

DANE COUNTY CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT

2024 Budget Request




LANGUAGE ACCESS

- This has long been a high priority for the Court, as litigants have a constitutional right to be able to fully understand and participate in proceedings.
- Language assistance in the circuit court is codified in Ch. 885.38 Wis. Stats.
- The Director of State Courts Office has established a statewide plan to ensure access to court services for people with limited English proficiency. The Dane County Circuit Court has developed its own language access plan describing how services are provided. It is available here:
<https://courts.countyofdane.com/Language-Assistance>

DECISION ITEMS

- Adding \$2,700 to our existing contract with Behavior Consultants, Inc. BCI works with juvenile defendants deemed incompetent to proceed with their cases but determined to be educable to competency.
- Adding \$20,000 to our Court Interpreter line to address increased hourly rates charged by freelance certified court interpreters.
- Adding \$30,000 to our court interpreter line to properly cover the cost of our two .5 FTE court interpreters (who are actually DOA staff), who have received compensation increases over the years without any changes to the budget line that covers the chargebacks. This proposed increase is offset by \$15,000 decreases in two expense lines: witness fees and court reporter expenses.

DECISION ITEMS

- Adding \$2,600 to our existing contract with Canopy Center for Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). This organization has long provided independent advocacy for children under the protection of the court due to issues of abuse or neglect.
 - Adding \$60,000 to our pool of funding for the Guardian ad Litem Project. It has been six years since the participating attorneys received an upward adjustment.
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ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES TO CONSIDER

While not part of my formal budget submission due to the required guidelines, I have asked the Executive to consider two additional items:

- Adding an additional Roving Clerk position (\$102,700) to address longstanding coverage needs.
- Adding an additional 1.0 FTE Spanish Language Interpreter (\$102,700) to reduce our reliance on the freelancers. Up to 26% of the position would be reimbursable by the state, so the true cost could be as low as \$76,000.

QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU!

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