

# **Recommendations of the Trial Court Budget Commission Fiscal Year 2015-16 Legislative Budget Request**

## **Issue 1: Employee Pay - Salary Equity and Flexibility**

At the August 26, 2014, meeting, the Trial Court Budget Commission (TCBC) voted on options for consideration of filing an FY 2015-16 Legislative Budget Request (LBR) to address continuing salary equity and salary flexibility issues as well as specific pay issues to combat recruitment and retention problems and advance the court administration element funding methodology.

### **Trial Court Budget Commission Recommendation:**

1. File an LBR issue for the original second-year funding request for the salary equity and flexibility issue in the amount of \$8,961,891 with the understanding that the amount may be adjusted based on continued analysis.
2. Do not file an LBR issue for a 3.5% competitive pay adjustment but work throughout 2015 Legislative Session to insure judicial branch employees are included in any general competitive salary increase as may be provided to other state employees.

## Issue 2: Technology

At the August 26, 2014, meeting, the Trial Court Budget Commission (TCBC) voted on options for consideration of filing an FY 2015-16 Legislative Budget Request (LBR) to address funding for technology issues.

Historically, the Trial Court Budget Commission (TCBC) has considered legislative budget requests for a number of technology issues related to due process on an issue-by-issue basis. However, efforts to secure funding for these requests have met with limited success. Last year, issues were filed related to remote interpreting, judicial viewers in the criminal division, refresh and maintenance of existing court reporting equipment, and court reporting equipment expansion. None of these issues were funded by the Legislature.

As a result of a June 2013 Supreme Court directive to the TCBC to explore revenue sources for supporting lifecycle funding for judicial viewers and future technology needs of the trial courts, the Trial Court Technology Funding Strategies Workgroup was created to address the issues and make recommendations to the full Commission. The Workgroup determined that an information technology strategic plan was needed in order to determine the scope of what specific trial court systems/resources need to be funded and sustained.

A determination must be made by the TCBC on whether to submit a legislative budget request (LBR) with a placeholder amount (e.g., \$20 million, based on the preliminary estimates) that can be updated and supplemented with supporting components, such as funding proposals, statutory or policy proposals, before the 2015 legislative session; or if the issue will be submitted as a supplemental LBR.

Option 1: File a comprehensive trial court technology LBR during the normal schedule. Direct OSCA staff to work with the trial courts, allowing updates to the cost estimates (up or down), and adding issues or moving issues to out years that support the comprehensive technology strategic plan being drafted by the National Center for State Courts. Approval of the final LBR would be made by the Executive Committee before the deadline for submitting the recommendation to the Supreme Court. The Trial Court Technology Funding Strategies Workgroup will meet and develop the comprehensive proposed recommendations, including the Trial Court Technology Strategic Plan, Tactical/Operational plan, proposed funding strategies, and any statutory proposals, and will present it to the full Commission before the beginning of legislative session 2015.

Option 2: File a comprehensive trial court technology LBR during the supplemental LBR schedule in January.

Option 3: File individual technology issues, similar to previous years.

### **Trial Court Budget Commission Recommendation:**

Approve Option 1.

### **Issue 3: Case Management**

At the August 26, 2014, meeting, the Trial Court Budget Commission (TCBC) voted on options for consideration of filing an FY 2015-16 Legislative Budget Request (LBR) to address funding for case management issues.

In the absence of additional judicial resources appropriated to the trial courts over the last several years, additional case management resources are needed to assist in the processing and management of cases through the judicial system. Additionally, general revenue and foreclosure settlement funds, which have been allocated to the circuits for temporary case management resources for the last three fiscal years, will be terminated on June 30, 2015. At the June 20, 2014 meeting, the TCBC directed staff to examine the need and cost for additional case managers in the trial courts as part of the FY 2015-16 LBR strategy.

#### **Proposed LBR Methodologies:**

Option 1: Current LBR Needs Assessment - The current needs assessment funding methodology, approved by the TCBC in FY 2007-08, for the case management element is based on a ratio of 1.0 FTE Case Manager for every 5,500 projected FY 2015-16 filings with a floor of 8.0 FTE. Based on this methodology, an additional 92.0 FTE are needed, funded at the Court Program Specialist II position, totaling \$5,633,712.

Option 2: Request Based on Current Foreclosure Initiative OPS Case Managers - Utilizing the Foreclosure Backlog Reduction Initiative funding, the trial courts were able to obtain 135.5 OPS positions including Court Program Specialist I, Court Program Specialist II, and Senior Court Program Specialist. Based on current Foreclosure Initiative OPS positions, this methodology proposes requesting funds needed for 135.5 Case Management FTE positions, at a cost of \$8,191,137.

#### **Funding Methodology Committee Recommendation:**

Option 1 - File an LBR for \$5,633,712 in recurring funds for an additional 92.0 FTE Case Managers based on the current needs assessment funding formula.

#### **Trial Court Budget Commission Recommendation:**

Option 1 - File an LBR for \$5,633,712 in recurring funds for an additional 92.0 FTE Case Managers based on the current needs assessment funding formula.

**Trial Court Budget Commission**  
**August 26, 2014 Meeting**  
**FY 2015/16 Needs Assessment**  
**Case Management**

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	FY 2014/15 Budget		Total Need		FY 2015/16 Needs Assessment	
Circuit	FTE Allotment <sup>1</sup>	Total Salaries, Benefits, and Expenses <sup>2</sup>	FY 2015/16 Projected Filings <sup>3</sup>	Case Management Total Need <sup>4</sup> (Rounded to the nearest whole FTE)	Case Management FTE Net Need	TCBC Decision: Total Additional Need <sup>2</sup>
1	11	\$666,857	69,198	13	2	\$122,472
2	4	\$244,591	39,684	8	4	\$244,944
3	5	\$301,072	18,172	8	3	\$183,708
4	20	\$1,046,557	145,054	26	6	\$367,416
5	10	\$589,295	84,214	15	5	\$306,180
6	21.5	\$1,226,158	145,173	26	4.5	\$275,562
7	16.5	\$1,087,091	91,063	17	0.5	\$30,618
8	5	\$343,449	41,036	8	3	\$183,708
9	18	\$1,088,687	151,299	28	10	\$612,360
10	10.5	\$689,522	80,057	15	4.5	\$275,562
11	48	\$2,797,102	311,998	57	9	\$551,124
12	11	\$665,906	64,922	12	1	\$61,236
13	21	\$1,250,090	160,579	29	8	\$489,888
14	7	\$449,080	36,605	8	1	\$61,236
15	18	\$1,086,102	143,383	26	8	\$489,888
16	7	\$437,659	9,572	8	1	\$61,236
17	31	\$1,818,317	226,935	41	10	\$612,360
18	12.5	\$722,390	93,876	17	4.5	\$275,562
19	7	\$418,944	54,866	10	3	\$183,708
20	16	\$892,424	108,111	20	4	\$244,944
Reserve						
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>\$17,821,293</b>	<b>2,075,797</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>\$5,633,712</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes cost center 122 and cost center 217 (drug court) as of April 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Includes salaries, benefits, and expenses provided by OSCA, Budget Office.

<sup>3</sup> FY 2015/16 Projected Filings includes all circuit and county court filings with the exception of civil traffic infractions.

<sup>4</sup> Case Management Total Need is based on the funding methodology of 1:5,500 filings ratio and a floor of 8.0 FTE.

## **Issue 4: Court Interpreting Resources**

At the August 26, 2014, meeting, the Trial Court Budget Commission (TCBC) voted on options for consideration of filing an FY 2015-16 Legislative Budget Request (LBR) to address funding for court interpreting issues.

On March 27, 2014, the Supreme Court issued an opinion in SC13-304 amending the rules for certification of court interpreters. In response to concerns expressed during the FY 2014-15 allocation process regarding additional funding needed to comply with the requirements of the administrative order, the TCBC requested OSCA staff to examine options for requesting additional funding through a legislative budget request and also consider additional workload needs. The current court interpreting funding methodology for requesting recurring dollars to address increases in workload, excluding maintenance, applies the average two-year statewide percent growth in non-English speaking population to current year contractual expenditures and the cost of existing positions.

### **A. Contractual Funding**

Proposed LBR Methodologies:

Option 1: Request additional contractual funds based on circuit requests during the FY 2014-15 Allocation Process. The proposed methodology applies a 36.2% increase to each circuit's FY 2014-15 approved allocation amounts plus an additional 3.3% statewide growth rate to account for the projected growth in the non-English speaking population for FY 2015-16, for a total request for additional funds of \$1,002,648.

Option 2: Request additional contractual funds based on percent difference between certified and non-certified court interpreter contractual rates. The proposed methodology applies a 32.4% increase to each circuit's FY 2014-15 approved allocation amounts plus an additional 3.3% statewide growth rate to account for the projected growth in the non-English speaking population for FY 2015-16, for a total request for additional funds of \$897,812.

#### **Funding Methodology Committee Recommendation:**

Option 1 - Approve a request for additional contractual funding in the amount of \$1,002,648.

#### **Trial Court Budget Commission Recommendation:**

Approve Option 1, plus an additional \$230,644 (based on funds used from the due process reserve during the FY 2014-15 allocation process) for a total request of \$1,233,292.

## Issue 4: Court Interpreting Resources (continued)

### B. Compensation for FTE's

Methodology:

Currently, 31.5 FTE non-certified court interpreters receive annual base salaries less than the new base salary recommended by the TCBC for certified court interpreters (\$43,331.15). An additional \$133,834 is needed in order to increase the salaries of the 31.5 FTE from their current base salary to the new base salary for certified court interpreters.

# of FTE	Class Title	Current Base Salary	Annual Base Salary if Certified	Difference
28.5	Court Interpreter	\$1,121,705	\$1,234,938	\$113,233
3.0	Supervising Court Interpreter	\$144,601	\$165,202	\$20,601
<b>31.5</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,266,306</b>	<b>\$1,400,140</b>	<b>\$133,834</b>

#### **Funding Methodology Committee Recommendation:**

Approve including a request for \$133,834 for additional salary funds (in addition to the request for \$1,002,648 in contractual funds for a total LBR of \$1,136,482).

#### **Trial Court Budget Commission Recommendation:**

Approve including a request for \$133,834 for additional salary funds (in addition to the request for \$1,233,292 in contractual funds for a total LBR of \$1,367,126).

**Trial Court Budget Commission**  
**August 26, 2014 Meeting**  
**FY 2015/16 LBR - Court Interpreting**

36.2%	Percent increase based on circuit requests during FY 2014/15 allocations. <sup>1</sup>
32.4%	Average % increase between certified and non-certified contractual rates. <sup>2</sup>
3.3%	Statewide Estimated Annual Growth Rate <sup>3</sup>

Circuit	FY 2014/15 Contractual Allocations <sup>5</sup>	TCBC Decision: FY 2015/16 LBR Request - Option 1 using 36.2% increase plus statewide growth rate (3.3%)	FY 2015/16 LBR Request - Option 2 using 32.4% increase plus statewide growth rate (3.3%)
1	\$45,243	\$63,648	\$61,852
2	\$37,854	\$48,390	\$47,403
3	\$47,812	\$67,262	\$65,364
4	\$279,754	\$361,572	\$351,367
5 <sup>4</sup>	\$154,007	\$166,313	\$159,043
6 <sup>4</sup>	\$304,027	\$313,969	\$313,969
7	\$84,418	\$118,760	\$115,408
8	\$31,474	\$44,278	\$43,028
9	\$147,720	\$207,813	\$201,948
10	\$84,410	\$118,748	\$115,397
11	\$318,793	\$448,479	\$435,821
12	\$316,429	\$445,153	\$432,589
13 <sup>4</sup>	\$247,830	\$255,934	\$255,934
14	\$38,588	\$47,252	\$45,918
15	\$121,430	\$170,828	\$166,007
16	\$20,639	\$29,035	\$28,216
17	\$115,659	\$162,709	\$158,117
18	\$31,784	\$44,714	\$43,452
19	\$404,210	\$568,644	\$552,594
20	\$371,750	\$522,979	\$508,218
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,203,831</b>	<b>\$4,206,479</b>	<b>\$4,101,643</b>
<b>Amount Needed</b>		<b>\$1,002,648</b>	<b>\$897,812</b>

<sup>1</sup> Based on requests submitted by the 4th, 5th, 6th, 13th, and 14th circuits for additional funding above the current FY 2014/15 allocation formula to address costs associated with the implementation of SC13-304.

<sup>2</sup> Based on percent difference in the funding ceilings for certified and non-certified court interpreters, as stated in AOSC 11-45, for Spanish, Haitian, Other, and Sign Language.

<sup>3</sup> Estimated annual growth rate is based on the 2000 and 2010 Census. The rate is based on the difference between the number of "People who speak English at home less than very well" in Florida from 2000 to 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Circuits 6 and 13 were provided their current FY 2014/15 allotment plus the 3.3% growth rate in both Options 1 and 2 as additional funds in excess of the 36.2% and 32.4% increases were provided to those circuits during the FY 2014/15 allocation process. Circuit 5 was provided its current FY 2014/15 allotment plus the 3.3% growth rate in Option 2.

<sup>5</sup> FY 2014/15 circuit allocations were determined based on each circuit's three year average expenditures with a one year growth rate applied based on projected growth in non-English speaking population plus a 5% cushion.

## **Issue 5: Trial Court General Counsel Support**

At the August 26, 2014, meeting, the Trial Court Budget Commission (TCBC) voted on options for consideration of filing an FY 2015-16 Legislative Budget Request (LBR) to address funding for general counsels.

### **Trial Court Budget Commission Recommendation:**

File a LBR issue to provide general counsel positions in circuits that do not currently have a general counsel position and to use unfunded FTE.

## **Issue 6: Law Clerks to Support Death Penalty Legislation**

At the August 26, 2014, meeting, the Trial Court Budget Commission (TCBC) voted on options for consideration of filing an FY 2015-16 Legislative Budget Request (LBR) to address funding for case management issues.

The Trial Court Budget Commission (TCBC) recognizes the need for sufficient law clerks to assist trial court judges in processing the often complex and legally significant matters related to a sentence of death. Additionally, the recent administrative order (AOSC11-32) directed the chief judges of each circuit to review and supervise the preparation of quarterly reports to the Supreme Court on post-conviction matters. To ensure sufficient law clerks are available to assist trial court judges in processing the often complex and legally significant matters related to a sentence of death, the TCBC approved filing a legislative budget request (LBR) for this issue last year. This issue was not funded by the Legislature for FY 2014-15. At its June 20, 2014, meeting, the TCBC directed staff to update the need and cost for additional law clerks to support death penalty legislation as part of the FY 2015-16 LBR strategy.

### **Methodology:**

A methodology was developed based on 10 years of cumulative capital murder conviction data, the official judicial Delphi case weight for Capital Murder cases, and a ratio of law clerk workload associated with these cases to the FTE equivalent judicial workload (this is the same methodology as was used to develop the LBR for FY 2014-15).

Option 1: Based on the above methodology and a 1/3 ratio of law clerk workload to judicial workload associated with Capital Murder cases, recommend filing an LBR for 17.0 FTE law clerk positions, for a total request of **\$1,249,687**.

Option 2: Based on the above methodology and a 1/2 ratio of law clerk workload to judicial workload associated with Capital Murder cases, recommend filing an LBR for 27.0 FTE law clerk positions, for a total request of **\$1,984,797**.

### **Funding Methodology Committee Recommendation:**

The Funding Methodology Committee (FMC) recommends option 2 with the addition of a floor of a 0.5 FTE. The addition of the floor would impact only one circuit. Under the FMC's recommendation, the total request will be for 27.5 FTEs, which equates to an LBR of \$2,021,553.

### **Trial Court Budget Commission Recommendation:**

Approve Option 2 with the addition of a floor of a 0.5 FTE recommended by the Funding Methodology Committee.

## Post Conviction Law Clerks Needs Assessment (Based on 10 Years of Cumulative Convictions)

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
		Capital Murder Delphi Case Weight (in Minutes)		2,151	<b>OPTION 1</b>		<b>OPTION 2 (TCBC Recommendation)</b>	
Circuit	10 Year Cumulative Capital Murder Convictions <sup>1</sup>	Weighted Judicial Workload (in Minutes) Associated with Capital Murder Convictions Based on 10 Years of Cumulative Convictions	Available Minutes Per Judge	Estimated Number of Capital Murder Judges (Unrounded)	FTE	Cost	FTE	Cost
1	96	206,496	70,950	2.9	1.0	\$73,511	1.5	\$110,267
2	55	118,305	70,950	1.7	0.5	\$36,756	1.0	\$73,511
3	26	55,926	70,950	0.8	0.0	\$0	0.5	\$36,756
4	177	380,727	77,400	4.9	1.5	\$110,267	2.5	\$183,778
5	67	144,117	70,950	2.0	0.5	\$36,756	1.0	\$73,511
6	170	365,670	77,400	4.7	1.5	\$110,267	2.0	\$147,022
7	75	161,325	70,950	2.3	0.5	\$36,756	1.0	\$73,511
8	25	53,775	70,950	0.8	0.0	\$0	0.5	\$36,756
9	206	443,106	77,400	5.7	2.0	\$147,022	2.5	\$183,778
10	73	157,023	70,950	2.2	0.5	\$36,756	1.0	\$73,511
11	159	342,009	77,400	4.4	1.5	\$110,267	2.5	\$183,778
12	53	114,003	77,400	1.5	0.5	\$36,756	1.0	\$73,511
13	103	221,553	77,400	2.9	1.0	\$73,511	1.5	\$110,267
14	31	66,681	70,950	0.9	0.5	\$36,756	0.5	\$36,756
15	154	331,254	77,400	4.3	1.5	\$110,267	2.0	\$147,022
16	6	12,906	70,950	0.2	0.0	\$0	<b>0.5</b>	<b>\$36,756</b>
17	162	348,462	77,400	4.5	1.5	\$110,267	2.5	\$183,778
18	131	281,781	77,400	3.6	1.5	\$110,267	2.0	\$147,022
19	61	131,211	70,950	1.8	0.5	\$36,756	1.0	\$73,511
20	38	81,738	70,950	1.2	0.5	\$36,756	0.5	\$36,756
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,868</b>	<b>4,018,068</b>		<b>53.3</b>	<b>17.0</b>	<b>\$1,249,687</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>\$2,021,553</b>

Note: The Summary Reporting System statistics provided above were extracted from a dynamic data base and may be amended by the Clerk of Court. Estimated 2013-14 includes annualized dispositions for Duval, Flagler, Hillsborough, Nassau, and Seminole counties.

## **Issue 7: Compensation to Senior Judges**

At the August 26, 2014, meeting, the Trial Court Budget Commission (TCBC) voted on options for consideration of filing an FY 2015-16 Legislative Budget Request (LBR) to address funding for senior judge compensation.

In 2009, the TCBC adopted a methodology to determine the needs assessment for the senior judge day element as part of the legislative budget request (LBR). The methodology is based on raising the senior judge daily rate of compensation from \$350 to \$400 per day and increasing the number of available senior judge days. The request has not been funded by the Legislature.

In a July 19, 2014, letter, the Conference of Circuit Judges, Inc., requested the Trial Court Budget Commission (TCBC) consider increasing the current per diem rate paid to retired judges who serve as senior judges. As part of its request, the Conference expressed a desire not to reduce the overall number of available senior judge days (6,249 current days, including a 50 day reserve), but rather to file an LBR for any increase in the senior judge daily rate. Based on this request, three methodologies are developed for calculating a possible increase to the senior judge rate of compensation.

Option 1: File an LBR for \$316,949 in recurring funds to adjust the senior judge rate of pay from \$350 to \$400, based on current needs assessment.

Option 2: File an LBR for \$950,910 in recurring funds to adjust the senior judge rate of pay from \$350 to \$500, based on civil traffic infraction hearing officer average hourly rate of pay.

Option 3: File an LBR for \$1,267,922 in recurring funds to adjust the senior judge rate of pay from \$350 to \$550, based on circuit judge salary (excluding benefits).

### **Funding Methodology Committee Recommendation:**

Option 2 – File an LBR for \$950,910 in recurring funds to adjust the senior judge rate of pay from \$350 to \$500, based on civil traffic infraction hearing officer average hourly rate of pay.

### **Trial Court Budget Commission Recommendation:**

Option 2 - File an LBR for \$950,910 in recurring funds to adjust the senior judge rate of pay from \$350 to \$500, based on civil traffic infraction hearing officer average hourly rate of pay.

## **Issue 8: Courthouse Furnishings**

At the August 26, 2014, meeting, the Trial Court Budget Commission (TCBC) voted on options for consideration of filing an FY 2015-16 Legislative Budget Request (LBR) to address funding for courthouse furnishings for areas of state responsibility.

At the June 20, 2014, meeting, the Trial Court Budget Commission approved, as part of the FY 2015-16 Trial Court Legislative Budget Request strategies, circuits to submit requests for courthouse furnishings. All items submitted were reviewed for compliance with provisions in Florida Statutes, section 29.008, and with the Department of Financial Services and the Governor's Office of Policy and Budget guidelines. The total of all requests submitted for courthouse furnishings is \$1,009,599 (\$692,686 Expense and \$316,913 Other Capital Outlay (OCO)) in non-recurring funding.

### **A. Furnishings for New Courthouses or Building Expansion**

#### **1. Fourteenth Judicial Circuit Request - \$54,307**

The Fourteenth Circuit requests \$54,307 (\$49,307 Expense and \$5,000 OCO) to furnish the non-public areas of a new courthouse addition that will house circuit judges and judicial assistants in Bay County. Additional furnishings are needed to meet the requirements of different office layouts for the county judges and judicial assistants that will occupy the vacated circuit judicial offices. The projected completion date of the addition is December 2015.

Option 1: File issue as requested.

Option 2: Do not file issue.

#### **2. Seventeenth Judicial Circuit Request - \$837,392**

The Seventeenth Circuit is requesting \$837,392 in non-recurring funds (\$544,670 Expense and \$292,722 OCO) to purchase furniture and high density filing to furnish private areas of 77 judicial chambers and approximately 85 associated administrative staff offices within the new Broward County Courthouse Complex being constructed for the Seventeenth Circuit. The projected occupancy date is the fall of 2015.

Option 1: File issue as requested.

Option 2: Do not file issue.

### **Trial Court Budget Commission Recommendation:**

File an issue as requested by the Fourteenth and Seventeenth Circuits for furnishings required due to construction of new courthouses or building expansions.

## **Issue 8: Courthouse Furnishings (continued)**

### **B. Replacement Furnishings**

#### **1. Second Judicial Circuit Request – \$18,769**

The Second Circuit requests \$18,769 (\$15,419 Expenses and \$3,350 OCO) to furnish the non-public portions of two retiring judges' offices. The judges used personal furniture in lieu of government provided furniture; therefore, will be removed upon retirement. This request also includes funding for refresh of judicial assistant furniture in the outlying counties, and to furnish a newly created office space for a mediation services coordinator and a law clerk.

Option 1: File issue as requested.

Option 2: Do not file issue.

#### **2. Tenth Judicial Circuit Request - \$61,657**

The Tenth Circuit requests \$61,657 in non-recurring Expense funding to purchase replacement furnishings for aging furniture purchased 26 years ago in the Polk County Courthouse.

Option 1: File issue as requested.

Option 2: Do not file issue.

#### **3. Eighteenth Judicial Circuit Request - \$37,474**

The Eighteenth Circuit requests \$37,474 (\$21,633 Expense and \$15,841 OCO) to furnish the non-public portions of a retiring judge's office. The judge used personal furniture in lieu of government provided furniture; therefore, will be removed upon retirement. This request also includes funding for ergonomic chairs for digital court reporters and refresh of old, non-functional furnishings.

Option 1: File issue as requested.

Option 2: Do not file issue.

#### **Trial Court Budget Commission Recommendation:**

Based on historical trial court reversion data, do not file an issue for furnishings for the Second, Tenth, and Eighteenth Circuits.

## **Issue 9: Fifteenth Judicial Circuit Request for Additional Court Reporting Resources**

At the August 26, 2014, meeting, the Trial Court Budget Commission (TCBC) voted on options for consideration of filing an FY 2015-16 Legislative Budget Request (LBR) to address funding for case management issues.

The Trial Court Budget Commission (TCBC), at their June 20, 2014, meeting, approved the strategies for the FY 2015-16 Legislative Budget Request (LBR) priorities. These included the second-year funding of the retention and equity pay issue, technology issues, court interpreting resources to comply with supreme court order, case management resources, law clerks to support death penalty legislation, foreclosure backlog initiative, and courthouse furnishings. The only issue that required individual submissions by the circuits related to courthouse furnishing. All other issues would be formulated by Funding Methodology Committee (FMC) in conjunction with the circuits when applicable.

The Fifteenth Judicial Circuit requests the TCBC to consider filing an issue in the FY 2015-16 LBR to include four full-time Digital Court Reporter positions for their circuit. Based on a letter from Chief Judge Jeffrey J. Colbath (attached), the circuit continues to use creative methods to maintain its court reporting operations; however, because of the number of events in this circuit, monitoring has become difficult due to the current staff and number of courtrooms and hearing rooms. Specifically, the circuit indicates that if all 50 courtrooms are running at the same time, it would require the current staff to monitor 8 courtrooms at one time or utilize stenographers who then are unable to work on transcripts. Additionally, the circuit states they have been unsuccessful in hiring skilled and reliable staff through contracting for these services.

Option 1: File an issue in the FY 2015-16 LBR, totaling \$222,244, for four full-time Digital Court Reporter positions in the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit.

Option 2: Defer the issue to allow the FMC time to study and determine if a FY 2015-16 Supplemental LBR for the court reporting element needs to be filed statewide.

Option 3: Do not file an issue.

### **Trial Court Budget Commission Recommendation:**

Option 2: Defer the issue to allow the FMC time to study and determine if a FY 2015-16 Supplemental LBR for the court reporting element needs to be filed statewide.

## **Issue 10: Foreclosure Backlog Reduction Initiative**

At the August 26, 2014, meeting, the Trial Court Budget Commission (TCBC) voted on options for consideration of filing an FY 2015-16 Legislative Budget Request (LBR) to address funding for foreclosure backlog reduction.

At the June 20, 2014, meeting, the Trial Court Budget Commission (TCBC) directed staff to monitor the Foreclosure Backlog Reduction Initiative and, based on estimated filings and dispositions, recommend to the TCBC on whether a legislative budget request (LBR) may be warranted to continue the Initiative in FY 2015-16. Based on the foreclosure filings estimates adopted by the Article V Revenue Estimating Conference in July 18, 2014, and the estimated level of foreclosure dispositions for FY 2014-15, staff recommends not filing an LBR for the Foreclosure Backlog Reduction Initiative for FY 2015-16.

### **Funding Methodology Committee Recommendation:**

Recommends approval of staff's recommendation of not filing an LBR for the Foreclosure Backlog Reduction Initiative for FY 2015-16.

### **Trial Court Budget Commission Recommendation:**

Do not file an LBR for the Foreclosure Backlog Reduction Initiative at this time. However, reexamine the pending caseload based on actual foreclosure filings and dispositions in December of 2014 to determine if a supplemental LBR may be warranted for the Foreclosure Initiative at that time.