

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FY 26 BUDGET REQUEST NARRATIVE

SUMMARY

There are two appropriations in the Legislative Council budget:

1. Legislative Council appropriation, which includes the administrative and nonpartisan support functions of the Legislature, as well as special committees, and offices such as Ethics, Ombudsman, and Victims' Rights; and
2. Legislative Operating Budget appropriation, which includes those functions directly connected to the operations of the Legislature: Legislators' Salaries and Allowances, House and Senate Operating, and Session Expenses.

State of Alaska increases in health insurance (\$122.11 per month, per employee to a monthly per employee total of \$2,030.11) and PERS rate (1.57% to a total of 28.33% per active employee) equate to an overall increase in FY 26 for the Legislative Council budget as follows:

FY 26 Health Insurance Salary Adjustment: 614.3

FY 26 PERS Rate Salary Adjustment: 527.6

SB259 amended AS 39.27.011 to provide that all legislative employees, as well as other certain exempt and partially exempt state employees not covered by a collective bargaining unit, receive the same cost of living adjustment (COLA) as those received by the Supervisory Bargaining Unit; therefore, per AS 39.27.011 Sec. 2, subsection (o), legislative employees receive a three percent (3%) COLA in FY26.

FY 26 COLA Salary Adjustment: 1,186.0

FY 26 Salary Adjustments Total: 2,327.9

There are proposed increments in the Legislative Council FY 26 Budget Request for the Administrative Services, Select Committee on Legislative Ethics, and State Facilities Rent allocations.

FY 26 Legislative Council Increment Request Total: 2,662.0

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL APPROPRIATION

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

35 PFT + 11 PFT (2 NEW) = 45 PFT; 17 PPT - 9 PPT = 8 PPT; 4 TEMP

This allocation pays for the operation of the Division of Administrative Services, which includes the Executive Director's Office, Accounting, Maintenance, Personnel, Print Shop, and Supply.

CHANGE: Nine (9) 11-month positions, which are classified as PPT, were adjusted to 12-month PFT positions to reflect current operations. There is no increment for this position adjustment.

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CHANGE: December 12, 2024, Legislative Council approved relocating the Capitol Mailroom to an offsite location for security purposes. Part of the approval includes the addition of two permanent positions within the Supply section necessary to staff the offsite mailroom and screening center (267.0). Additionally, new screening and security equipment requires annual maintenance and consumables (25.0).

CHANGE: A transfer of 98.0 was made to the Legislative Security Services allocation to align funding for the Anchorage LOB security services contract.

Administrative Services Transfer Out Total: 98.0

Administrative Services Increment Total: 292.0

COUNCIL & SUBCOMMITTEES

1 PFT

This allocation pays for the operation of Legislative Council (Legislative Council Chair), Joint Armed Services Committee, and any task forces or special committees established by statute or resolution. The Joint Legislative Seafood Industry Task Force is reported in this allocation for FY2025 only and the Redistricting Board is reported in this allocation for fiscal years 2021-2026.

CHANGE: In the Redistricting Board allocation there was a 375.0 increment added in FY2025; however, it is expected that outstanding litigation will be completed in FY2026, so it was changed to a one-time increment.

CHANGE: A transfer of 30.0 from the Legislative Council Chair budget to the Legislative Security Services allocation to fund a salary increase for uniformed armed security officers was approved by Legislative Council on September 26, 2024.

CHANGE: The Legislative Council Chair has funding for a professional assistant; however, the position was not reflected in the overall position count of the Legislature, so there is a position adjustment transaction to include that position.

Council and Subcommittees Transfer Out Total: (30.0)

LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES

21 PFT + 9 PFT = 30 PFT; 14 PPT – 9 PPT = 5 PPT

This allocation pays for the operation of the Division of Legal and Research Services including bill drafting, legal services, legislative library, and research services.

CHANGE: Nine (9) 11-month positions, which are classified as PPT, were moved to 12-month PFT positions to reflect current operations. There is no increment for this position adjustment.

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SELECT COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE ETHICS

2 PFT

This allocation pays for the operation of the Select Committee on Legislative Ethics.

On January 31, 2025, the Committee tasked the Administrator with putting together a proposal for Committee consideration on the cost of hiring a part-time nonpermanent staff to assist with addressing a large backlog of work due to the untimely passing of previous Ethics Administrator Jerry Anderson. Depending on the decision of the Committee, this could be a budget item offered as an amendment in either House or Senate Finance.

Absent an amendment, there are no changes to this allocation.

OFFICE OF VICTIMS' RIGHTS

7 PFT

This allocation pays for the operation of the Office of Victims' Rights (OVR). OVR provides free legal services to victims of crime to help them obtain the rights they are guaranteed under the Alaska Constitution and statutes regarding their contacts with police, prosecutors, judges, and other criminal justice agencies in this state.

The OVR allocation is paid for with a combination of UGF and restorative justice funds. Per AS 43.23.048 – Restorative Justice Account:

(a) The restorative justice account is created as a separate account in the dividend fund. The commissioner shall transfer from the dividend fund to the restorative justice account each fiscal year an amount equal to the amount that would have been paid during the previous fiscal year to individuals who were ineligible to receive dividends under AS 43.23.005(d) if they had been eligible.

(b) The legislature may appropriate amounts from the account to the following recipients in the priority order and percentages listed:

(2) two to six percent to the office of victims' rights for payments to crime victims as provided in AS 24.65.105 and for operating costs of the office of victims' rights;

OVR is given an estimated amount of funding from the restorative justice account and the required UGF is adjusted accordingly to ensure a fully funded operating budget.

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OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN 10 PFT

This allocation pays for the operations of the Office of the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman has offices in Juneau and Anchorage and investigates citizen complaints against state executive and court branch agencies including boards and commissions, corporations, and the University system. By doing so, the Ombudsman serves as a resource for the Alaska Legislature in its oversight of state government.

LEGISLATURE STATE FACILITIES RENT

This allocation pays for leases and some operating expenses and parking associated with space rented by the Legislature statewide. There are 21 Legislative Information Offices (LIOs) outside of Juneau; and many of the LIOs include space for legislator interim offices. Additional leased space includes the Office of the Ombudsman, the Office of Victims' Rights, Legislative Audit in the State Office Building; Print Shop in the Community Building; and Anchorage and Juneau storage.

CHANGE: As part of the Capitol mailroom relocation proposal approved at the December 12, 2024, Legislative Council meeting, there is an increment request of 32.1 to support the addition of a package screening center to existing offsite warehouse space. This increment will be partially offset by current efforts to reduce and consolidate Juneau storage space.

CHANGE: Interagency lease costs are projected to increase by approximately 10.0 in FY 26.

Legislative State Facilities Rent Increment Total: 42.1

DIVISION OF TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION

40 PFT + 5 PFT = 45 PFT; 27 PPT – 5 PPT = 22 PPT; 24 TEMP – 2 TEMP = 22 TEMP

This allocation pays for the operations of technology and information services, including the Juneau and Anchorage Technical Assistance Centers (Help Desks); network and programming; critical infrastructure and systems; communications; cybersecurity; media services; teleconferencing and moderating services; and 22 legislative information offices.

CHANGE: Five (5) PPT positions were moved to PFT and two (2) temporary positions were eliminated to reflect current operations. There is no increment for this position adjustment.

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LEGISLATIVE SECURITY SERVICES

9 PFT

This allocation pays for 24/7 legislative armed security services at the Capitol Complex in Juneau and contracted daily security services in Anchorage.

CHANGE: This allocation received a total of 155.0 to fund a salary increase for uniformed armed security officers transferred from the below allocations:

Transfer In from Council and Subcommittees: 30.0

Transfer In from House Operating: 82.5

Transfer In from Senate Operating: 42.5

CHANGE: This allocation received a transfer of 98.0 from the Administrative Services allocation to align funding for the Anchorage LOB security services contract.

Transfer In from Administrative Services: 98.0

Legislative Security Services Transfer(s) In Total: 253.0

LEGISLATIVE OPERATING BUDGET APPROPRIATION

LEGISLATORS' SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES

60 PFT

This allocation funds legislator salaries, relocation expenses for legislators and their families, and individual legislator office allowance accounts.

LEGISLATIVE OPERATING BUDGET

This allocation pays for most House and Senate personal staff during the interim, including majority and minority staff, committee expenses during the interim such as travel for legislators and staff, membership dues to national and other legislative organizations, supplies, telecommunications, contracts, equipment, etc. Funds are discretionary to the Senate President and the Speaker of the House.

CHANGE: Approved by Legislative Council on September 26, 2024, a total of 125.0 was transferred from this allocation to the Legislative Security Services allocation to fund a salary increase for uniformed armed security officers as follows:

House Operating Transfer Out: (82.5)

Senate Operating Transfer Out: (42.5)

Legislative Operating Transfer(s) Out Total: (125.0)

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SESSION EXPENSES

215 PPT

This allocation pays for the operations of a 121-day session and any special sessions: personal services for most partisan staff, Offices of the Chief Clerk and Senate Secretary, Records, Floor staff, and Legislative Lounge; legislator session per diem; travel during session for legislators, legislative staff, and witnesses; moving offices to and from session; staff relocation and lodging stipend; committee meeting travel costs; professional services; communications; and other session-related services and commodity expenses.

The Rules Chairs control these funds except for travel, which is approved by the Presiding Officers.

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