

BUDGET REVIEW AND ANALYSIS: JUDICIARY



The New York State courts are established and administered as an independent branch of government pursuant to Article VI of the State Constitution. The cost of operating the courts (excluding town and village courts) is borne by the state pursuant to the Unified Court Budget Act. The mission of the Unified Court System is to promote the rule of law and to serve the public by providing just and timely resolutions of all matters before the courts. The New York State Judiciary (Judiciary) carries out its mission through 11 different trial courts (courts of original jurisdiction), its intermediate appellate courts and its highest court, the Court of Appeals.

The Judiciary's proposed budget request, as submitted to the Governor, recommends appropriations of \$2.8 billion, which is an increase of \$78.43 million or 2.9 percent from the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2014-15 level.

Table 58

Appropriations					
Agency	2014-15	2015-16	Change (\$ in Millions)	Change (%)	5-year Trend
	Adjusted (\$ in Millions)	Exec Request (\$ in Millions)			
Office of Court Administration	2,726.14	2,804.57	78.43	2.88	

Table 59

Disbursements					
Agency	2014-15	2015-16	Change (\$ in Millions)	Change (%)	5-year Trend
	Adjusted (\$ in Millions)	Exec Request (\$ in Millions)			
Office of Court Administration	2,707.60	2,783.37	75.77	2.80	

Civil Legal Services: The proposed budget includes a total of \$70 million to support the recommendations of the Chief Judge's task force to expand civil legal services, an increase of \$15 million from the SFY 2014-15 level.

Family Court Judges: The Judiciary's budget includes a \$24.3 million increase in personal service over the SFY 2014-15 level. This includes support for additional Family Court judgeships created effective January 1, 2016, as well as the annualization of the cost of the 20 Family Court judgeships created effective January 1, 2015. The proposed budget also provides funding for non-judicial positions that would support these new judgeships.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS: STATE OPERATIONS AND WORKFORCE



- **Executive Agencies:** The Executive proposes to hold personal service and non personal service spending flat with limited exceptions, such as costs attributable to the NY State of Health marketplace and the new Basic Health Plan (BHP) program. Agencies are expected to continue to utilize less costly forms of service deliveries, improve administrative practices, and pursue statewide solutions, particularly at mental hygiene State-operated facilities.
- **Fringe Benefits/Fixed Costs:** The Executive Budget includes a payment of the State's pension bill by the end of July 2015, instead of March 1, 2016, which will save the State an estimated \$41 million. Additionally, health insurance costs for State employees increased by less than anticipated, and the Executive Budget includes a planned audit to identify and remove ineligible dependents from the New York State Health Insurance Program (NYSHIP). Finally, the Executive Budget adjusts State Workers' Compensation costs to reflect lower medical inflation rates and slower growth in average weekly wages.
- **University Systems:** Spending for the State University of New York (SUNY)/CUNY is projected to decline, mainly due to the closure of the Long Island College Hospital.
- ✓ ➤ **Independent Officials:** Spending for the Legislature, the Department of Audit and Control (OSC), and the Department of Law is projected to remain essentially flat through SFY 2018-19.
- ✓ Judiciary spending is projected to increase by 1.7 percent in SFY 2015-16, driven primarily by the authorization of additional Family Court Justices in the SFY 2014-15 Enacted Budget, statutory salary increases for non-judicial employees represented by the Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA), and increased funding for civil legal services.