

Judicial

The 2004-06 budget, as introduced, includes a total of \$301.8 million GF the first year and \$305.2 million GF the second year for the Judicial Department. This represents a net increase of \$16.0 million GF (or 2.7 percent) for the biennium, when compared to the adjusted appropriation for current operations.

The introduced budget includes a series of small, technical amendments to adjust funding for risk management premiums, state employee workers' compensation premiums, and rental charges for office space at the seat of government; and, to capture savings associated with the Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA). Also, there is a series of technical amendments to pay the increase in Social Security taxes on salaries for justices and judges, resulting from the increase in the federal FICA salary tax cap.

There is a series of technical amendments to realign positions within the court system to reflect more accurately the actual work assignments for those positions in the General District Courts, Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts, Combined District Courts, and the Magistrate System.

There is a technical adjustment to distribute the base budget amounts for the Criminal Fund to the respective courts in which those funds are actually spent. However, the new funds proposed for the Criminal Fund are budgeted to the Circuit Courts, and have not yet been distributed to the other parts of the judicial system.

- **Circuit Courts**

- *Criminal Fund.* Includes \$5.0 million GF the first year and \$8.1 million GF the second year for the cost of providing court-appointed counsel for an increasing number of indigent defendants in criminal cases, and other expenses in the Criminal Fund.
- Total expenditures for the Criminal Fund are expected to increase from \$74.1 million in FY 2004 to \$77.7 million in FY 2005 and \$80.8 million in FY 2006.

- **General District Courts**

- *Involuntary Mental Commitment Fund.* Includes \$0.7 million GF the first year and \$0.9 million GF the second year for the cost of providing hearings for determining whether persons are to be committed involuntarily for mental health treatment.

- *Total (Judicial Department only) expenditures for the IMCF are expected to increase from to \$4.8 million in FY 2004 to \$4.9 million in 2005 and \$5.1 million in 2006.*
- *Hospitalization costs associated with involuntary mental commitment proceedings are included in the budget for the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS).*
- **State Board of Bar Examiners**
 - *Conversion of Part-Time Position.* Includes \$71,106 GF the first year and \$67,106 GF the second year to convert the position of Secretary-Treasurer from part-time to full-time status.
- **Public Defender Commission**
 - *Rent Increase.* Provides \$280,659 GF the first year and \$297,573 GF the second year for rent increases for 27 public defender offices throughout the Commonwealth.
 - *Salary Increase for New Positions.* Includes a technical adjustment of \$47,292 GF each year to fund the 2.5 percent pay increase as of December 1, 2003, for positions in the newly-created Norfolk Public Defenders Office.
- **Virginia State Bar**
 - *Base Budget Adjustment.* Provides \$130,000 NGF each year to reflect current personal services costs.
 - *Compensation Plan.* Includes \$108,000 NGF the first year and \$144,000 NGF the second year to implement the compensation plan for employees of the Virginia State Bar.
 - *Increased Regulatory Staff.* Provides \$203,950 NGF the first year and \$191,450 NGF the second year and 3.5 FTE positions each year for regulation of the legal profession. These additional attorney positions are intended to eliminate case backlogs and thereby ensure prompt resolution of disciplinary complaints.
 - *Electronic Files for Disciplinary Orders.* Includes \$20,000 NGF the first year only for conversion of hard-copy disciplinary orders into a web-based, searchable electronic file.

- *Electronic Services.* Provides \$110,000 NGF the first year only to implement a web-based information system to enhance public access to services. The system is intended to enable bar members to review and update information on file with the Virginia State Bar, and to provide enhanced access to the general public.
- *Study of Existing Database.* Includes \$25,000 NGF each year for an assessment of database replacement needs.