State of Wisconsin

Judicial Council

Agency Budget Request
2027 – 2029 Biennium
September 15, 2026

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STATE OF WISCONSIN – JUDICIAL COUNCIL

September 15, 2026

Mr. Brian Pahnke
Division of Executive Budget and Finance
Department of Administration
101 E. Wilson St., 10th Floor
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Mr. Pahnke,

Enclosed please find the Judicial Council's 2027-2029 biennial budget request.

The Judicial Council is a unique organization whose volunteer members work collaboratively to improve court practice and procedure in the State of Wisconsin. The work of the Council has been performed by its appointed members of the Wisconsin State Bar, Wisconsin's law schools, the Judiciary, the Executive Branch, and the Legislature. All the members have volunteered their time, knowledge and experience.

In the last budget cycle, the Council's 2025-2027 budget restored position authority and funding so that an attorney could be appointed to support the Council's administrative and legal needs. A staff attorney was appointed in January 2026 and has increased the productivity and substantive work of the Council in just six short months. The staff attorney conducts research and necessary legal writing for the Council and all its subcommittees, advises on open records and public record law, has refreshed the Council's website, and acts as a liaison to all three branches of government.

As a result, the Council now has the capacity to have its committees navigate larger projects, such as its newly formed Committee on Municipal Court Interpreters, a research committee assembled at the request of the Supreme Court. Soon, the Council will roll out a new "open comment" process for public collaboration that will be managed by the staff attorney, increasing the Council's public engagement prior to the drafting of rule petitions and legislative amendments. The first open comment period will concern the Council's review and restyling of the state's rules of evidence. Future important projects are on the horizon with the support of a staff attorney.

The Council's 2027-2029 biennial budget request seeks to continue position authority and funding so that the Council can operate efficiently and continue its mission to improve court practice and procedure for all.

On behalf of the Council, our Budget Chair, Margo Kirchner, and I will be pleased to answer any questions that you may have about the Council's proposed 2027-2029 biennial budget.

Sincerely,

Electronically signed by William C. Gleisner, III

William C. Gleisner, III, Chair
Wisconsin Judicial Council
State Bar No. 1014276

Cc: Judicial Council Budget Committee

AGENCY DESCRIPTION

The council is authorized to advise the Supreme Court, the Governor and the Legislature on any matter affecting the administration of justice in Wisconsin, and it may recommend Supreme Court rules or legislation to change the procedure, jurisdiction or organization of the courts. The council studies the rules of pleading, practice and procedure, and advises the Supreme Court and Legislature about changes that will simplify procedure and promote efficiency.

The council consists of 21 members as follows: a Supreme Court justice designated by the Supreme Court; a Court of Appeals judge designated by the Court of Appeals; the director of state courts or his or her designee; four Circuit Court judges selected by the Judicial Conference; the chairpersons of the Senate and Assembly committees dealing with judicial affairs or a designated member from such committees; the Attorney General or his or her designee; the chief of the Legislative Reference Bureau or his or her designee; the deans of the University of Wisconsin and Marquette University law schools or a designated member of the respective law school faculties; the state public defender or his or her designee; the president-elect of the State Bar of Wisconsin or a designated member of the Board of Governors of the State Bar; three members of the State Bar selected by the State Bar; one district attorney appointed by the Governor; and two citizens at large appointed by the Governor.

MISSION

The mission of the council is to study and make recommendations relating to court pleadings, practices and procedures; and organization, jurisdiction and methods of administration and operation of Wisconsin courts.

PROGRAMS, GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Program 1: Advisory Services to the Courts and the Legislature

Goal: Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Wisconsin court system.

Objective/Activity: The council studies the rules of pleading, practice and procedure, and advises the Supreme Court and the Legislature on changes that will simplify procedures and promote efficiency. The council studies court administration throughout the state, and can receive, investigate and recommend proposed changes to the administration of justice in Wisconsin. The council is to be aware of judicial decisions and proposed legislation that would impact courts. The council is also empowered to recommend to the Supreme Court, Governor and Legislature any changes in the organization, jurisdiction, operation and business methods of the courts that would result in a more effective and cost-efficient court system.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2025 AND 2026 GOALS AND ACTUALS

Prog. No.	Performance Measure	Goal 2025	Actual 2025	Goal 2026	Actual 2026
1.	Review and draft recommended amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure.	Participate in review of digital audio recording rules	Provided feedback on rule improvement and maintained contact with Digital Audio Recording Workgroup convened by the Director of State Courts	Review and draft changes related to the deoxyribonucleic acid analysis surcharge	Sample drafts circulated internally to subcommittee, additional research and collaboration ongoing based on feedback
1.	Review and research amendments to the Rules of Evidence.	Continue to work on revisions to the state's injunction rules	Subcommittee completed initial draft of recommended changes to Rules of Evidence, including revisions to the state's injunction rules, project ongoing	Continue to work on revisions to the state's injunction rules	Project to revise Rules of Evidence, including revisions to the state's injunction rules, ongoing Council approved draft for solicitation of public comments
1.	Review and research amendments to the Rules of Civil Procedure.	Finalize proposed statutory language for changes to Rules of Civil Procedure regarding temporary restraining orders and preliminary injunctions and submit proposed bill to Legislature	Completed draft of recommended changes, project ongoing Initiated study of interpreter use in municipal courts at suggestion of the Supreme Court	Review and draft recommended amendments at the direction of the Supreme Court, Legislature or council	Study of interpreter use in municipal courts at the suggestion of the Supreme Court Analyzing referrals to the council received in spring 2026, new projects will be selected in fall 2026

Prog. No.	Performance Measure	Goal 2025	Actual 2025	Goal 2026	Actual 2026
1.	Review and research amendments to the Rules of Appellate Procedure.	Review the procedure for assigning an appeal to one of the state's appellate court districts	Review completed, no further action taken	Review and draft recommended amendments at the direction of the Supreme Court, Legislature or council	Ongoing analysis of s. 809.10(4), Wisconsin Statutes, for potential amendment was resolved by new case law. Workgroup ongoing to analyze issue areas identified in s. 809.019, Wisconsin Statutes.
1.	Timely response to requests to review Supreme Court rules.	Provide recommendations regarding proposed Supreme Court rules changes	No requests received	Provide recommendations regarding proposed Supreme Court rules changes	No requests received

Note: Based on fiscal year.

Note: The council's calendar begins in September of each year and continues until the following June. The council ordinarily does not meet in April, July, August and December.

2027, 2028 AND 2029 GOALS

Prog. No.	Performance Measure[1]	Goal 2027	Goal 2028	Goal 2029
1.	Review and draft recommended amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure.	Review and draft recommended amendments at the direction of the Supreme Court, Legislature or council Review and draft changes related to the deoxyribonucleic acid analysis surcharge Review criminal statutes for laws and rules superseded by more recently enacted legislation	Review code for areas to update and restyle, including incorporation of federal rules and recent case law Review and draft recommended amendments at the direction of the Supreme Court, Legislature or council	Review code for areas to update and restyle, including incorporation of federal rules and recent case law Review and draft recommended amendments at the direction of the Supreme Court, Legislature or council
1.	Review and research amendments to the Rules of Evidence.	Continue review of all rules of evidence and research into updates to the rules to restyle and incorporate Federal Rules of Evidence and recent case law Complete and submit rule petition updating the Rules of Evidence	Analyze the implementation of new evidence rules for improvements or continue work on petition if further review is requested by the Supreme Court or Legislature	Analyze the implementation of new evidence rules for improvements or continue work on petition if further review is requested by the Supreme Court or Legislature

Prog. No.	Performance Measure[1]	Goal 2027	Goal 2028	Goal 2029
1.	Review and research amendments to the Rules of Civil Procedure.	Review and draft recommended amendments at the direction of the Supreme Court, Legislature or council Submit bill proposal for Rules of Civil Procedure regarding temporary restraining orders and preliminary injunctions Complete research on interpreter use in municipal courts as requested by the Supreme Court	Complete recommendations for interpreter use in municipal courts at the request of the Supreme Court Review and draft recommended amendments at the direction of the Supreme Court, Legislature or council	Review and draft recommended amendments at the direction of the Supreme Court, Legislature or council
1.	Review and research amendments to the Rules of Appellate Procedure.	Review and draft recommended amendments at the direction of the Supreme Court, Legislature or council Comprehensive review and restyling of the Rules of Appellate Procedure, including drafting amendments or petitions	Review and draft recommended amendments at the direction of the Supreme Court, Legislature or council Comprehensive review and restyling of the Rules of Appellate Procedure, including drafting amendments or petitions	Review and draft recommended amendments at the direction of the Supreme Court, Legislature or council Comprehensive review and restyling of the Rules of Appellate Procedure, including drafting amendments or petitions

Prog. No.	Performance Measure[1]	Goal 2027	Goal 2028	Goal 2029
1.	Timely response to requests to review Supreme Court rules.	Provide recommendations regarding proposed Supreme Court rules changes	Provide recommendations regarding proposed Supreme Court rules changes	Provide recommendations regarding proposed Supreme Court rules changes

Note: Based on fiscal year.

[1]Performance measures and goals have been revised for the upcoming biennium.

Judicial Council

Sarah Walkenhorst Barber
Drafting Attorney
APPT: Legislative Reference Bureau

Sarah A. Zylstra
Attorney at Law
APPT: State Bar

Hon. Rachel Graham
Court of Appeals
APPT: Court of Appeals

Hon. Ryan Nilsestuen
Dane County Circuit Court
APPT: Judicial Conference

Jason Luczak
Gimbel, Reilly, Guerin, & Brown
APPT: State Bar

William Gleisner
APPT: Governor's Appointment

Samir Jaber
Department of Justice
APPT: Attorney General

Margo Kirchner
Wisconsin Justice Initiative, Inc.
APPT: State Bar

Hon. Audrey Skwierawski
Director of State Courts
APPT: Director of State Courts

Jeremy Perri
Office of the State Public Defender
APPT: State Public Defender

Hon. Beverly Wickstrom
Eau Claire County Circuit Court
APPT: Judicial Conference

Daniel Blinka
Godfrey and Kahn, S.C.
APPT: State Bar President-Elect

Rep. Ron Tusler
APPT: Assembly Judiciary Committee

Molly McNab
Department of Natural Resources
APPT: Governor's Appointment

Professor Thomas L. Shriner, Jr.
Foley & Lardner LLP
APPT: Dean, Marquette Law School

Hon. Kristine Snow
Dodge County Circuit Court
APPT: Judicial Conference

Hon. Emily Lonergan
Outagamie County
APPT: Judicial Conference

Senator Van H. Wanggaard
APPT: Senate Judiciary Committee

Professor Lanny Glinberg
University of Wisconsin Law School
APPT: Dean, UW Law School

Hon. Brian Hagedorn
Wisconsin Supreme Court
APPT: Supreme Court

Rebecca Maki-Wallander
Adams County District Attorney
APPT: Governor's Appointment

As of: 9/15/2026

Agency Total by Fund Source

		ANNUAL SUMMARY						BIENNIAL SUMMARY			
Source of Funds		Prior Year Total	Adjusted Base	1st Year Total	2nd Year Total	1st Year FTE	2nd Year FTE	Base Year Doubled (BYD)	Biennial Request	Change From (BYD)	Change From BYD %
GPR	S	$78,568	$164,000	$192,900	$192,900	1.00	1.00	$328,000	$385,800	$57,800	17.60%
Total		$78,568	$164,000	$192,900	$192,900	1.00	1.00	$328,000	$385,800	$57,800	17.60%
Grand Total		$78,568	$164,000	$192,900	$192,900	1.00	1.00	$328,000	$385,800	$57,800	17.60%

Agency Total by Program

		ANNUAL SUMMARY						BIENNIAL SUMMARY			
Source of Funds		**Prior Year Total**	**Adjusted Base**	**1st Year Total**	**2nd Year Total**	**1st Year FTE**	**2nd Year FTE**	**Base Year Doubled (BYD)**	**Biennial Request**	**Change From (BYD)**	**Change From BYD %**
01 Advisory services to the courts and the legislature											
Non Federal											
GPR		**$78,568**	**$164,000**	**$192,900**	**$192,900**	**1.00**	**1.00**	**$328,000**	**$385,800**	**$57,800**	**17.62%**
	S	$78,568	$164,000	$192,900	$192,900	1.00	1.00	$328,000	$385,800	$57,800	17.62%
Total - Non Federal		**$78,568**	**$164,000**	**$192,900**	**$192,900**	**1.00**	**1.00**	**$328,000**	**$385,800**	**$57,800**	**17.62%**
	S	$78,568	$164,000	$192,900	$192,900	1.00	1.00	$328,000	$385,800	$57,800	17.62%
PGM 01 Total		**$78,568**	**$164,000**	**$192,900**	**$192,900**	**1.00**	**1.00**	**$328,000**	**$385,800**	**$57,800**	**17.62%**
GPR		**$78,568**	**$164,000**	**$192,900**	**$192,900**	**1.00**	**1.00**	**$328,000**	**$385,800**	**$57,800**	**17.62%**
	S	$78,568	$164,000	$192,900	$192,900	1.00	1.00	$328,000	$385,800	$57,800	17.62%
TOTAL 01		**$78,568**	**$164,000**	**$192,900**	**$192,900**	**1.00**	**1.00**	**$328,000**	**$385,800**	**$57,800**	**17.62%**
	S	$78,568	$164,000	$192,900	$192,900	1.00	1.00	$328,000	$385,800	$57,800	17.62%
AGENCY TOTAL		$78,568	$164,000	$192,900	$192,900	1.00	1.00	$328,000	$385,800	$57,800	17.62%

Agency Total by Decision Item

Decision Item	1st Year Total	2nd Year Total	1st Year FTE	2nd Year FTE
2000 Adjusted Base Funding Level	$164,000	$164,000	1.00	1.00
3003 Full Funding of Continuing Position Salaries and Fringe Benefits	$20,700	$20,700	0.00	0.00
4001 Supplies and Services Expenditure Authority Re-estimate	$8,200	$8,200	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	**$192,900**	**$192,900**	**1.00**	**1.00**

Decision Item (DIN): 2000 - Adjusted Base Funding Level

NARRATIVE

Adjusted Base Funding Level

Decision Item by Line

Decision Item (DIN): 2000 - Adjusted Base Funding Level

Line Number	Expenditure Items	1st Year Cost	2nd Year Cost
01	Permanent Position Salaries	$107,900	$107,900
02	Turnover	$0	$0
03	Project Position Salaries	$0	$0
04	LTE/Misc. Salaries	$0	$0
05	Fringe Benefits	$44,100	$44,100
06	Supplies and Services	$12,000	$12,000
07	Permanent Property	$0	$0
08	Unallotted Reserve	$0	$0
09	Aids to Individuals & Organizations	$0	$0
10	Local Assistance	$0	$0
11	One-time Financing	$0	$0
12	Debt service	$0	$0
13		$0	$0
14		$0	$0
15		$0	$0
16		$0	$0
17	**TOTAL**	**$164,000**	**$164,000**
18	Project Positions Authorized	0.00	0.00
19	Classified Positions Authorized	0.00	0.00
20	Unclassified Positions Authorized	1.00	1.00

Decision Item by Numeric

Program: 01 - Advisory services to the courts and the legislature

Decision Item (DIN): 2000 - Adjusted Base Funding Level

Numeric	1st Year Total	2nd Year Total	1st Year FTE	2nd Year FTE
01 - General program operations	$164,000	$164,000	1.00	1.00
Program Sub Total	**$164,000**	**$164,000**	**1.00**	**1.00**
DIN 2000 - Adjusted Base Funding Level Total	**$164,000**	**$164,000**	**1.00**	**1.00**
Agency Total	**$164,000**	**$164,000**	**1.00**	**1.00**

Decision Item by Fund Source

Decision Item (DIN): 2000 - Adjusted Base Funding Level

Source of Funds	Type	1st Year Total	2nd Year Total	1st Year FTE	2nd Year FTE
GPR	S	$164,000	$164,000	1.00	1.00
DIN 2000 - Adjusted Base Funding Level Total		**$164,000**	**$164,000**	**1.00**	**1.00**
Agency Total		**$164,000**	**$164,000**	**1.00**	**1.00**

Decision Item (DIN): 3003 - Full Funding of Continuing Position Salaries and Fringe Benefits

NARRATIVE

Standard Budget Adjustment - Full Funding of Continuing Position Salaries and Fringe Benefits

Decision Item by Line

Decision Item (DIN): 3003 - Full Funding of Continuing Position Salaries and Fringe Benefits

Line Number	Expenditure Items	1st Year Cost	2nd Year Cost
01	Permanent Position Salaries	$100	$100
02	Turnover	$0	$0
03	Project Position Salaries	$0	$0
04	LTE/Misc. Salaries	$0	$0
05	Fringe Benefits	$20,600	$20,600
06	Supplies and Services	$0	$0
07	Permanent Property	$0	$0
08	Unallotted Reserve	$0	$0
09	Aids to Individuals & Organizations	$0	$0
10	Local Assistance	$0	$0
11	One-time Financing	$0	$0
12	Debt service	$0	$0
13		$0	$0
14		$0	$0
15		$0	$0
16		$0	$0
17	**TOTAL**	**$20,700**	**$20,700**
18	Project Positions Authorized	0.00	0.00
19	Classified Positions Authorized	0.00	0.00
20	Unclassified Positions Authorized	0.00	0.00

Decision Item by Numeric

Program: 01 - Advisory services to the courts and the legislature

Decision Item (DIN): 3003 - Full Funding of Continuing Position Salaries and Fringe Benefits

Numeric	1st Year Total	2nd Year Total	1st Year FTE	2nd Year FTE
01 - General program operations	$20,700	$20,700	0.00	0.00
Program Sub Total	**$20,700**	**$20,700**	**0.00**	**0.00**
DIN 3003 - Full Funding of Continuing Position Salaries and Fringe Benefits Total	**$20,700**	**$20,700**	**0.00**	**0.00**
Agency Total	**$20,700**	**$20,700**	**0.00**	**0.00**

Decision Item by Fund Source

Decision Item (DIN): 3003 - Full Funding of Continuing Position Salaries and Fringe Benefits

Source of Funds	Type	1st Year Total	2nd Year Total	1st Year FTE	2nd Year FTE
GPR	S	$20,700	$20,700	0.00	0.00
DIN 3003 - Full Funding of Continuing Position Salaries and Fringe Benefits Total		**$20,700**	**$20,700**	**0.00**	**0.00**
Agency Total		**$20,700**	**$20,700**	**0.00**	**0.00**

Decision Item (DIN): 4001 - Supplies and Services Expenditure Authority Re-estimate

NARRATIVE

The Judicial Council (or Council) requests an increase to ongoing supplies and services expenditure authority under s. 20.670 (1) (a), Wis. Stats., General program operations, appropriation numeric 10100, in the amount of $8,200 GPR for a Wheeler Report subscription and for Council member and board travel expense reimbursement, both of which are unable to be absorbed within current expenditure authority.

Prior to the 2025-27 biennial budget enacted by 2025 Act 15, the Council had no expenditure or position authorization. In the 2025-27 biennial budget, the Council was authorized $12,000 in annual, ongoing supplies and services authority accompanying the authorization of their sole 1.00 FTE position. The expenditure authority granted was for personnel-related expense and did not include funding for other operational needs such as to reimburse board members for travel expenses as authorized under s. 758.13 (1) (b), Wis. Stats., or to purchase additional subscriptions used for Council operations and awareness, such as the Wheeler Report. The $8,200 GPR of expenditure authority requested would enable the Council to support these further operational necessities in addition to personnel-related expenditures.

Decision Item by Line

Decision Item (DIN): 4001 - Supplies and Services Expenditure Authority Re-estimate

Line Number	Expenditure Items	1st Year Cost	2nd Year Cost
01	Permanent Position Salaries	$0	$0
02	Turnover	$0	$0
03	Project Position Salaries	$0	$0
04	LTE/Misc. Salaries	$0	$0
05	Fringe Benefits	$0	$0
06	Supplies and Services	$8,200	$8,200
07	Permanent Property	$0	$0
08	Unallotted Reserve	$0	$0
09	Aids to Individuals & Organizations	$0	$0
10	Local Assistance	$0	$0
11	One-time Financing	$0	$0
12	Debt service	$0	$0
13		$0	$0
14		$0	$0
15		$0	$0
16		$0	$0
17	**TOTAL**	**$8,200**	**$8,200**
18	Project Positions Authorized	0.00	0.00
19	Classified Positions Authorized	0.00	0.00
20	Unclassified Positions Authorized	0.00	0.00

Decision Item by Numeric

Program: 01 - Advisory services to the courts and the legislature

Decision Item (DIN): 4001 - Supplies and Services Expenditure Authority Re-estimate

Numeric	1st Year Total	2nd Year Total	1st Year FTE	2nd Year FTE
01 - General program operations	$8,200	$8,200	0.00	0.00
Program Sub Total	**$8,200**	**$8,200**	**0.00**	**0.00**
DIN 4001 - Supplies and Services Expenditure Authority Re-estimate Total	**$8,200**	**$8,200**	**0.00**	**0.00**
Agency Total	**$8,200**	**$8,200**	**0.00**	**0.00**

Decision Item by Fund Source

Decision Item (DIN): 4001 - Supplies and Services Expenditure Authority Re-estimate

Source of Funds	Type	1st Year Total	2nd Year Total	1st Year FTE	2nd Year FTE
GPR	S	$8,200	$8,200	0.00	0.00
DIN 4001 - Supplies and Services Expenditure Authority Re-estimate Total		**$8,200**	**$8,200**	**0.00**	**0.00**
Agency Total		**$8,200**	**$8,200**	**0.00**	**0.00**