

LSC Greenbook

Analysis of the Enacted Budget

Court of Claims

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August 2015

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ATTACHMENT:

Budget Spreadsheet By Line Item

Court of Claims

- Service levels to be maintained
- GRF drives budget
- Roughly 80% of budget allocated for payroll-related expenses

OVERVIEW

Duties and Responsibilities

The Court of Claims, established in 1975, is the only statutory court with statewide jurisdiction. Prior to its creation, there was no forum for civil actions filed against the state of Ohio. The Court of Claims' duties include:

1. Adjudicating civil actions filed against the state;
2. Hearing appeals from decisions made by the Attorney General on claims allowed under the Victims of Crime Law; and
3. Acting as the state's fiduciary agent for processing claims of wrongful imprisonment.

Appropriation Overview

Table 1 below summarizes the Court's budget by fund group. It is primarily funded by money appropriated from the General Revenue Fund (GRF) and secondarily by Dedicated Purpose Fund (DPF) Group funds, specifically cash transferred from the Victims of Crime/Reparations Fund (Fund 4020), which is used primarily by the Office of the Attorney General. Each source of funding is dedicated to supporting the primary functions of the Court, including administering the civil docket (GRF) and overseeing the appeals of victims of crime applications (DPF), respectively.

Fund Group	FY 2015*	FY 2016	% change, FY 2015-FY 2016	FY 2017	% change, FY 2016-FY 2017
General Revenue	\$5,205,386	\$2,562,959	-50.8%	\$2,536,419	-1.0%
Dedicated Purpose	\$407,434	\$427,184	4.9%	\$434,019	1.6%
TOTAL	\$5,612,820	\$2,990,143	-46.7%	\$2,970,438	-0.7%

*FY 2015 figures represent actual expenditures.

For FY 2016, the budget appropriates for the Court's use a total of \$2,990,143, a decrease of \$2,622,677, or 46.7%, from FY 2015 expenditures of \$5,612,820. This decrease reflects wrongful imprisonment payments made in FY 2015 on an as-needed basis. The Court's FY 2017 appropriation totals \$2,970,438, a decrease of \$19,705, or 0.7%, from the FY 2016 appropriation. These appropriations are expected to be sufficient for the Court to maintain necessary service levels over the course of the FY 2016-FY 2017 biennium.

Roughly 80% of the Court's total biennial appropriation is expected to be allocated for personal services, which represents the payroll-related expenses (salary and fringe benefits) associated with the equivalent of 20-plus full-time staff positions.

Staffing

Tables 2 and 3 below display staffing levels in terms of full-time equivalent (FTEs) staff positions maintained by the Court from FY 2009 projected through FY 2017. Table 2 reflects the number of FTEs for the Court's two major divisions: Civil and Victims of Crime. Table 3 represents FTEs by type of appointment. It should be noted that a number of employees are part-time. For this reason, the numbers may not illustrate a physical portrayal (i.e., head count) of the Court's staffing.

As shown in Table 2, the overall staffing level has more or less been decreasing since FY 2011. These decreases have been most noticeable in the Victims of Crime Division. As civil case filings and victims of crime appeals have decreased so has the need for staff.

Division	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015*	2016*	2017*
Civil	23.9	23.1	23.5	21.2	17.3	19.0	19.0	20.7	20.7
Crime Victims	11.6	10.7	11.8	10.6	6.2	2.3	2.3	2.5	2.5
TOTAL	35.5	33.8	35.3	31.8	23.5	21.3	21.3	23.2	23.2

*The staffing levels displayed in the above table represent FTEs. FYs 2015 through 2017 are projections.

Judges. The Court resides in Franklin County and consists of judges who sit by temporary assignment of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The appointments to the Court are temporary, lasting roughly three months. Many of the judges, however, are reappointed for multiple terms.

Appointment Types	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015*	2016*	2017*
Permanent Staff	28.9	29.3	28.5	27.5	27.5	18.0	18.0	19.7	19.7
Temporary Staff	1.6	0.7	1.8	0.0	0.0	1.9	1.9	1.2	1.2
Commissioners**	3.6	2.7	3.6	2.9	3.1	0.0	0.0	0	0
Judges	1.5	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	2.3	2.3
TOTAL	35.6	33.8	35.3	31.8	32.0	21.3	21.3	23.2	23.2

*The staffing levels displayed in the above table represent FTEs. FYs 2015 through 2017 are projections.

**The Commissioners were eliminated in FY 2014, as their work was transferred to existing magistrates.

ANALYSIS OF ENACTED BUDGET

The line items and related appropriations that will finance the Court's handling of civil cases and victims of crime appeals in FY 2016 and FY 2017 are shown in the table below. The table is followed by a description of the purpose for which those appropriations will be used. Also discussed is the Court's role in wrongful imprisonment settlements, which are funded on an as-needed basis.

Court of Claims Appropriations by Line Item, FY 2016-FY 2017				
Fund	ALI and Name		FY 2016	FY 2017
General Revenue Fund (GRF)				
GRF	015321	Operating Expenses	\$2,562,959	\$2,536,419
Dedicated Purpose Fund (DPF) Group				
5K20	015603	CLA Victims of Crime	\$427,184	\$434,019
Total Funding: Court of Claims			\$2,990,143	\$2,970,438

Operating Expenses (GRF line item 015321)

The expenses of operating the Court, primarily the Court's Civil Division, are paid with money appropriated to this GRF line item. The budget appropriates \$2,562,959 in FY 2016, an increase of \$319,674, or 14.3%, from FY 2015 expenditures of \$2,243,285. For FY 2017, the budget appropriates \$2,536,419, a decrease of \$26,540, or 1.0%, from the FY 2016 appropriation. Each year's appropriation will be allocated primarily for payroll-related expenses, with the remainder funding a mix of purchased personal services, supplies and maintenance, and equipment.

The Court's Civil Division is responsible for hearing all civil claims filed against the state of Ohio and its agencies. These claims are classified as either administrative determinations or judicial cases. Administrative determinations involve claims that are valued at \$10,000 or less and are typically resolved by the clerk without a hearing. Judicial cases are handled by a Court of Claims judge or magistrate and resolved through a judicial hearing.

Victims of Crime Appeals (DPF line item 015603)

This line item pays for: (1) the compensation of judges of the Court of Claims necessary to hear and determine appeals from the Office of the Attorney General, and (2) the compensation of any personnel of the Court of Claims needed to administer their appellate duties and responsibilities. Its appropriation is supported by cash transferred by the Office of Budget and Management from the Victims of Crime/Reparations Fund (Fund 4020), which is used by the Office of the Attorney General.

The line item's appropriation of \$427,184 in FY 2016 represents an increase of \$19,750, or 4.9%, from FY 2015 expenditures of \$407,434. The FY 2017 appropriation of \$434,019 represents an increase of \$6,835, or 1.6%, from the FY 2016 appropriation. Approximately 90% of each year's appropriation will be allocated for payroll-related expenses, with the remainder funding a mix of purchased personal services, supplies and maintenance, and equipment.

Wrongful Imprisonment Claims (GRF line item 015402)

The Court of Claims acts as the state's fiduciary agent for processing claims of wrongful imprisonment. When a wrongful imprisonment judgment has been rendered in a court of common pleas, the Controlling Board, upon certification by the Court of Claims, transfers the sum necessary to pay that judgment to the Court's GRF line item 015402, Wrongful Imprisonment Compensation. Since the Controlling Board provides the money for such judgments on an as-needed basis, the Court's line item does not receive a direct appropriation through the main operating appropriations act enacted by each General Assembly. However, once the expenditure is made, the amounts are tracked as spending by the Court.

The table below shows the total amount of money that the Court has disbursed to make wrongful imprisonment settlements from FYs 2006-2015.

Wrongful Imprisonment Settlement Disbursements, FYs 2006-2015	
Fiscal Year	Total Disbursed
2006	\$2,357,877
2007	\$4,260,000
2008	\$0
2009	\$772,316
2010	\$1,088,396
2011	\$3,664,717
2012	\$549,628
2013	\$379,128
2014	\$721,560
2015	\$2,962,131

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FY 2016 - FY 2017 Final Appropriation Amounts

All Fund Groups

Line Item Detail by Agency

			FY 2014	FY 2015	Appropriation FY 2016	FY 2015 to FY 2016 % Change	Appropriation FY 2017	FY 2016 to FY 2017 % Change
Report For Main Operating Appropriations Bill			Version: As Enacted					
CLA Court of Claims								
GRF	015321	Operating Expenses	\$ 2,496,113	\$ 2,243,285	\$ 2,562,959	14.25%	\$ 2,536,419	-1.04%
GRF	015402	Wrongful Imprisonment Compensation	\$ 721,560	\$ 2,962,101	\$ 0	-100.00%	\$ 0	N/A
General Revenue Fund Total			\$ 3,217,673	\$ 5,205,386	\$ 2,562,959	-50.76%	\$ 2,536,419	-1.04%
5K20	015603	CLA Victims of Crime	\$ 290,561	\$ 407,434	\$ 427,184	4.85%	\$ 434,019	1.60%
Dedicated Purpose Fund Group Total			\$ 290,561	\$ 407,434	\$ 427,184	4.85%	\$ 434,019	1.60%
Court of Claims Total			\$ 3,508,234	\$ 5,612,820	\$ 2,990,143	-46.73%	\$ 2,970,438	-0.66%