

**King County District Court
Office of the Chief Presiding Judge**

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**The Honorable Barbara Linde
Chief Presiding Judge**

**Tricia Crozier
Chief Administrative Officer**

April 30, 2007

Honorable Larry Gossett
Metropolitan King County Council, Chair
King County Courthouse, Room 1200
Seattle, Washington 98104

Re: 2007 Budget Proviso

Dear Council Chair Gossett:

When the King County Council passed the 2007 budget, it included the following proviso for District Court:

By April 1, 2007, the district court shall submit to the council for its review a report detailing the status of the court's contracting with cities for municipal court services, the status of the court's facilities master plan, especially the status of facilities in the cities of Bellevue and Kent, and the court's progress in implementing operational master plan recommendations approved by the council in Ordinance 15195.

District court previously requested an extension of the response time to May 1, 2007. I am pleased to have the opportunity to provide the King County Council members with updated information regarding District Court. The Court has recently completed four significant projects:

1. The District Court implemented the new 2007 Interlocal Agreement for Court Services with 12 contracting cities and entered into a new Interlocal Agreement for Weekend and Holiday Jail Calendar Services with the City of Lake Forest Park;
2. The District Court assessed the quality of services and hardware in the Call Center;
3. The District Court along with the Facilities Management Division assessed the facility needs of District Court now, and over the next ten years, and transmitted a Facility Master Plan to Council; and

4. The District Court approved a comprehensive Staff Needs Assessment Study, authored by the National Center for State Courts.

You will note in the Court's Proviso Response that in addition to the above, the Court has made significant progress in implementing the 2005 Operational Master Plan and has begun work on the implementation of Performance Measures in the Court.

The most significant projects have been the Call Center Assessment and the Staff Needs Assessment. The Court is constantly juggling priorities in order to handle all of its administrative functions as well as its core business functions. Backlogs have grown and staff morale has suffered. Both of these independent assessments came to the same conclusion. The District Court staff works hard to provide consistent and quality service, but cannot do so at the current staffing levels.

The good news is that the Court already has funding available to implement the recommendations in the Call Center Assessment. A work order has been issued and bids are due back to the Court by May 4th. At the same time, a Request for Purchase is being written to begin the work on upgrading the hardware and software currently being utilized in the Call Center. These projects are expected to make a noticeable improvement in the Call Center in a very short time.

The Staff Needs Assessment is a comprehensive study that looks at all areas of the Court's staffing needs. It includes recommendations for eliminating positions, redefining positions, reclassifying positions and creating new positions. The study identifies areas that are priorities, such as a complete training program, a deputy chief administrative officer and a court analyst. These are programs and positions that most courts across the nation have, but District Court does not have and would greatly benefit the Court. The study makes two very important points:

- Beginning in Mid-2006, when managers left the employ of District Court, the court made a decision to leave those positions vacant at that time. The work was reassigned on an ad hoc basis, placing an even greater burden on the limited staff. The court should be commended for this action, in that the court is now in a position to immediately implement a portion of the changes recommended in this study.
- The Court could not absorb the total number of staff increases recommended in one year, even if budget resources permitted these increases, which they do not.

The Study contains an implementation strategy that was developed based upon draft report reviews and discussions between the National Center for State Courts and the Court's leadership. It is a multi-faceted and multi-year strategy. It contains recommendations that can be implemented right now, within the court's existing resources, as well as recommendations for a 2007 supplemental budget request, 2008 budget request and 2009 budget request.

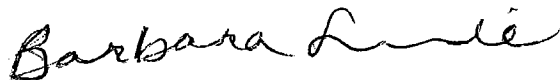
The Court's Leadership Team is meeting on Wednesday, May 2nd to begin the process of implementing the recommendations that can be accomplished within current resources. We also plan to submit a supplemental budget request that will be sent to the Executive within the next three weeks and then forwarded to the Council shortly thereafter. In the supplemental, the Court will be requesting funding for 12 clerks, 5 managers and consultants who will develop a detailed training program for the court. I hope

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you will favorably consider this request. I will make myself and my staff available to assist with any questions or additional information you may need at any point in this process.

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to get to work with you and the other Councilmembers so far this year. I look forward to continuing the close working relationship the Court has developed with the King County Council and with you in particular. Thank you, once again, for providing me with an opportunity to brief the Council on the good things the Court is doing and our serious need for staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Linde".

Barbara Linde
Chief Presiding Judge

cc: King County Councilmembers
Ron Sims, King County Executive
King County District Court Judges
Bob Cowan, Director, Office of Management and Budget
Tricia Crozier, Chief Administrative Officer, King County District Court