

**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS (0023)**

**FISCAL YEAR 2016**

**As Enacted by Acts 986 & 598 of 2015**

**I) AGENCY SUMMARY & REVENUE SOURCES**

**MISSION**

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) is the administrative office for the non-judicial business of the state courts. The office provides services to the court system, state and local governments and the public. AOC also oversees Trial Court Administrators and Court Reporters.

**TOTAL APPROPRIATION**

The total operations appropriation is \$25,536,489 for FY2016. The total appropriation for Trial Court Administrators (TCA's) is \$7,787,911 and the total appropriation for Court Reporters is \$9,974,929.

**FUNDING SOURCES**

The Administrative Office of the Courts receives funding from State Central Services, Federal Funds, Special Revenues (court technology fees), Administration of Justice Funds (AOJ) and Cash Funds (grants).

**II) CHANGE LEVEL REQUESTS**

**OPERATIONS-State Central Services**

Appropriated at \$4.1 million for FY2016 which is \$381,781 over base level for salary and match for 2 new positions, increases in the Judicial Education line item, Court Interpreter Fees line item and restoration of Capital Outlay to the FY2015 authorized level of \$164,500.

**DEPENDENCY NEGLECT REPRESENTATION-State Central Services & AOJ**

Appropriated at \$9.6 million for FY2016 which is over \$974,000 over base level in salaries and match for a salary retention plan, increases in CASA grants, reimbursement for parent counsel attorneys and increases in Ad Litem reimbursements.

**COURT AUTOMATION-Special Revenue (court technology fees)**

Appropriated at over \$6.1 million for FY2016 which is \$1,174,540 over base level for expenses relating to two new positions and restoration of Capital Outlay to FY2015 authorized level of \$1,000,000.

**COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM-Federal**

Appropriated at \$1.1 million for FY2016 which is \$157,187 over base level due to increased funding in federal grant monies.

**DISTRICT JUDGES/CLERKS CONTINUING EDUCATION-AOJ**

Appropriated at \$120,000 for FY2016 which is \$20,000 over base level for increased training reimbursements which will be funded from fund balances.

**ACCESS/VISITATION MEDIATION-Federal**

Appropriated at \$138,852 for FY2016 which is a decrease from base level of \$5,000 due to a decline in anticipated federal funding.

**COURT SECURITY GRANTS-State Central Services & AOJ**

Appropriated at \$362,248 which is \$3,000 above base level for conference and travel expenses.

**ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMISSION-Cash (grant)**

Appropriated at \$275,000 for FY2016 which is \$25,000 over base level for technology upgrades.

**AUTOMATION PROJECT-Cash (grant)**

Appropriated at \$150,000 for FY2016 which is the FY2015 authorized level.

**FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS**

Agency has four federal appropriations that were established during the interim and are being recommended to continue for FY2016. There are also four federal appropriations that are not continuing due to no available federal funds.

**TRIAL COURT ADMINISTRATORS & COURT REPORTERS-AOJ & Real Estate Transfer Tax**

Act 268 of 2015 transferred responsibility for TCA's and Court Reporters to AOC. It also changed the title from Trial Court Administrative Assistants to Administrators and made the same adjustment to the fund name. Both appropriation levels remained at base level.

**SPECIALTY COURT PROGRAMS-Special Revenue (fees)**

New appropriation totaling \$300,000 funded from a specialty court user fee of \$250 created in Act 894 of 2015 The Criminal Justice Reform Act.

**III) ADDITIONAL POSITIONS (Total Authorized Position FY2015:124)**

Operations

Total Authorized Positions FY2016:131

Total Base Level Positions:124

Increase/(Decrease)Over Base Level:7

TCA's

Total Authorized Positions FY2016:122

Total Base Level Positions:122

Increase/(Decrease)Over Base Level:0

Court Reporters

Total Authorized Positions FY2016:122

Total Base Level Positions:122

Increase/(Decrease)Over Base Level:0

Extra Help Positions FY2016:2 (Total FY2015 Authorized Extra Help:2)

**IV) SPECIAL LANGUAGE**

**FUND TRANSFER:** Federal funds transferred to State Central Services, received from the State Police from the federal "State and Community Highway Safety Program" are to be used to reimburse the Municipal Judges Continuing Education Appropriation.

**CONTRACTING WITH STATE ATTORNEYS:** The AOC may contract with state employees to provide Dependency Neglect Services which will not count against those employees rate of pay.

**DEPENDENCY NEGLECT REPRESENTATION APPROPRIATION TRANSFER AUTHORITY:**

Allows the AOC to transfer funds and appropriations between line items as needed.

**TRANSFER AUTHORITY:** Provides language that the appropriation for Dependency-Neglect may be funded by funds transferred from the State Administration of Justice Fund to the State Central Services Fund.

**FUNDING:** Federal funds received from the State Police from the federal "Safety Incentives to Prevent Operation of Motor Vehicles by Intoxicated Persons" may be used for operating expenses of the District Court State Automation System.

**MONTHLY INSTALLMENTS:** Provides that a lump sum monthly installment of the annual appropriation for the Division of Dependency-Neglect Representation shall be provided from the Administration of Justice Fund.

**\*LANGUAGE DELETED\* LEGAL RESEARCH SPECIALIST NEW HIRE REQUIREMENT.** Any new hire for the this position for the Division of Dependency Neglect-Representation must have prior approval of the personnel subcommittee.

**INDIGENT PARENT COUNSEL REPRESENTATION:** Allows the AOC to enter into professional service contracts with attorneys to provide counsel for indigent parents in cases involving termination of parental rights.

**\*LANGUAGE DELETED\* DISTRICT JUDGES ASSOCIATION REIMBURSEMENT:** Allows a portion of Municipal Court Judge and Municipal Court Education Fund to be used to reimburse District Judges Association.

**TRANSFER PROVISION:** Allows transfer of appropriation between line items in the Court Automation Appropriation.

**\*NEW LANGUAGE\* AOC RESPONSIBILITY FOR COURT REPORTERS & TCA'S:** AOC will be responsible for financial oversight of TCA's and Court Reporters and shall establish procedures and rules for TCA's and Court Reporters.

**\*NEW LANGUAGE\* FUNDING FROM ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE (AOJ) FUND:** AOC shall be responsible for requesting any increases in funding or appropriations for TCA's and Court Reporters. AOJ fund increase request shall not exceed projected total revenues available.

**TRIAL COURT ADMINISTRATOR EMPLOYMENT:** If a TCA terminates employment, the position shall remain vacant until payment of accumulated annual leave has been accounted for.

April 2015