienced disrupted school attendance. Keeping kids safely in school is a cost-effective crime prevention strategy and increases juvenile protective factors. For every 10% increase in high school graduation rates, there is a corresponding 9% reduction in arrest rates for young adults.

The PAO respectfully requests to expand Safer Schools by adding one (1) new *dedicated* DPA to serve as the single point of contact, working directly with law enforcement and all *18* school districts in King County to assist with threat assessments, to staff high-risk cases, and to develop school safety plans.

Priority 3: Public Records Act and Police Video Evidence – 5 FTEs

The PAO has been requesting body worn camera paralegals for at least four years, and this request has been repeatedly denied. Police in-car and body worn camera video demonstrate King County's *commitment to fairness and accountability* in policing, but this technology is ineffective without the critical resources necessary to review, redact, and share these important records with the public and defense attorneys, as required by the Constitution and state law. The PAO's 2026-27 Budget Submittal provides some additional context that explains how critical these positions are.

Here is the direct language from the PAO's 2026-27 Budget Submittal:

In 2024, the PAO responded to 1,921 separate requests for public records. In addition, the PAO is constitutionally mandated to review and organize evidence relating to police videos and other records and then disseminate them to defense attorneys within strict court deadlines. DPD does not have this responsibility.

Police video evidence and discovery is more time-intensive to review than any other record because it must be reviewed frame by frame. A five-minute video typically includes 9,000 frames.

One recent homicide case had 80 separate police in car videos, 75 separate police body worn camera videos, 848 photos, and 1,085 additional images and electronic evidence. This is in addition to the thousands of pages of police reports, witness statements, and other paper-type documents that are also part of this case.

Police in-car and body worn camera video demonstrate King County's commitment to fairness and accountability in policing, but this technology is ineffective without the critical resources necessary to review, redact, and share these important records with the public and defense attorneys, as required by the Constitution and state law.

The PAO respectfully requests two (2) public records specialists and three (3) paralegals[12] to address the continued increase in public record requests and criminal case discovery relating to police body-worn camera and other video evidence.

Priority 4: ICAC – 2 FTEs and Human Trafficking – 2 FTEs

The PAO has one Senior DPA dedicated to the prosecution of Internet crimes against children (ICAC), where adults systematically and intentionally lure, groom, sexually solicit, and sexually exploit children online. She has a current caseload of 136 filed cases. That is far too many. The PAO respectfully requests two (2) additional DPAs so that each would carry a more manageable caseload of 45.

In King County, an estimated 500-700 *children* are forced into sex work each year. *Every day*, approximately 300 people buy sex along Aurora Avenue, which is often recognized as the second busiest buying "track" in the United States. Traffickers in Seattle and King County boast online about lax accountability and continue to openly harm the victims they have coerced into sex work.[13] Recently, law enforcement shared reports of traffickers dragging teenage girls by their hair and running over them with cars.

The PAO has requested two (2) case development specialists to assist law enforcement in their investigation and identification of the individuals working to exploit and abuse victims. Every investigation requires multiple search warrants to gather evidence from social media, cellphone extractions, and surveillance to corroborate victims' experiences, and most investigations include the review of thousands of pages of financial records and other digital material. Without adequate resources to tackle these serious and heartbreaking crimes, vulnerable victims will continue to suffer at the hands of pimps and traffickers who exploit them for profit.

Here is the direct language from the PAO's 2026-27 Budget Submittal:

Internet Crimes Against Children – 2 FTEs

Internet crimes against children (ICAC) encompass a range of offenses aided and facilitated by technology, including child sexual exploitation, online grooming, sexual solicitation, and the distribution of child sexual abuse material.

Reports of suspected internet crimes against children in Washington increased by 250% between 2019-2023. One in three minors experience an unwelcome sexual experience online before they turn 18. The number of child enticement cases in Washington increased by 76% from 2022 to 2023.

[12] The PAO has been requesting paralegal resources to address police video evidence since 2018. The PAO's requests have been repeatedly denied.

[13] https://www.instagram.com/g.a.m.e365llc/reel/DKldFr5RW9l/

The PAO currently has one DPA dedicated solely to the prosecution of ICAC cases. This DPA has a current caseload of 130 filed cases, which far exceeds the caseload of *any* DPD attorney.

The PAO respectfully requests two (2) additional DPAs to assist with the existing ICAC caseload, which will result in each DPA handling 43 cases – still far more than any DPD attorney representing the defendants in these cases. Victims of internet crimes are often traumatized for years because images of sexual exploitation remain on the Internet often for decades, and they deserve the timely resolution of cases. The resources allocated to the prosecution of those who have victimized children should more closely match those invested to defend the individuals accused of these crimes.

The PAO has one Senior DPA dedicated to the prosecution of Internet crimes against children (ICAC) crimes, where adults systematically and intentionally lure, groom, sexually solicit, and sexually exploit children online. She now has a current caseload of 136 filed cases. That is far too many. I requested two (2) additional DPAs so that each would carry a caseload of 45, but even one (1) additional DPA would be welcomed capacity.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking – 2 FTEs

In King County, an estimated 500-700 *children* are forced into sex work each year. *Every day*, approximately 300 people buy sex along Aurora Avenue, which is often recognized as the second busiest buying "track" in the United States. Traffickers in Seattle and King County boast online about lax accountability and continue to openly harm the victims they have coerced into sex work.[14] Recently, law enforcement shared reports of traffickers dragging teenage girls by their hair and running over them with cars.

Victims and survivors of sex trafficking are often first exploited as teenagers. Most have experienced (or are experiencing) poverty, homelessness, and/or foster care. Victims are disproportionately BIPOC and LGBTQ+. Victims and survivors suffer from trauma, and many suffer from substance use and/or mental health disorders – 68% meet the criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) at levels as severe as those suffered by combat veterans and victims of state torture.

The PAO respectfully requests two (2) case development specialists to assist law enforcement in their investigation and identification of the individuals working to exploit and abuse victims. Every investigation requires multiple search warrants to gather evidence from social media, cellphone extractions, and surveillance to corroborate victims' experiences, and most investigations include the review of thousands of pages of financial records and other digital material.

Without adequate funding to tackle these serious and heartbreaking crimes, vulnerable victims will continue to suffer in the hands of pimps and traffickers who exploit them for profit.

Priority 5: Vehicular Homicide and Vehicular Assault – 4 FTEs

The PAO's three (3) vehicular assault and vehicular homicide DPAs each carry a caseload of 30-78 *filed* cases – each case involving a victim who has been severely injured or maimed as the result of impaired and/or reckless driving involving extremely high speed or a survivor who has suffered the devasting loss of a loved one in a fatal collision. This caseload is too high. It takes longer than it should to resolve these cases, whether by plea or by trial. Victims are not receiving the amount of support they need and are deserving of. The PAO has asked for four (4) FTEs (2 DPAs and 2 Paralegals) to address these serious and significant cases, which impact individuals in all parts of King County.

Here is the direct language from the PAO's 2026-27 Budget Submittal:

There has been an alarming increase in vehicular homicides and serious injury vehicular assault crashes throughout Washington State. In King County in 2022, there were 151 vehicular fatalities (a 94% increase compared to 2013) and 709 serious injury crashes (a 561% increase compared to 2014).

The PAO's Felony Traffic Unit currently has 136 open homicide and assault cases, yet only three (3) DPAs to handle these serious cases. Each DPA currently carries a caseload of more than 45 cases, which far exceeds the caseload of any DPD attorney. In fact, DPD often assigns two attorneys to most vehicular homicide cases.

These serious crimes represent devastating losses for families, leave victims contending with serious and often lifelong injuries, and disproportionately impact communities of color. Victims and surviving family members in these cases deserve justice and the timely resolution of their cases. Victims should not be penalized or denied timely justice simply because the PAO lacks sufficient resources to match those allocated to defense.

The PAO respectfully requests two (2) DPAs and (2) paralegals to right size this caseload so that each DPA is assigned 27 cases instead of 45 (27 cases is still far more than any DPD attorney handling homicide or serious assault cases).

Question 1 (second half): Where does the Prosecuting Attorney see the highest return on investment?

According to the Prosecuting Attorney - There are many ways to measure return on investment for the criminal justice system and its outcomes. For example, one may choose to measure recidivism, the reduction of gun violence, the number of victims or families served, the number of cases filed or resolved, the amount of fentanyl seized from traffickers, or a community's sense of safety. The PAO's 2026-27 budget request

reflects our many resource needs. However, our priority areas may not be the same as budget requests ranked by order of return on investment – depending on what Council is using to determine value or return. The PAO is happy to discuss this question further, but some clarifying information would be helpful.

Question 2: Request report back on where and how much funding is dedicated to victim support services or advocacy/crime survivor supports through the budget.

Answer: For an initial response, council staff pulled together the information in Table 2 below; however, this is an estimate from budget materials and implementation plans. PSB is in the process of confirming actual appropriation amounts assumed in the 2026-2027 proposed budget. Staff can provide an updated table once more information is received but Table 2 should provide a sense of County investments in victim support services.

Another note, Table 2 focuses on programs serving victims. There are some programs that serve both individuals involved in the criminal legal system and victims. Since it was not possible to determine what percentage of those appropriations served victims, the table below did not include them. Examples of those programs from 2025 include the Regional Office of Gun Violence Prevention in DPH and Restorative Community Pathways (now KC Youth Diversion and Intervention) and Family Intervention and Restorative Services (FIRS) in DCHS.

Table 2. Victim Support Services – Estimate for the 2026-2027 Biennium[15]

Agency	Fund/Levy Strategy	Program	2026-2027 Biennium
Victim Services			
PAO	General Fund	Victim Assistance Unit	$7,417,883
DCHS-CSO	General Fund	CSO Contracts - Domestic Violence Survivor Services	$3,277,325
DCHS-CSO	General Fund	CSO Contracts - Sexual Assault Victim Services	$1,616,555
DCHS	MIDD PRI-09	Sexual Assault Behavioral Health Services	$1,757,442
DCHS	MIDD PRI-10	Domestic Violence and Behavioral Health Services & System Coordination	$2,067,045
DCHS	MIDD CD-08	Children's Domestic Violence Response Team	$748,823
DCHS	VSHSL SS3	Consolidated Domestic Violence Hotline	$1,863,000
DCHS	VSHSL SS4	Gender-Based Violence Specialized System Navigation and Mobile Advocacy	$6,041,000
DCHS	VSHSL HL 10	Countywide Gender-Based Violence and Trafficking Prevention	$3,089,000

[15] PAO information is from the base budget document for the 2026-2027 Proposed Budget (and confirmed with the PAO) – it does not include the $2.2 million decision package for victim support services in the Executive's Proposed Budget; DCHS CSO contract information from 2026-2027 Proposed Budget materials; MIDD information from 2026-2027 agency proposed budget materials; and VSHSL information are estimates in the levy implementation plan.

Agency	Fund/Levy Strategy	Program	2026-2027 Biennium
DCHS	VSHSL HL 11	Elder Abuse Multi-Disciplinary Team	$857,000
		Total	**$28,735,073**

KING COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

ANALYST: MELISSA BAILEY

	Expenditures	Revenues	FTEs	TLTs
2025 Revised Budget Biennialized	$140,474,846	$11,288,910	320.9	0.5
2026-2027 Base Budget Adjust.	$2,197,175	($301,206)	0.5	(0.5)
2026-2027 Decision Packages	$8,893,160	$768,571	7.0	0.0
2026-2027 Proposed Budget	**$151,566,000**	**$11,757,000**	**328.0[1]**	**0.0**
% Change from prior biennium, biennialized	7.9%			
Dec. Pkg. as % of prior biennium, biennialized	6.3%			

Major Revenue Sources: General Fund, MIDD, BH-ASO, state and federal funds, and service fees.

DESCRIPTION

King County Superior Court is Washington State's largest general jurisdiction trial court. Superior Court currently has 56 judges, each elected to four-year terms by the voters of King County or, in the event of a vacancy, appointed by the Governor. Under the Washington State Constitution and State statute, Superior Court has responsibility for felony criminal cases, civil matters involving more than $300, unlawful detainers, injunctions, family law cases, probate and guardianship matters, juvenile offender cases, juvenile dependency cases, and mental illness and involuntary commitment matters. Superior Court manages or participates in three MIDD-funded therapeutic court programs: Family Treatment Court, King County Adult Drug Diversion Court, and Juvenile Therapeutic Response and Accountability Court (formerly known as the Juvenile Drug Court).

Superior Court operates at four sites: the King County Courthouse, the Judge Patricia H. Clark Children and Family Justice Center (CCFJC), and the Harborview Medical Center (specific to Involuntary Treatment Act Court) in Seattle, and the Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET AND CHANGES

The proposed budget would appropriate $151.6 million to the Superior Court, which would be an $11.2 million, or 7.9%, increase from the biennialized 2025 revised budget.

[1] The Executive's Proposed 2026-2027 Budget Book shows two different FTE numbers (328.4 FTE and 332.4 FTE). The 332.4 FTE is the number for the proposed ordinance as it reflects the maximum number of FTEs needed for the biennium. The 328.4 FTE number shows the number of FTEs in December 2027 (4.0 FTE positions are only funded for six month and do not show up in the December 2027 FTE count).

The increase is the result of a $2.2 million base budget adjustment, largely due to inflationary increases in personnel costs, and a net increase of $8.9 million from proposed decision packages ($9.4 million of increased expenditures and a $507,000 reduction to capture salary savings from employee turnover).[2] Of the $9.4 million increase, about $4.1 million, or 43%, is due to central rate adjustments (primarily increased FMD rates), and $5.3 million would go toward the decisions packages discussed below – supported by a mix of General Fund and other revenue.[3]

General Fund Supported Proposals

Juvenile Probation Counselors - $959,576, 3.0 FTE. The 2025 Budget added five juvenile probation counselors (JPCs) to Juvenile Court.[4] Despite the addition of these positions, Superior Court states that Juvenile Court remains understaffed and requested the Executive include five new JPCS in the 2026-2027 budget. According to the Court, juvenile offender filings and the commensurate workload continue to increase year-over-year (from 210 juvenile felony filings in 2021 to 692 in 2024), and JPCs are carrying workloads over best practice levels. Budget materials submitted by Superior Court estimate that by the end of 2025 the Court may be understaffed by six JPCs and that could rise to nine JPCs by the end of the 2026-2027 biennium. The Executive proposed appropriation and FTE authority for three new JPCs.

JPC positions are primarily supported by the General Fund; however, there are some positions supported by MIDD and some by grants. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the JPC positions included in the 2026-2027 base budget.

Table 1. Juvenile Probation Counselors in the 2026-2027 Base Budget

Position	General Fund	MIDD	Grants	Total
Juvenile Probation Counselors (JPC)	25	6	2	**33**
JPC Leads	1	1	3	**5**
JPC Supervisors	3	2	1	**6**
Total	**29**	**9**	**6**	**44**

Superior Court reports that, as of July 2025, the total monthly caseload was 700 cases, and Juvenile Court Services projects caseloads will continue to exceed best practice levels even with the addition of three new JPCs. Additionally, Superior Court states that their request for additional JPCs was made prior to the announcement of the new King

[2] Breakdown of Superior Court's 2026-2027 base budget: 67.9% personnel costs, 21.6% central rates, and 10.5% supplies and services. As of September 12, 2025, Superior Court has 8.0 vacant positions.
[3] The Superior Court's budget also makes a technical revenue adjustment of $372,593 million to more accurately reflect projected revenue to be collected over the biennium (such as adjusting contract revenue to known/finalized contract amounts). No fee changes are included in this revenue adjustment.
[44] Two of the JPCs added in 2025 were created using existing FTE authority and savings from the conversion of an administrative assistant position and a juvenile probation supervisor position.

County Youth Diversion Initiative and the changes in eligibility for DCHS youth diversion. Felony cases that the PAO previously diverted to the former Restorative Community Pathways program are now being filed in Juvenile Court and assigned a JPC. Superior Court asserts this will result in an increase in JPC caseloads.

Unlawful Detainer Court Commissioner and Court Coordinator - $797,780, 2.0 FTE.[5] Given recent changes in State law, Superior Court is now able to use a housing court commissioner to support unlawful detainer matters (eviction cases).[6] The Court is proposing to add one commissioner and one court coordinator in the 2026-2027 biennium. According to the Court, the addition of a housing court commissioner would help address eviction cases and alleviate pressure on the Ex Parte department.

The 2025 Budget included two new judge positions (and relevant support staff) dedicated to unlawful detainer cases.[7] Currently, the Ex Parte commissioners handle the first appearance Unlawful Detainer (ULD) calendar, and the two judicial officers handle the second ULD appearance calendars. Superior Court's intent is to remove the ULD work from Ex Parte, which has been overwhelmed with civil protection orders. Per the Court, all three constitutional commissioners are needed to address initial orders for civil protection order cases as well as emergency motions. The new housing court commissioner would be dedicated to unlawful detainer cases.

Table 2 shows the total number of unlawful detainer cases and the monthly average per year for the last two and a half years.

Table 2. Unlawful Detainer Cases in Superior Court

Unlawful Detainer Cases	2023	2024	Jan-Aug 2025
Total Filings	4,542	7,779	6,093
Monthly Average Filings	379	648	762

According to Superior Court, the addition of the two judges in 2025 has increased their ability to clear cases despite increased filings. In 2024, the Court averaged 595 dispositions and, from January to August of 2025, they averaged 846 dispositions. They also noted a significant reduction in the pending caseload with the monthly average decreasing from 2,268 cases in 2024 to 1,523 cases as of August 2025. Furthermore, the December 2024 pending caseload was 2,177 cases and at the end of August 2025 it was 1,235 cases.

[5] It is standard practice to provide a commissioner with one court coordinator (in Superior Court) and three clerk administrative specialists (CAS) in the Department of Judicial Administration (DJA). Thus, DJA's proposed budget includes a related request for three CAS positions.
[6] Chapter 268, Laws of Washington 2025
[7] These positions were recommended by the Protocol Committee (see K.C.C. 2A.320.510 and Report 2024-RPT0135). The Council adopted Ordinance 19885 approving the 55th and 56th judge positions of Superior Court.

Increase Interpreter Rates - $525,000, ongoing. Superior Court and the Executive are proposing to increase the rates paid to interpreters. Budget materials note this increase would raise the rates paid by Superior Court to match those paid by municipal courts. The hourly rates would change as follows:

- Administrative Office of the Court (AOC) Certified Interpreters and AOC Registered Interpreters would increase $10 per hour from $65 to $75; and
- Non-credentialed interpreters would increase $5 per hour from $60 to $65.

Guardian Ad Litem Attorney (GAL) for Dependency Matters - $366,784, 1.0 FTE. Superior Court requested two GAL attorney positions. The Executive's proposed budget would provide appropriation and FTE authority for one. Superior Court notes that state law mandates the appointment of a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) or GAL for children in certain cases (dependency, termination, or Title 13 guardianship cases).[8] The Court reports that, in King County, there are about 354 children who are statutorily entitled to an advocate and have an appointment ordered but are pending assignment of an available CASA or staff GAL. Currently, the Court does not have a dedicated GAL attorney and estimates that the current backlog could be reduced by 45-50 cases per year by adding 1.0 FTE GAL attorney.

Becca Program Staff - $335,755, one-time. The legislature cut State funding for the Becca program[9] during the 2025 legislative session. According to Executive staff, the legislature is expected to restore the funding during the 2026 legislative session, so the Executive's budget proposes to use General Fund moneys to support existing Becca program positions in Superior Court (4.0 FTEs) for the first six months of 2026 (until the state funding would be reinstated). Executive staff note this would avoid the need to lay off staff.

These staff provide court coordination, case and calendar management, intervention service referral, crisis intervention, and re-engagement support. The Court states that, without these staff, petitions will continue to be filed but there will be no wraparound or prevention support for the youth or their families.[10] If the State does not reinstate the funding for these positions during the upcoming legislative session, Superior Court would propose continuing the use of the General Fund to support the positions and would make a related request in a proposed 2026 budget omnibus.

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[8] RCW 13.34.100

[9] Becca cases refer to certain types of petitions under the state Family Reconciliation Act (Chapter 13.32A RCW), including: At-Risk Youth (ARY) petitions, when a parent files a petition with juvenile court to get help in the care and control of a child; Child In Need of Services (CHINS) petitions, when a child, parent, or a representative from the state Department of Children, Youth, and Families files a petition to temporarily place the child outside of the parent's home due to a serious conflict; and Truancy petitions, when a student has seven or more unexcused absences a month from school, the school must file a petition in juvenile court. If the student continues to be absent, they may be found in contempt.

[10] The Court reports that, in 2024, King County received 72 ARY petitions, 18 CHINS petitions, and 1,570 Truancy petitions. For the 2024-2025 school year, 1,414 Truancy hearings were scheduled (156% increase from the previous school year). Of these, 81 had Contempt hearings scheduled (also a 156% increase from the previous school year).

Increase Hourly Rate for Contract Staff in Guardianship Cases - $1,080,000 [$385,000, revenue-backed]. Superior Court is proposing to increase the hourly rate paid to GALs, court visitors, and attorneys in adult and minor guardianship cases. It would be an additional cost of nearly $1.1 million a biennium, partially offset by $385,000 in revenue from the state.

Superior Court currently pays $70 per hour for these contracted positions, which they note is the lowest rate in the state (state average is $95 per hour for GALs and court visitors and $128 per hour for attorneys). Based on a recommendation from the Minor Guardianship Committee,[11] Superior Court is proposing to increase the hourly rate paid to GALs, court visitors, attorneys for adult guardianship cases, and attorneys for a child in minor guardship cases to $100 per hour. They are also proposing to increase the hourly rate paid to attorneys for parents in a minor guardianship case to $175 per hour. Superior Court states this recommendation is in response to the scarcity of parent attorneys for minor guardship cases and the delays it creates for children and families.

Fully Revenue-Backed Proposals.

There are also several decision packages fully backed by revenue from the State. There is a technical adjustment to reflect increased State revenue for interpreter services ($300,000). Additionally, the following would be supported by moneys managed in the DCHS Behavioral Health – Administrative Services Organization (BH-ASO) fund to support the Involuntary Treatment Act (ITA) Court:

- *Guardian Ad Litem Costs in ITA Court - $600,000, fully revenue-backed.* Superior Court reports that the use of GALs in ITA Court has substantially increased over the last several years and associated annual cost has increased from $78,000 in 2019 to $300,000 in 2024. Superior Court states it is no longer able to absorb these costs. Other significant ITA Court-related costs (such as staffing and interpretation costs) are reimbursed by the BH-ASO fund, so Superior Court and the Executive are proposing to add GAL costs in ITA Court to that list, which would serve as an offset to the General Fund. The proposed budget estimates $300,000 per year; however, only actual costs would be reimbursed.

- *ITA Court Coordinator - $264,166, 1.0 FTE, fully revenue-backed.*[12] ITA Court currently has one court coordinator, so the proposed budget would double staffing to two coordinators. Superior Court notes this request is in response to the growing workload in ITA Court related to a rise in mental health facilities in King County accepting long-term transfer cases from state facilities, an increase

[11] Superior Court notes this is an ad hoc internal work group that has been working through procedural issues associated with minor guardianships. Note, these are family law cases where guardianship needs to be determined.

[12] The Executive Proposed 2026-27 Budget Book shows a slight difference in revenue and expenditures for this decision package; however, Executive staff confirm differences are due to technical rounding issues.

in crisis services, and new legislation to include more drug and alcohol concerns into ITA Court.

- *Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) Coordinator - $187,474, 0.5 FTE, fully revenue-backed.*[13] The 2025 Budget provided Superior Court with appropriation and 0.5 FTE authority to support a new AOT program in ITA Court. The program is a partnership between the PAO, DPD, and Superior Court and backed by State revenue managed in the BH-ASO fund. The proposed budget would increase Superior Court's FTE authority from 0.5 FTE to 1.0 FTE, fully backed by State revenue.

Regarding revenue changes, there is also a decision package that shows a one-time $1.4 million decrease in MIDD revenue for the Family Intervention Restorative Services (FIRS) program in 2026. Executive staff clarified that the proposal would not have an operational impact on FIRS as the program would be supported by the General Fund in 2026. The intent of the proposal is to provide temporary support for the MIDD fund and mitigate MIDD program reductions in 2026-2027. They also note the reduction is not reflective of any longer-term funding decisions related to FIRS.

Unfunded Requests. Superior Court made several additional requests that ultimately were not included in the Executive's proposed budget due to the state of the General Fund. In addition to the 1.0 FTE for a GAL attorney and 2.0 FTE for JPCs that were not funded, the Executive's proposed budget does not include:

- An additional family law commissioner and court coordinator, and
- 6.0 FTE positions to support court operations (such as IT and cyber security personnel, a floating bailiff at the CCFJC, an Ex Parte coordinator, a courtroom training specialist, and a staff person to assist with state requirements that juvenile justice involved youth be screened for commercial sexual abuse of a minor).

KEY ISSUES

ISSUE 1 – COURT COMMISSIONER POSITION

Per state law, Superior Court may only create the housing court commissioner position with prior approval from the Council. Additionally, the County Code establishes a "Protocol Committee" responsible for making recommendations to the Council and Executive on any changes to the number of Superior Court judges or commissioners.[14] The Protocol Committee was not convened prior to making this budget request; however, Superior Court and Executive staff are in the process of pulling the Protocol Committee together to discuss court staffing and follow the process outlined in the

[13] The Executive Proposed 2026-27 Budget Book notes that the expenditure amount and 0.5 FTE were inadvertently added into the base budget and are not reflected in the decision package totals.
[14] K.C.C. 2A.320.510

County Code. They believe a recommendation can be transmitted to the Council prior to a final vote on the budget ordinance.

Additionally, the Council would need to act on an ordinance approving the creation of the new court commissioner.[15] The Executive did not transmit such an ordinance along with the proposed 2026-2027 Budget; however, legislation was introduced earlier this year and could be taken up with the other legislation accompanying the budget.[16]

[15] For reference, the council adopted a similar ordinance in 2010 (Ordinance 16819).
[16] Proposed Ordinance 2025-0186

DEPARTMENT OF JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

ANALYST: MELISSA BAILEY

	Expenditures	Revenues	FTEs	TLTs
2025 Revised Budget Biennialized	$67,319,400	$28,287,730	198.9	0.0
2026-2027 Base Budget Adjust.	$1,106,159	($1,120,154)	0.0	0.0
2026-2027 Decision Packages	$2,424,824	$2,797,280	7.0	0.0
2026-2027 Proposed Budget	**$70,851,000**	**$29,965,000**	**207.9[1]**	**000.0**
% Change from prior biennium, biennialized	5.2%			
Dec. Pkg. as % of prior biennium, biennialized	3.6%			

Major Revenue Sources: General Fund, state and federal funding, fines and fees, and revenue through DCHS (MIDD and BH-ASO Funds).

DESCRIPTION

The Department of Judicial Administration (DJA) is more commonly known to the public as the Superior Court Clerk's Office or the Clerk's Office. The department is part of the executive branch and all DJA personnel are executive branch employees; however, it is administered by the Superior Court Clerk who is appointed by a majority of the Superior Court judges. The department is responsible for:

- Receiving, maintaining, and providing access to Superior Court records;
- Handling receipt, disbursement, and trust accounting for all fees, fines, and payments made in Superior Court cases;
- Providing customer assistance, including two protection order offices; and
- Managing the King County Adult Drug Diversion Court.[2]

DJA operates three Clerk's Office locations to facilitate public access and customer support: the King County Courthouse and the Judge Patricia H. Clark Children and Family Justice Center in Seattle, and the Norm Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent. General Fund support for the King County Law Library, an independent entity with its own Board of Trustees, is budgeted in the DJA budget.

[1] The Executive's Proposed 2026-2027 Budget Book shows two different FTE numbers (205.9 FTE and 207.9 FTE). The 207.9 FTE is the number for the proposed ordinance as it reflects the maximum number of FTEs needed for the biennium. The 205.9 FTE number shows the number of FTEs in December 2027 (2.0 FTE positions are only funded for six month and do not show up in the December 2027 FTE count).
[2] King County Charter 350.20.20 and K.C.C. 2.16.171.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET AND CHANGES

The proposed budget would appropriate $70.9 million to DJA for the 2026-2027 biennium, which is an increase of $3.5 million (5.2%) from the biennialized 2025 revised budget. The increase is the result of a $1.1 million base budget adjustment largely reflecting increased personnel costs[3] and a $2.4 million net increase from decision packages ($3.2 million of increased expenditures and a $786,000 reduction to capture salary savings from employee turnover). Of the $3.2 million increase, about half is due to higher central rate costs (primarily related to KCIT and FMD rates), and the other half would largely cover costs discussed in the decision packages below.

General Fund Backed Proposals – $1,177,944, 7.0 FTE

- *Clerk Administrative Specialists – $701,087, 3.0 FTE*. These positions would support the new court commissioner for unlawful detainer cases proposed in the Superior Court budget.[4] It is standard practice for DJA to receive three clerk administrative specialists for every new judicial officer added. These positions would only need to be added if the new court commissioner is added.

- *Clerk Administrative Specialist Floater positions – $0, 3.0 FTE.* DJA is requesting to add FTE authority for three clerk administrative specialist positions and proposes to fund the positions with salary savings from staff using unpaid leave. According to budget documents, DJA has experienced a significant increase in staff being out on unpaid leave, which has made it challenging to ensure all courts and Clerk's Office locations are properly staffed and docketing is completed within required timeframes.[5]

- *Senior Human Resource Analyst – $361,799, 1.0 FTE.* DJA currently has one HR position supporting over 200 employees. Budget materials note that comparably sized departments have two to four HR staff to support their operations. This position would manage recruitment and selection processes, facilitate and assist in the administration of federal leave laws and required accommodation processes, and assist in processing personnel transactions such as new employee paperwork and reclassification requests. DJA has requested assistance from DHR, but DHR has lacked the resources to provide support. This position would be housed in DJA.

[3] DJA's overall base budget is about 75.8% personnel, 14.1% central rates, 9% contracted services (such as contracts for Adult Drug Court and copier leases), and 1% other/non-labor costs. As of October 1, DJA has eleven vacant positions, five of which have been backfilled.

[4] Clerk administrative specialists provide clerk services such as documenting court proceedings and ensuring accuracy of the court record, managing For the Record (FTR) technology and presented exhibits, and quality checking documents and orders presented in court. They also provide customer service to all parties and attorneys.

[5] According to DJA, the use of unpaid leave has increased from an average of one clerk administrative specialist (CAS) out at any given time in 2020 and 2021 to three or four CAS out on unpaid leave at any given time in 2023 and 2024. Total CAS leave usage (paid and unpaid) has increased from an average of three FTE on leave at any given time to ten FTE on leave at any given time.

- *Becca Program Staff – $115,058, one-time.* The legislature cut state funding for the Becca program[6] during the 2025 legislative session. Superior Court and the Executive expected the legislature to restore the funding during the 2026 legislative session, so the Executive's budget proposes to use General Fund moneys to support existing Becca program positions (2.0 FTEs) for the first six months of 2026 (until the state funding would be reinstated). Executive staff note this would avoid the need to lay off staff.

  These are clerk administrative specialists who support the processing of Becca cases and clerk the matters in the courtroom. DJA is legally required to process the cases. If the State does not reinstate the funding for these positions during the upcoming legislative session, Superior Court and DJA would propose continuing the use of the General Fund to support the positions and would make a request for the Executive to consider in a proposed 2026 budget omnibus.

Revenue-Backed Proposal – $473,844

- *Blake Decision Resources – $473,844, revenue-backed.* The proposed budget would also provide appropriation authority to continue addressing cases affected by the *State v. Blake* decision.[7] This is a one-time, revenue-backed appropriation as costs are expected to be fully reimbursed by the state.

In addition to the revenue assumed for work related to the *Blake Decision*, the proposed budget includes a technical revenue adjustment of nearly $2.2 million to reflect updated revenue projections[8] and $150,000 of added revenue due to a new state law instituting a $5 filing fee surcharge for clerk operations.[9] While the Executive's proposed budget includes most of DJA's requests, it did not include an administrator position (1.0 FTE) requested to assist with payroll, expense, and invoice processing.

KEY ISSUES

Staff have not identified any key issues for this budget.

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[6] Becca cases refer to certain types of petitions under the state Family Reconciliation Act (Chapter 13.32A RCW), including: At-Risk Youth petitions, when a parent files a petition with juvenile court to get help in the care and control of a child; Child In Need of Services (CHINS) petitions, when a child, parent, or a representative from the state Department of Children, Youth, and Families files a petition to temporarily place the child outside of the parent's home due to a serious conflict; and Truancy petitions, when a student has seven or more unexcused absences a month from school, the school must file a petition in juvenile court. If the student continues to be absent, they may be found in contempt.

[7] State v. Blake, 197 Wn.2d170 (2021) found that the state's felony drug possession law was unconstitutional. As a result of Blake, all pending possession cases must be dismissed, all warrants must be quashed, and all prior convictions impacted by Blake must be vacated.

[8] Revenue adjustment reflects projections of revenue collection based on past actuals. There were some decreases (for example, in child support revenue) as well as increases in several accounts such as civil filing fees, record services, and other felony penalties fees. As for revenue assumptions in the base budget, the decrease is due to the removal of one-time 2025 Blake revenue from the state

[9] Chapter 357, Laws of 2025 (Second Substitute House Bill 1207)

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC DEFENSE

ANALYST: MELISSA BAILEY

	Expenditures	Revenues	FTEs	TLTs
2025 Revised Budget Biennialized	$200,655,712	$53,745,308	512.7	0.0
2026-2027 Base Budget Adjust.	$2,324,714	($8,531,722)	0.0	0.0
2026-2027 Decision Packages	$20,567,240	$4,350,574	17.0	0.0
2026-2027 Proposed Budget	**$223,548,000**	**$49,565,000**	**529.7**	**0.0**
% Change from prior biennium, biennialized	11.4%			
Dec. Pkg. as % of prior biennium, biennialized	10.3%			

Major Revenue Sources: General Fund, federal and state funds, contract revenue, and revenue from DCHS (MIDD and BH-ASO).

DESCRIPTION

In keeping with federal and state constitutional requirements, state law, and the King County Charter and County Code, the Department of Public Defense (DPD) provides legal representation to adults and juveniles who have been charged with a crime and cannot afford an attorney as well as people facing civil commitment and parents who could lose their children in a dependency action. DPD also works with partners to address racial disproportionality in the criminal legal system, the collateral consequences of legal system involvement, and other structural and systemic issues that harm its clients.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET AND CHANGES

The proposed budget would appropriate $223.5 million to DPD for the 2026-2027 biennium, which is an increase of $22.9 million (11.4%) from the biennialized 2025 revised budget. The increase is the result of a $2.3 million base budget adjustment[1] reflecting inflationary increases in personnel costs, and a $20.6 million net increase from decision packages ($21.3 million in increased expenditures and a $776,000 reduction to capture salary savings from employee turnover). For the proposed increases totaling $21.3 million, $4.9 million (23%) is for a central rate adjustment (driven by FMD rates related to building out office space for new staff added in Q4 2025), and the rest ($16.4 million) would go toward the decision packages discussed below. Most of the increase in DPD's budget would be supported by the General Fund.

[1] DPD's 2026-2027 base budget is divided as follows: 75.4% personnel costs, 13.9% central rates, 3.6% expert services, 2.7% conflict panel (assigned counsel), 0.4% capacity attorney contracts (for felony cases), and 3.9% other contracted services/supplies. According to DPD, as of October 1, 2025, DPD has 8.75 FTE funded vacancies (none of which are attorney positions). DPD anticipates having zero funded FTE vacancies by the end of the year.

General Fund Supported Proposals - $16,111,980, 17.0 FTEs

Attorney Positions - $6,075,478, 17.0 FTEs. The proposed budget would add $6.1 million to support the 17.0 FTE attorney positions released in 2025 per the expenditure restriction on DPD's appropriation.[2] The FTE authority released in 2025, and the related supplemental appropriation provided, were technically one-time, so this decision package would incorporate the positions into the base budget. Executive staff note the positions are in response to increased felony filings; they are not related to the implementation of new caseload standards. Caseload standards are discussed in more detail under the Key Issues section of this staff report.

As a reminder, the expenditure restriction on DPD's appropriation was first established in the 2019-2020 Biennial Budget to ensure the department has the flexibility to hire up to 20.0 additional FTE attorney positions than it has funding for in the event there is a surge in felony filings. These are referred to as "vapor positions" because they authorize a full-time equivalent (FTE) but provide no additional appropriation. DPD can access the positions when felony case credits exceed staffing model estimates assumed when the budget was established for two consecutive months. In 2025, the expenditure restriction was triggered in April (releasing 12.0 FTEs). This led to the 2025 1st Omnibus request for one-time additional funds to support the released positions for the remainder of the year.[3] The expenditure restriction was triggered again in May, releasing an additional 5.0 FTEs and bringing the total to 17.0 FTE attorney positions released in 2025. DPD is in the process of hiring these positions and plans to have all 17.0 FTE attorney positions filled by the end of 2025.

According to PSB, these positions are not required this biennium to meet the caseload standards set by the recent Supreme Court Interim Order (discussed in the Key Issues section), but they contribute to staffing that will be necessary in future years to address these standards. They note that including these positions in the 2026-2027 Biennial Budget would prevent potential layoffs of staff just hired and provide necessary staff capacity for DPD to work through the high number of cases assigned in 2025. DPD states that the department "expected to receive additional professional staff to be consistent with the staffing ratios in 2026-2027. While it [the addition of the 17.0 FTE attorney positions] can be seen in the Executive proposed budget as a decision package, one could also think of it as a pro forma rollover to this biennium, since we filled the positions in 2025 and have no additional vacancies. Additionally, it could also be construed as a reduction because there are no additional professional staff FTEs.

[2] Ordinance 19861, Section 55, Expenditure Restriction ER 1

[3] Ordinance 19956 provided DPD with an additional $529,000 to support the 12.0 FTE attorney positions released. Budget materials noted that the amount was equivalent to four months of salary costs (not including benefit costs) for the positions. And, according to Executive staff, this was an amount agreed upon between PSB and DPD and informed by conversations with the PAO regarding filing expectations for the remainder of the year. It was noted at the time that the increase in PAO filings, a related increase in DPD assignments, and a case mix that includes felonies of a higher severity than in many previous months, led to two consecutive months with total credits exceeding the base caseload assumed in DPD's staffing model (thus triggering the expenditure restriction and the release of 12.0 additional FTEs).

DPD's understanding was that the ER felony trigger would authorize hiring as an immediate stopgap, and that in a subsequent omnibus or budget we would receive 15 professional staff and 2 attorney supervisors to support those additional 17 staff attorneys."

Legal Services - $10,036,502. The 2025 1st Omnibus provided DPD with $3.8 million in additional appropriation authority to support assigned counsel, expert services, and contract attorney expenses.[4] At the time, it was noted that these services had historically been underbudgeted, and DPD had been using salary savings from vacancies to offset the expenses. In 2025, DPD's successful recruitment efforts meant there were not enough salary savings to cover the cost of these services and additional appropriation authority was needed. The appropriation authority was granted and there was a discussion about rightsizing these budget items in future budgets.

The Executive's proposed budget for the 2026-2027 biennium would establish cost centers for each of these legal services with the stated objective of creating more budget transparency and monitoring. The $10.0 million request breaks down as follows:

- Expert Services - $8,000,000. Public defenders request expert services when such services are necessary to effectively represent their clients.[5] This could include expert opinions on various matters, such as forensic evaluations, psychological evaluations, or other expert testimony. The budget would establish a base budget and cost center for these services. Executive staff note that an $8.0 million budget reflects the estimated cost based on historical trends. DPD's agency request was for $11.0 million for the biennium.

- Assigned Counsel Conflict Panel - $1,036,502. DPD handles most of its case assignments with county employees; however, approximately 4.0% of assignments go to the Assigned Counsel Conflict Panel. The panel is comprised of private attorneys who contract with the County to handle cases that DPD cannot take due to a conflict of interest. The proposed budget would shift base budget ($5.0 million) from DPD's existing legal services cost center to this new cost center and add resources ($1.0 million) to reflect estimated costs based on historical trends. The request in the 2026-2027 Proposed Budget is for $1.0 million and this would bring the base budget for the Conflict Panel to about $6.0 million. DPD requested $12.6 million for the biennium.

- Capacity Contract Attorneys - $1,000,000. In 2022, DPD created the Contract Attorney Panel (capacity contracts) with private attorneys to help address an increased number of court filings. Contract attorneys are used when case assignments exceed departmental capacity. According to Executive staff, about 3.0% of case assignments were being handled by the Contract Attorney Panel.

[4] Ordinance 19956
[5] Executive staff note that the consultation and use of experts by defense counsel is required by state law and point to *State v. A.N.J., 168 Wn.2d 91 (2010).* Expert services are requested and approved through an independent process. See DPD's Expert Services Policy for more information [LINK].

PSB notes that the total budgeted amount of $1.0 million in the 2026-2027 biennium reflects the estimated costs based on an assumed reduction in contract usage due to the department being fully staffed. DPD requested $5.3 million for the biennium.

Revenue-Backed Proposal - $300,000. The proposed budget would appropriate $300,000 to the Strength at Home program, which provides people facing criminal charges with access to evidence-based domestic violence treatment.[6] DPD has a contract with Strength at Home to provide online services to clients; this appropriation amount is expected to serve 300 participants. DPD hopes that no-cost access to this treatment program will reduce wait times and barriers to starting domestic violence treatment. This appropriation would be fully backed by MIDD revenue, and there is a corresponding decision package in the MIDD Fund.

Revenue adjustments. The Executive's proposed 2026-2027 budget book shows a negative revenue adjustment to the base budget of $8.5 million as well as a technical decision package reflecting a $4.1 million increase in revenue for the biennium. According to Executive staff, these adjustments are related to contract revenue and the timing of contract renewals. For example, DPD's contract with the Seattle Municipal Court (SMC) will need to be adjusted for 2026 given the contract amount is still being determined. Once the SMC contract is finalized, a technical adjustment will be reflected in a future supplemental budget to align with the new contract amount. Executive staff confirm that 2026-2027 total revenues are expected to be similar or above 2025 levels.[7]

Unfunded Proposals. DPD's requested decision packages totaled almost $69 million and 141.0 FTEs for the 2026-2027 biennium – some of which was included in the Executive's proposed budget and discussed above. Examples of DPD's requests not included in the proposed budget are:

- $12.0 million and 43.0 FTE for attorney and staff positions to implement new caseload standards (WSBA Phase II[8]);
- $4.4 million and 15.0 FTE for support staff (WSBA Phase I);
- $4.3 million and 30.0 FTE for 3L attorney positions (WSBA Phase II and III);
- $3.5 million and 10.0 FTE for mitigation specialists[9];
- $1.9 million and 4.0 FTE for a training program; and

[6] According to executive staff, the program was jointly chosen by DPD and PAO because in clinical trials, individuals who engaged in the program saw physical aggression reduced by 56% and a significant decrease in psychological aggression, alcohol misuse, and PTSD symptoms. [LINK] The program started in September 2024, and Executive staff report that, to-date, 91 people have participated in the program and have been diverted from the criminal legal system.

[7] Revenue increases are related to the inflationary increases (mostly salary and benefit costs) of the contracted services provided.

[8] Washington State Bar Association Standards (WSBA) for Indigent Defense Services. Phases refer to implementation of the revised standards released March 2024 and explained in more detail in the Key Issues section.

[9] Related to the new caseload standards adopted by WSBA, which requires a ratio of 1.0 FTE mitigation specialist for every 3.0 FTE attorneys by July 1, 2028.

- $965,167 and 4.0 FTE to add reception services at two DPD locations (Jefferson Street in Seattle and Kent).

According to PSB: "A large portion of DPD's Agency Proposed budget requests included resources to achieve Phase II and prepare for Phase III of the WSBA standards for indigent defense implementation timeline. The 2026-2027 Executive Proposed budget aligns with the State Supreme Court implementation timeline, not the WSBA implementation timeline, so this was the basis for not approving several staffing-related budget requests." The state of the General Fund was the primary reason the Executive did not include other discretionary requests in the proposed budget.

Expenditure Restriction. The 2026-2027 Proposed Budget ordinance would maintain the expenditure restriction on DPD's appropriation. The language of the expenditure restriction is the same as previous years, but the numbers are updated to reflect felony staffing estimates assumed in the 2026-2027 staffing model. This has been standard practice since the expenditure restriction was first established.

KEY ISSUES

REVISED CASELOAD STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC DEFENSE

DPD Staffing Model. DPD's staffing model was first developed for the 2017-2018 Biennial Budget process and has been in place since.[10] It is a complex formula that has been based on the caseload standards set in the WSBA Standards for Indigent Defense Services (WSBA Standards). To build DPD's budget, PSB and DPD look at past caseload trends for various case types and work through the assumptions to use when modeling staffing needs for the next biennium.

During 2025 Budget deliberations, DPD raised concerns that the staffing model did not account for when a case is transferred from one attorney to another (due to attrition, for example). To address this concern, the Council added $1.7 million and 10.0 additional FTEs in the 2025 Adopted Budget.[11] Since then, DPD and PSB have worked together to update the staffing model and confirm that it now accounts for case transfers.

According to PSB, the staffing model for the 2026-2027 biennium still uses the WSBA Standards in terms of case weighted credits and staffing ratios (the number of attorneys to investigators, paralegals, and mitigation specialists for example). The major difference in this biennium, however, is that DPD is committed to implementing the new caseload standards on the timeline determined by the WSBA, and the Executive's

[10] In response to two provisos included in the 2015-2016 Biennial Budget, the Executive formed a work group to review DPD's budget and staffing levels. That work group made several recommendations, including having PSB and DPD develop a formal staffing model. See Motion 14429.
[11] This was in addition to $2.3 million and 14 FTE for attorney and staff positions related to implementing Phase I of the WSBA revised standards, $645,633 and 15.0 FTE for 3L attorneys as part of DPD's strategy to meet Phase II of the WSBS revised standards, and $288,563 for an HR and finance positions to support ongoing implementation of the new WSBA standards.

proposed budget aligns with the timeline set in the State Supreme Court Interim Order on the Standards for Indigent Defense (discussed below).

Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) - Revised Caseload Standards. In March 2024, the WSBA adopted revised Standards for Indigent Defense Services (WSBA Standards).[12] These standards set caseload limits and other requirements related to public defense, and the revisions change how public defense work will be measured by moving to a case weighting system. Cases will now be broken into case types and weighted according to the number of hours an average case of that type can be expected to require (resulting in a lower number of maximum cases a public defender may have at one time and increasing the need for more attorneys). The revised standards also mandate support staff ratios and include mitigation specialists (social workers) for the first time. There are two interim reductions in caseload maximums (effective July 2025 and July 2026) and then the new caseload standards will take full effect July 2027. Mandatory support staff ratios become effective July 2028. The WSBA phased implementation of the new standards includes:

Phase 1: July 2, 2025	1.0 FTE felony attorney ≤ 110 felony case credits 1.0 FTE misdemeanor attorney ≤ 280 misdemeanor case credits
Phase II: July 2, 2026	1.0 FTE felony attorney ≤ 90 felony case credits 1.0 FTE misdemeanor attorney ≤ 225 misdemeanor case credits
Phase III: July 2, 2027	1.0 FTE felony attorney ≤ 47 felony case credits 1.0 FTE misdemeanor attorney ≤ 120 misdemeanor case credits
Phase IV: July 2, 2028	Minimum 1.0 FTE mitigation specialist or social worker for every 3.0 FTE attorneys. Public defense agencies are required to make "meaningful progress" towards this ratio prior to July 3, 2028.

Washington State Supreme Court – Interim Order. On June 9, 2025, the Washington State Supreme Court issued an interim order related to the revised WSBA Standards.[13] The Supreme Court noted that it was still reviewing the standards and the associated public comments and testimony; however, it recognized that budget planning in local jurisdictions was underway and it would be helpful for local governments to have some interim guidance in advance of the Court's full decision.

[12] Washington State Bar Association, Standards for Indigent Defense Services, Revised March 8, 2024 [LINK]. State law (RCW 10.101.030) requires each county to adopt standards for the delivery of public defense services and states that the standards endorsed by the WSBA should serve as guidelines. K.C.C. 2.60.026.A. directs the Public Defender to rely on the American Bar Association (ABA) Ten Principles for a Public Defense Delivery System (as approved by the ABA House of Delegates in February 2002) to guide the management of the department and development of department standards for legal defense representation. It also directs the Public Defender to follow the Washington State Standards for Indigent Defense Services.

[13] The Supreme Court of Washington Order NO. 25700-A-1644 [LINK]

The Supreme Court's Interim Order does the following:

- Adopts the same caseload standards for full-time felony and misdemeanor attorneys determined by the WSBA. Each criminal case will be assigned a case credit, and public defenders will be limited to a certain number of case credits per year (see WSBA Phase III – a maximum of 47 felony case credits and 120 misdemeanor case credits).

- Gives local governments ten years to implement the new caseload standards starting from January 1, 2026 (as opposed to WSBA's three-year timeline starting July 2, 2025). According to the Interim Order:
    - Implementation of these caseload standards must be accomplished as soon as reasonably possible.
    - Implementation may, however, be accomplished in a phased approach with an annual reduction of at least 10% of the difference between the current standard and the new standard (as measured on January 1, 2026), until the new standard has been met.
    - Full compliance must occur no later than ten years from January 1, 2026.

- Declines to adopt the mandatory method of case counting and weighting; however, the Court endorses the importance of case weighting to measure case credits and actual case counts, including inherited cases, to make the mandatory caseload limits meaningful. Thus, case weighting to measure case credits is permissible and encouraged.[14]

- The Interim Order is silent on mandatory support staff ratios.

It also should be noted that the Court plans to evaluate the progress and impacts of the Court Standards in 2029.

King County Implementation of the New Standards. As previously mentioned, the Executive's 2026-2027 Proposed Budget assumes the timeline outlined in the State Supreme Court's Interim Order. DPD has noted their commitment to the WSBA Standards and getting to WSBA Phase II in the 2026-2027 biennium. DPD is not asking for staffing to implement Phase III at this time. Phase III is not scheduled to start until July 1, 2027. DPD plans to base an omnibus request for Phase III once it is closer to 2027, at which point they say there could be more information on things like the possibility of additional funding as a result of the ongoing Washington State Association of Counties litigation, additional clarity from the Washington State Supreme Court through a final order, and possible additional guidance from the WSBA in light of a final order from the Supreme Court.

[14] DPD reports that it has "used case-weighted credits since June of 2024. This is when DPD transitioned from a supplemental credit model to a case-weight credit model. The supplemental credit model credited based on the work completed so it was always late in granting relief to staff. This is because the credit was granted after the work was completed. By contrast, the case-weight credit model marks an important improvement because it accounts for the anticipated volume of work at the time it is assigned to an attorney—and it is also required by the WSBA Standards for Indigent Defense Services."

Proposed Code Change. The Executive transmitted a proposed ordinance along with the budget that would amend the County Code to clarify the County's intent to follow the Washington State Supreme Court's Standards for Indigent Defense.[15]

Council staff analysis is ongoing.

[15] Proposed Ordinance 2025-0305

INQUEST PROGRAM

ANALYST: MELISSA BAILEY

	Expenditures	Revenues	FTEs	TLTs
2025 Revised Budget Biennialized	$5,665,808	$0	11.0	0.0
2026-2027 Base Budget Adjust.	$101,207	$0	0.0	0.0
2026-2027 Decision Packages	($2,470,808)	$0	(5.8)	0.0
2026-2027 Proposed Budget	**$3,297,000**	**$0**	**5.2**[1]	**0.0**
% Change from prior biennium, biennialized	(41.8%)			
Dec. Pkg. as % of prior biennium, biennialized	(43.6%)			
Major Revenue Sources: General Fund				

DESCRIPTION

The County Charter mandates an inquest (an administrative, fact-finding inquiry) to investigate the causes and circumstances of any death where an action, decision or possible failure to offer the appropriate care by a member of any law enforcement agency might have contributed to an individual's death.[2] The Executive is responsible for holding inquests and for providing legal representation to a family participating in an inquest proceeding.[3,4] The Inquest Program sits within the Department of Executive Services, and the Executive's Office of Performance, Strategy, and Budget administers the provision of legal representation to families involved in inquest proceedings.[5]

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET AND CHANGES

The Executive is proposing to cut the Inquest Program by 41.8% in the 2026-2027 biennium. This reduction would be due to the elimination of 5.75 FTE positions (the

[1] There are 11.0 FTEs supporting the office. The proposed budget would eliminate 5.75 FTEs; however, due to rounding, the budget book shows a decrease of 5.8 FTEs and authority for 5.2 FTEs in the 2026-2027 biennium.
[2] King County Charter Section 895. "Member of any law enforcement agency" includes a commissioned officer, noncommissioned staff and agent of any local or state police force, jail, detention facility or corrections agency. See also RCW 36.24.020.
[3] K.C.C. 2.35A.090.B. Inquest procedures are in Executive Order PHL-7-1-6-EO signed February 5, 2025.
[4] K.C.C. 2.16.025.B(12).
[5] K.C.C. 2.16.025.B(12). Expenditures related to providing legal representation for families involved in an inquest proceeding are reflected in the Internal Support appropriations unit. According to Executive staff, the "role for family counsel under the EO is to provide support to the family – should the family desire – when meeting with the inquest program attorney and giving their impressions about the law enforcement incident that [led] to the family member's death. This should require no more than 3-4 hours of attorney time per case."

budget book rounds this to 5.8 FTEs) and would result in $2.5 million in savings to the General Fund.[6]

Executive staff report that the new inquest process detailed in the 2025 Executive Order significantly reduces the workload required to manage the program.[7] The proposed budget reduction is meant to align with new program operations. Executive staff provided a briefing on the history of the Inquest Program and the new inquest process at the Law and Justice Committee meeting held May 7, 2025.[8] In short, the new process clarifies when an inquest hearing will ordinarily *not* be called[9] and no longer involves a significant discovery process or lengthy trial proceedings with multiple represented parties. Instead, it is a more streamlined fact-finding hearing with the addition of a multidisciplinary panel focused on providing recommendations that can be implemented across jurisdictions in the county to decrease deaths following interactions with law enforcement. Table 1 shows the proposed staffing changes.

Table 1. Proposed Changes to Inquest Program Staffing

Position	2025 FTE	2026-27 FTE
Program Manager	1.0	1.0
Program Attorneys[10]	5.0	3.0
Inquest Administrators	0.0	1.0
Program Coordinators	4.0	0.0
A/V Technology/Communications	1.0	0.25
Total	**11.0**	**5.25**

Executive staff confirm that the new Deadly Incident Review and Recommendation Panel created by the new Executive Order does not require a dedicated budget.[11] The panel members are volunteers, and staffing for the panel will be handled through budgeted staff.

[6] The increase to the base budget reflects general wage increases for the biennium.
[7] Executive Order PHL-7-1-6-EO. See also the Executive's related news bulletin issued February 5, 2025.
[8] 2025-B0057: Inquest Program Briefing
[9] Executive Order PHL-7-1-6-EO, Section 2.3.3.2: "Unless extenuating circumstances exist, an inquest hearing will ordinarily not be called: (1) where a death was the result of (a) natural causes, (b) a traffic accident, (c) an overdose, or (d) a suicide; and (2) sufficient facts do not exist as a matter of law to support a determination by a reasonable jury that the death involved criminal means by a member of law enforcement under any of the criminal culpability standards set forth in RCW 9A.08.010." Executive staff assert that this new threshold better reflects the language in the County Charter and the purposes of an inquest under state statute and Supreme Court authority. They also note that the Executive retains discretion to order an inquest or panel review in these cases.
[10] In 2025, this included 4.0 FTE attorneys and 1.0 FTE attorney lead (totaling 5.0 FTEs). In 2026-2027, the proposed budget would provide authority for 2.0 FTE attorneys and 1.0 FTE attorney lead (totaling 3.0 FTEs).
[11] Deadly Incident Review and Recommendation Panel - King County, Washington

KEY ISSUES

ISSUE 1 – INQUEST BACKLOG

The Inquest Program has a backlog of reported deaths dating back to 2017. When the Inquest Program was funded in the 2023-2024 Biennial Budget, the Executive estimated the program would complete 15 inquests a year; however, it was reported during 2025 Budget deliberations that only about eight inquests were being completed per year. This was using the former, lengthier process under the previous Executive Order.[12] Since the new Executive Order was signed in February 2025, the Inquest Program has completed three inquests. Executive staff note that, after a new Executive Order is issued, a time period is necessary to adjust to the new processes.

Moving forward, the Executive estimates that inquests will be completed in two to four days and expects to handle about 20 to 25 inquests a year (about two a month) using the new streamlined inquest process. The Executive does not believe the staffing reduction will have an impact on the program's ability to get through the backlog and estimates the Inquest Program will be able to clear the backlog in 2 to 4 years.

As of October 3, 2025, the Inquest Program's website shows a total of 122 reported deaths, and the status of those reports is shown in Table 2. Additionally, Executive staff have shared there are eight to ten new use-of-force deaths per year, on average.

Table 2. Status of Reported Deaths as of October 3, 2025[13]

Status	Deaths
Inquest completed (since 2017)	22
Inquest hearing scheduled	10
Inquest ordered (not yet scheduled)	1
No inquest ordered	4
Pending Executive's decision[14]	27
Under review by Inquest Program	43
Reported[15]	15
TOTAL	**122**

[12] Executive Order PHL-7-1-5-EO.
[13] Status definitions can be found on the Inquest Program's "Reported Deaths" webpage
[14] Deaths with a recommendation from the Inquest Program but that are pending the Executive's decision include cases that have not been activated (or "called") by the Executive to request jurors from Superior Court, yet. These are also referred to as "uncalled" cases. Once the Executive requests jurors from Superior Court, there is an 18-month clock to conduct and finish the inquest. As a result, the Inquest Program reports the best way to ensure jurisdiction does not expire is to stagger out and “call/activate” each inquest as capacity demands.
[15] Reported deaths are deaths that have been reported, but the Inquest Program has not yet received the case file and is awaiting discovery from the PAO or other agencies.

In King County, the function of holding inquests is vested with the County Executive, and the procedures related to calling an inquest have been issued through Executive Order since the 1970s (as reported by Executive staff). When asked about retaining staff to address the backlog, Executive staff note the Executive "recognizes the need to fund inquests and is at the same time balancing other pressing priority GF investments such as homelessness and the criminal legal system."

OFFICE OF RISK MANAGEMENT SERVICES

ANALYST: MELISSA BAILEY

	Expenditures	Revenues	FTEs	TLTs
2025 Revised Budget Biennialized	$148,343,322	$163,249,202	29.5	0.0
2026-2027 Base Budget Adjust.	($2,418,565)	($2,800,000)	0.0	0.0
2026-2027 Decision Packages	$6,738,908	$5,936,620	3.0	0.0
2026-2027 Proposed Budget	**$152,664,000**	**$166,386,000**	**32.5**	**0.0**
% Change from prior biennium, biennialized	2.9%			
Dec. Pkg. as % of prior biennium, biennialized	4.5%			

Major Revenue Sources: ORMS Internal Service Rate

DESCRIPTION

The Office of Risk Management Services (ORMS) manages the County's self-insurance program and all supplemental insurance coverages, investigates and resolves claims filed against the County, advises County agencies on liability related to contracts, and recovers compensation for damages to County assets by negligent third parties. Through the enterprise risk management program and loss control program, ORMS collaborates with County departments to identify and address risks. ORMS also handles complex public records requests.[1]

ORMS, which is within the Department of Executive Services, is supported by an internal service rate charged to all County departments to cover insurance premiums, claim costs, and all other operational costs of the office.[2]

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET AND CHANGES

The ORMS budget is proposed to increase by approximately 2.9% in the 2026-2027 biennium. This growth is primarily due to rising insurance premiums discussed in more detail below. The proposed budget also assumes a $5.9 million revenue adjustment to reflect the ORMS's 2026-2027 internal service rate increase of 3.7%. The negative adjustments to the base budget (both expenditures and revenue) can mainly be attributed to the removal of one-time CLFR funding in 2025 for expenses related to vaccine mandate legislation. Decision packages are discussed below.

Insurance Premiums – $6,151,206. The Executive proposes to increase the budget for insurance premiums by about $6.2 million.[3] Budget materials state that insurance

[1] ORMS functions are governed by K.C.C. Chapter 2.21.
[2] Revenues are deposited into the Risk Management Fund (see K.C.C. 4A.200.630 for allowable uses).

premiums are projected to increase by 12% in the 2026-2027 biennium, with the largest increases in excess liability insurance and property insurance.[4] Executive staff note that insurance premiums have been rising due to reduced market capacity, increased severity of litigation outcomes, and increased frequency and severity of global catastrophic weather events.

The Executive's 2026-2027 Proposed Budget Book states that ORMS "worked with the County's property insurer to make 26 improvements in County buildings to reduce future risk. This reduced potential future losses by $104 million, leading to savings in insurance premiums." Executive staff clarified that increased property insurance premiums are a result of the County having more properties and the corresponding increased exposure for insurers.

Staffing Changes – $576,378, 3.0 FTE. Also of note are two decision packages related to staffing changes.

Open Government Program Manager – $0, 1.0 FTE. The Executive proposes converting a TLT program manager position to an FTE position using existing appropriation authority. Although there would be no appropriation authority requested in the 2026-2027 biennium, the change would represent an ongoing cost (the total cost for salary and benefits in 2026-2027 is $358,929).

The Open Government Section consists of four programs (Ethics, Financial Disclosure, Lobbyist Disclosure, and Public Disclosure) and is currently supported by 7.0 FTE positions plus the 1.0 TLT position proposed for conversion to an FTE. Part of this section's responsibility is to train and advise department-level public records officers on strategies for complying with the Washington State Public Records Act. It also facilitates Public Records Act appeals.

According to budget materials, the Executive received 4,598 Public Records Act (PRA) requests in 2024, which represents a 42% increase from 2023 and a 98% increase from the number of requests in 2016 (when the public records program was established). Executive staff note that converting the TLT position into an FTE position would allow ORMS to maintain staff handling public records requests, which could reduce the risk of future penalties and other financial consequences associated with Public Records Act litigation.

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[3] The County holds its own self-insurance program covering various liabilities, professional malpractice, police professionals, and public officials' errors and omissions. However, the County also purchases reinsurance and excess liability insurance and maintains various other insurance policies to cover cyber liability, property insurance, excess workers' compensation insurance, fiduciary liability insurance, and marine insurance.

[4] The 12% is an average percentage increase over the last 5 years, while the last 3-year average is 9%. Executive staff state that there "are signs of some insurance markets softening, so we are cautiously optimistic that we will not see as large increases as we have seen in previous years, but it is difficult to predict the "out-years" as the insurance market is constantly changing. We will have a more accurate projection as we get closer to budgeting for those years."

Customer Service Representatives – $576,378, 2.0 FTE. The Executive is proposing to move customer service positions from the Executive's Office to ORMS. These positions are responsible for responding to customer inquiries via phone, email, and text; routing issues to the appropriate departments; and providing referrals to county and regional agencies. They also manage requests submitted through the County's "Contact Us" form and 1-800 line. In the Executive's Office, these positions have been funded using General Fund Overhead.[5]

According to Executive staff: "Moving the customer service function into ORMS, a central service agency that supports all County departments, offers several benefits. Risk Management's existing administrative infrastructure provides capacity to support the customer service function, enabling operational efficiencies. Additionally, integrating customer service into an internal service model aligns with Risk Management's broader role in delivering enterprise-wide services such as insurance procurement, contract risk review, and enterprise risk management. This transition supports a more sustainable and scalable approach to countywide customer service delivery."

Risk Management Fund. The Risk Management Fund has one reserve, the Actuarial Reserve for Losses Incurred, which is set by the actuary as the estimated outstanding losses limited to the self-insured retention level. The Year End 2024 Actuary Report increased the amount advised to be on reserve for 2025 and beyond. To help mitigate increased risk management costs and comply with required reserve levels, ORMS is raising the internal service rate it charges all County departments by 3.7% in the 2026-2027 biennium.[6] This is lower than previously projected (the financial plan adopted with the 2025 Budget assumed a 4.7% increase). In outyears, however, the financial plan assumes higher increases to the internal service rate (9.4% increase in 2028-2029 and an 8.4% increase in 2030-2031). The increases projected in the outyears are higher than what was assumed in last year's financial plan. Executive staff note this is primarily because the projected Actuarial Reserves for Losses incurred is $12 million higher according to the most recent Actuary Report.

The Risk Management Financial Policy requires the fund balance to be maintained at a minimum of 75% of the actuarially determined reserve amounts.[7] Additionally, the policy states that "if reserves are more or less than 100% of the actuarially determined amounts, the financial plan shall reflect a plan over two biennia to match the actuarial amount." The transmitted financial plan shows reserves at 99% of the actuarially determined amount in 2025 and reaching 100% in the 2026-2027 biennium.

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[5] The General Fund overhead (GFO) model is used to recover costs from all other funds. Costs supported by the GFO model are divided between General Fund support and support by all other funds.

[6] The county's risk management internal service rate for 2026-2027 is comprised of the following: (a) Claims, 53.8%, (b) Insurance Premiums, 35.8%, (c) ORMS Administration, 9.7%, and (d) Public Records Program, 0.7%. Claim rates are calculated based on 5-year claim history (uncapped) plus reserves on open claims (three claims per division capped at $250,000). Insurance premiums, ORMS administration, and Public Records program rates are calculated based on agency's property values, number of FTEs, number of claims, and claim allocation methods.

[7] Risk Management Financial Policy, adopted by the Risk Management Committee on March 16, 2016, and updated August 1, 2019.

KEY ISSUES

Staff have not identified any key issues for this appropriation unit.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES CAPITAL

ANALYST: ERICA NEWMAN

	2026-2027 Proposed	2028-2029 Projected	2030-2031 Projected
Revenues	$4,800,000	$0	$0
Appropriation	$4,800,000	$0	$0

Major Revenue Sources: Bond Proceeds

DESCRIPTION

The Information Technology Services (ITS) Capital fund[1] supports IT capital projects for County departments and agencies that do not have their own capital funds. The fund is managed by King County Information Technology (KCIT).

Ordinance 19712. In November 2023, the Council adopted the 2023 2nd Omnibus or Ordinance 19712, which appropriated $73,107,140 to the ITS Capital Fund (3771). The ITS Capital Fund houses multiple projects, including the Property Tax Accounting System (PTAS), a project that will replace the Department of Assessments (DOA) existing property tax system as it is at risk of failing. The ordinance included an expenditure restriction and a proviso response as listed below.

Ordinance 19712, Section 89, ER2, stated the following:
Of this appropriation for capital project 1123944, Property Tax Accounting System, $7,000,000 shall be expended or encumbered solely for the procurement phase of the project up until the identification of the preferred or highest-ranked main contractor or vendor to replace the existing property tax accounting system that is at risk of failure. No moneys restricted by this expenditure restriction shall be used to award a contract until Proviso P3 of this section is satisfied.

Ordinance 19712, Section 89, P3 required the following*:*
Of this appropriation, for capital project 1123944, Property Tax Accounting System, no moneys shall be expended or encumbered, except as provided in Expenditure Restriction ER2 of this section, until: (1) the project review board reviews the results from the procurement phase of the project and approves the project to continue; (2) upon the project review board review and approval described in (1) of this proviso, the office of performance, strategy and budget files a capital project notice to release moneys witheld by proviso letter with the clerk of the council, who shall retain an electronic copy and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers and the lead staff for the budget and fiscal management committee or its successor; (3) when the clerk of the council receives the capital project notice to release moneys withheld by proviso

[1] K.C.C. 4A.200.370; Fund 3771, formerly referred to as Office of Information Resources Management (OIRM) capital projects.

letter, the clerk of the council shall list the capital project notice to release money withheld by proviso letter under other business on the next two consecutive council agendas; and (4) no councilmember objects at either council meeting.

If an objection is made by a councilmember or councilmembers at either of the two council meetings, the moneys withheld by this proviso shall not be released. The clerk of the council shall notify the office of performance, strategy and budget of the council's action.

The scope of the PTAS project consists of multiple phases as outlined below:

1. Procurement of a systems integrator, a project management firm, development vendors, and others in 2024;

2. Replacement of the two legacy Accounting and Treasury system modules for DOA Accounting and Treasury with Dynamics D365 technology; and

3. Development of the three remaining DOA modules - CAMA, Mobile, and Portals - after Phase 2 is completed.

In March 2025, the Executive wrote a letter to notify the Council that the requirements of the Expenditure Restriction and Proviso response have been satisfied. According to the Executive, the PTAS project moved from the “Planning” phase to the “Implementation” phase in June 2025 and expects to be in this phase until May 2, 2028.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET AND CHANGES

The 2026-2027 Executive proposed budget would add $4,800,000 to an existing project for the PTAS project (CIP # 1123944). The one-time request of $4,800,000 is intended to cover anticipated sales taxes resulting from Senate Bill (SB) 5814 for the remainder of the project period. According to Executive staff, SB 5814 became effective on October 1, 2025, and broadens the scope of services subject to sales tax. As a result, King County agencies, including the PTAS project, will be required to pay sales tax on services that were previously exempt. The PTAS project utilizes consulting services to plan, develop, and test custom software solutions, which are now classified as taxable under SB 5814.

KEY ISSUES

Staff have not identified any key issues for this fund.

DISTRICT COURT

ANALYST: ERICA NEWMAN

	Expenditures	Revenues	FTEs	TLTs
2025 Revised Budget Biennialized	$90,347,018	$24,864,008	235.8	0.0
2026-2027 Base Budget Adjust.	$1,082,557	($900,000)	0.0	0.0
2026-2027 Decision Packages	$2,197,984	$5,588,411	0.0	0.0
2026-2027 Proposed Budget	**$93,628,000**	**$29,553,000**	**235.8**	**0.0**
% Change from prior biennium, biennialized	3.6%			
Dec. Pkg. as % of prior biennium, biennialized	2.4%			

Major Revenue Sources: General Fund

DESCRIPTION

The King County District Court (KCDC) is the largest court of limited jurisdiction in the state of Washington and is currently responsible for processing over 200,000 cases per year. The court adjudicates all misdemeanant and infraction cases for unincorporated King County, including charges filed by Washington State Patrol, Sound Transit, Port of Seattle, University of Washington, Metro, Fish and Wildlife, State Parks, Liquor Control Board, and cases from the 12 jurisdictions that contract with District Court for municipal court services. District Court also conducts bench and jury trials, Relicensing Court, Student Court, Mental Health Court, Regional Veterans Court, and Community Court. The District Court also manages Therapeutic Community Court, which currently operates in Redmond and Shoreline.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET AND CHANGES

The proposed 2026-2027 Biennial Budget for District Court is $93,628,000, which is about 3.6% more than the 2025 revised budget biennialized of $90,347,018. The proposed changes include the following:

- An ongoing request of $1,155,300 to increase the hourly wage of certified and registered interpreters from $60 to $75 to align with other municipal courts. According to Executive staff, interpreters are independent contractors, and their market rate is increasing, which results in District Court competing with other courts in King County to get interpreters; and

- An ongoing request of $219,000 for additional sales tax liability that County agencies will incur because of the expansion of the sales tax base in the 2025 Legislative Session. In 2025, the Washington State legislature

adopted Senate Bill 5814, which added previously untaxed services to the retail sales base, to include information technology services, temporary staffing, and security services. According to Executive staff, Senate Bill 5814 allows local jurisdictions to raise taxes to fund criminal justice and the benefit to District Court is they were not asked to take additional cuts, but it does increase costs related to IT services and training etc.

KEY ISSUES

Staff have not identified any key issues for this appropriation unit.

AUTOMATED FINGERPRINT IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM (AFIS)

ANALYST: ERICA NEWMAN

	Expenditures	Revenues	FTEs	TLTs
2025 Revised Budget Biennialized	$59,021,678	$427,870	82.0	0.0
2026-2027 Base Budget Adjust.	($9,759,265)	0	0.0	0.0
2026-20277 Decision Packages	$67,955	$50,655,108	(1.0)	0.0
2026-27 Proposed Budget	**$49,331,000**	**$51,083,000**	**81.0**	**0.0**
% Change from prior biennium, biennialized	(17.9%)			
Dec. Pkg. as % of prior biennium, biennialized	0.1%			

Major Revenue Sources: General Fund, voter-approved property tax levy

DESCRIPTION

The Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) is a regional law enforcement tool managed by the King County Sheriff's Office. The AFIS program promotes public safety by providing technology and resources to solve crimes and identify criminals by collecting, storing, and identifying fingerprints and palm prints.

Since 1986, the AFIS program has been funded by a voter-approved property tax levy that is used to support enhanced regional fingerprint identification services to all cities and unincorporated areas in King County. The AFIS levy was renewed in August 2018 for six years (2019-2024). The AFIS Advisory Committee provides oversight on the operations and funding of services and includes representatives from suburban jurisdictions, City of Seattle, and King County.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET AND CHANGES

The proposed 2026-2027 Biennial Budget for AFIS is $49,331,000, which is about 17.9% less than the 2025 revised budget biennialized of $59,021,678. The proposed changes include the following:

- An ongoing savings of $298,823 from eliminating the photographer position to align with the 2026-2032 AFIS Levy Plan. According to Executive staff, there are no impacts to AFIS as the duties of this position have been phased out over time; and

- An ongoing request of $714,732 to inflate the transfer to Seattle AFIS to align with the 2026-2032 AFIS Levy Plan. According to Executive staff, Seattle Police Department operates an independent AFIS unit, and King County AFIS provides levy funding to support Seattle AFIS as a passthrough. This proposal increases

the budget for the Seattle AFIS transfer to match the amount anticipated in the AFIS 2026-2032 levy planning budget.

KEY ISSUES

Staff have not identified any key issues for this appropriation unit.

RECORDS AND LICENSING SERVICES

ANALYST: ERICA NEWMAN

	Expenditures	Revenues	FTEs	TLTs
2025 Revised Budget Biennialized	$33,870,870	$62,405,486	84.0	0.0
2026-2027 Base Budget Adjust.	$1,403,047	0	(0.4)	0.0
2026-2027 Decision Packages	($352,724)	$1,889,436	0.0	0.0
2026-2027 Proposed Budget	**$34,922,000**	**$64,295,000**	**83.7**	**0.0**
% Change from prior biennium, biennialized	3.1%			
Dec. Pkg. as % of prior biennium, biennialized	1%			

Major Revenue Sources: General Fund, etc.

DESCRIPTION

The Records and Licensing Services (RALS) Division of Department of Executive Services is charged with recording and making accessible real property and other documents, collecting and dispersing real estate excise tax payments, providing licensing and information services and enforcing licensing and taxi regulations, providing internal mail services, maintaining physical and electronic records management services to all County agencies, and providing animal control services.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET AND CHANGES

The proposed 2026-2027 Biennial Budget for RALS is $34,922,000, which is about 3.1% more than the 2025 revised budget biennialized of $33,870,870. There are only technical adjustments included in this appropriation unit.

KEY ISSUES

Staff have not identified any key issues for this appropriation unit.

ELECTIONS

ANALYST: ERICA NEWMAN

	Expenditures	Revenues	FTEs	TLTs
2025 Revised Budget Biennialized	$62,925,182	$46,370,824	72.0	0.0
2026-2027 Base Budget Adjust.	$1,004,282	($485,078)	0.0	0.0
2026-2027 Decision Packages	($2,220,419)	$3,062,513	0.0	1.0
2026-2027 Proposed Budget	**$61,710,000**	**$48,949,000**	**72.0**	**1.0**
% Change from prior biennium, biennialized	(1.9%)			
Dec. Pkg. as % of prior biennium, biennialized	3.5%			
Major Revenue Sources: General Fund				

DESCRIPTION

King County Elections (KCE) conducts accurate, secure, accessible elections for 191 jurisdictions and 1.4 million registered voters. Guided by values of accuracy, equity, integrity, service, teamwork, and transparency, the team of state and nationally certified election administrators have years of experience setting the gold standard in vote-by-mail elections.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET AND CHANGES

The proposed 2026-2027 Biennial Budget is $61,710,000, which is about 1.9% less than the 2025 revised budget biennialized of $62,925,182. The proposed changes include the following:

- An ongoing request of $814,250 to support the 6.1% print vendor rates. According to Executive staff, Elections has used the listed vendors for over 15 years and the 6.1% increase first appeared in the contract renewal for Signature Graphics. Due to the timing of contract renewals and budget proposal timeline, the 6.1% increase was applied to vendor costs for K&H and Trio. Listed below are the services that each vendor provides to Elections.
    - K&H Integrated Print Solutions is the primary vendor for ballot printing and mailing services.
    - TRIO NW Business Solutions provides services for voter notifications, such as letters and cards.

- Signature Graphics provides voter pamphlet printing services.

Executive staff note that each contract has different terms and RCW 36.32.245 states that contracts and purchases for the printing of election ballots, voting machine labels, and all other election material containing the names of candidates and ballot titles are exempt from competitive bidding. K&H and Signature Graphics print the exempted materials[1]; and

- A one-time request of $323,257 [$242,222 revenue-backed] to cover the cost for temporary staff that would be responsible for responding to and supporting litigation against federal interventions in local elections, in addition to supporting communications and messaging to combat ongoing misinformation and staff critical transparency work, like the Observer Program used during the 2028 presidential election. According to Executive staff, due to recent budget reductions, Elections is unable to absorb unbudgeted temporary staff costs[2]; and

- A one-time savings of $192,000 due to operational efficiencies that include the following:

    - Reduced vehicle and parking usage, as the usage is less due to flexible work schedules.

    - Removed chatbot support on the Elections website, which has had limited value based on the experience of customers and staff.

    - Eliminated return-trip envelope tracking, a service provided by USPS that was initially promising for ballot tracking but has yielded less useful and comprehensive data than expected.

    - Reduced temporary staff hours by doing fewer reviews and audits of unopposed judicial races.

KEY ISSUES

Staff have not identified any key issues for this budget.

[1] The RCW's that govern election printing are outlined under RCW 29.A.32.010 and 29A.36.111.
[2] The $323,257 is equivalent to one TLT, but Elections will not be recruiting for a single position, instead various temporary positions to cover various functions depending on the need.

ASSESSMENT

ANALYST: ERICA NEWMAN

	Expenditures	Revenues	FTEs	TLTs
2025 Revised Budget Biennialized	$74,107,074	$3,403,298	210.0	0.0
2026-2027 Base Budget Adjust.	$1,960,625	0	0.0	0.0
2026-2027 Decision Packages	$1,071,445	$69,342	0.0	0.0
2026-2027 Proposed Budget	**$77,140,000**	**$3,473,000**	**210.0**	**0.0**
% Change from prior biennium, biennialized	4%			
Dec. Pkg. as % of prior biennium, biennialized	1.4%			

Major Revenue Sources: General Fund, etc.

DESCRIPTION

The Department of Assessments (DOA) is led by a separately elected Assessor who oversees the department's five operational divisions that consist of over 200 employees and relies on the General Fund as the major revenue source. The DOA operates a line of business such as determining the value of real and business property, maintaining property accounts or parcels, and creating the Property Tax Roll, which results in tax revenue for King County and other jurisdictions. The DOA is also responsible for processing property appeal responses and property tax exemption services.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET AND CHANGES

The proposed 2026-2027 Biennial Budget for this appropriation unit is $77,140,000, which is about 4% more than the 2025 revised budget biennialized of $74,107,074.The proposed 2026-2027 budget includes the following:

- An ongoing request of $600,000 to support staff that work overtime to assess and collect new construction valuations. According to Executive staff, due to reduced staffing from prior years DOA relies on overtime to discover, list, and assess new construction and increase property tax revenue collection above the statutory 1% cap on growth. The Table below includes the position titles, number of positions for each classification, and the average hours of overtime worked for each position during March-September 2025.

POSITION TITLE	NO. OF POSITIONS	WEEKLY AVERAGE OVERTIME-FOR EACH POSITION
Commercial Appraiser I	7	8
Commercial Appraiser II	9	8
Commercial Residential Appraiser II	1	9
Commercial Senior Appraiser	4	9
Residential Appraiser I	38	9
Residential Appraiser II	17	9
Residential Senior Appraiser	6	9

KEY ISSUES

Staff have not identified any key issues for this appropriation unit.