

**The 15 Court of Appeals Districts
Summary of Budget Recommendations - Senate**

IV 7-24

The Honorable John Bailey, Chair, Council of Chief Justices

Jordan Parr, LBB Analyst

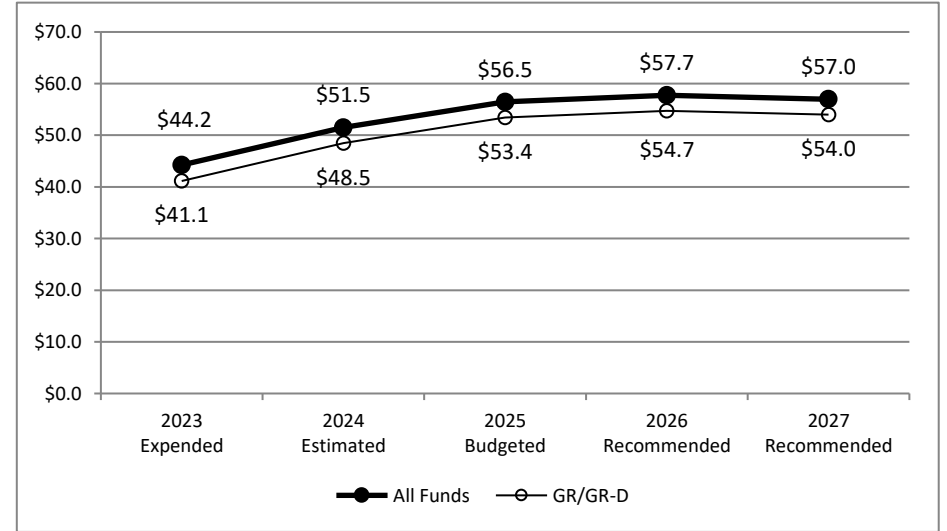
Method of Financing	2024-25 Base	2026-27 Recommended	Biennial Change (\$)	Biennial Change (%)
General Revenue Funds	\$101,915,190	\$108,690,838	\$6,775,648	6.6%
GR Dedicated Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%
<i>Total GR-Related Funds</i>	<i>\$101,915,190</i>	<i>\$108,690,838</i>	<i>\$6,775,648</i>	<i>6.6%</i>
Federal Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0%
Other	\$6,049,884	\$6,025,674	(\$24,210)	(0.4%)
All Funds	\$107,965,074	\$114,716,512	\$6,751,438	6.3%

	FY 2025 Budgeted	FY 2027 Recommended	Biennial Change	Percent Change
FTEs	414.0	420.0	6.0	1.4%

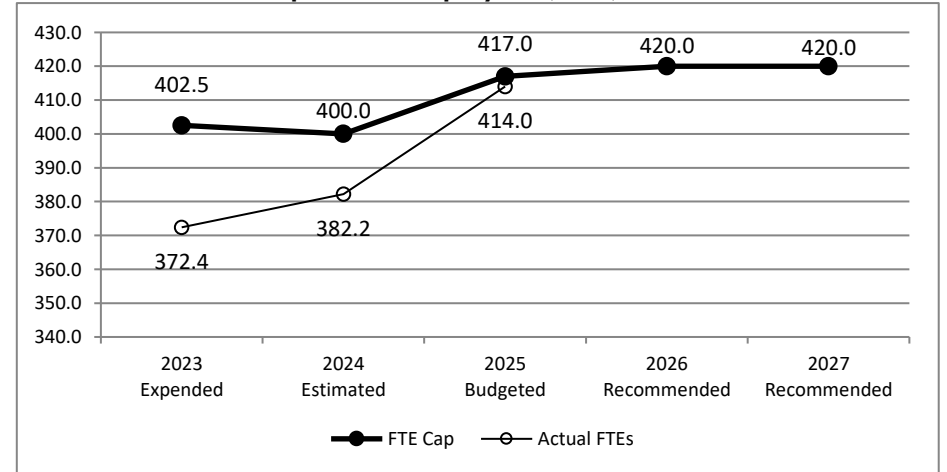
First Court of Appeals District, Houston 93.5%
 Second Court of Appeals District, Fort Worth 90.3%
 Third Court of Appeals District, Austin 91.2%
 Fourth Court of Appeals District, San Antonio 91.9%
 Fifth Court of Appeals District, Dallas 96.0%
 Sixth Court of Appeals District, Texarkana 96.3%
 Seventh Court of Appeals District, Amarillo 91.2%

Eighth Court of Appeals District, El Paso 94.4%
 Ninth Court of Appeals District, Beaumont 98.0%
 Tenth Court of Appeals District, Waco 87.7%
 Eleventh Court of Appeals District, Eastland 95.0%
 Twelfth Court of Appeals District, Tyler 94.7%
 Thirteenth Court of Appeals District, Corpus Christi-Edinburg 98.8%
 Fourteenth Court of Appeals District, Houston 93.8%
 Fifteenth Court of Appeals District, Austin 100.0%

Historical Funding Levels (Millions)



Historical Full-Time-Equivalent Employees (FTEs)



**The 15 Court of Appeals Districts
Summary of Funding Changes and Recommendations - Senate**

Funding Changes and Recommendations for the 2026-27 Biennium compared to the 2024-25 Base Spending Level (in millions)		General Revenue	GR-Dedicated	Federal Funds	Other Funds	All Funds	Strategy in Appendix A
<i>SIGNIFICANT Funding Changes and Recommendations (each issue is explained in Section 3 and additional details are provided in Appendix A):</i>							
A)	Increase to biennialize appropriations provided by the Eighty-eighth Legislature, Regular Session, 2023, for the creation of the 15th Court of Appeals (See also, Selected Fiscal and Policy Issue #3).	\$2.3	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$2.3	A.1.1, A.1.2
B)	Increase in Strategy A.1.2, Appellate Justice Salaries, in various Courts of Appeals resulting from anticipated changes in judicial tenure (See also, Selected Fiscal and Policy Issue #1).	\$0.1	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.1	A.1.2
C)	Increase in funding for the 15th Court of Appeals for buildout costs associated with a dedicated courtroom.	\$1.2	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$1.2	A.1.1
D)	Increase in funding to provide a 10 percent salary increase for positions at the 15th Court of Appeals which did not receive the salary adjustment provided by the 88th Legislature and to recruit an additional Staff Services Officer.	\$0.5	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0.5	A.1.1
<i>OTHER Funding Changes and Recommendations (these issues are not addressed in Section 3 but details are provided in Appendix A):</i>							
E)	Increase in funding to biennialize the statewide salary adjustments included in the 2024-25 appropriations.	\$1.8	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$1.8	A.1.1
F)	Increase in funding for the 4th Court of Appeals to recruit 2.0 Central Staff Attorneys for cases related to Operation Lone Star.	\$0.7	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.7	A.1.1
G)	Increase in funding for the 8th Court of Appeals to recruit 1.0 Central Staff Attorney for cases related to Operation Lone Star.	\$0.2	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.2	A.1.1
TOTAL SIGNIFICANT & OTHER Funding Changes and Recommendations (in millions)		\$6.8	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$6.8	As Listed
<i>SIGNIFICANT & OTHER Funding Increases</i>		\$6.8	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$6.8	As Listed
<i>SIGNIFICANT & OTHER Funding Decreases</i>		\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	As Listed

**The 15 Courts of Appeals Districts
Selected Fiscal and Policy Issues - Senate**

1. **Judicial Salaries.** Recommendations provide \$29.5 million in All Funds, including \$24.6 million in estimated General Revenue funds and \$4.9 million in Judicial Fund No. 573, for judicial compensation at the 15 Courts of Appeals (COAs). This is an estimated General Revenue increase of \$1.8 million above 2024-25 spending levels to cover the salary, benefits, and longevity costs for anticipated increases in judicial tenure at the 4th, 8th, 9th, 14th, and to biennialize salaries for the 15th COAs during the 2026-27 biennium. (See also, Selected Fiscal and Policy Issue #3).

Base salaries for the COA justices are linked to the base salary of a district judge under the tiered, tenure-based compensation structure established by Government Code §659.012. Statute sets the base salary for a justice, other than a chief justice, of the 15 Courts of Appeals at 110.0 percent of the district judge base salary (\$154,000) for the first four years of their tenure. When their tenure is between 4 and 8 years, the court of appeals justice earns 110.0 percent of their \$154,000 base salary (\$169,400). A court of appeals justice with over 8 years of tenure earns a salary that's 120.0 percent of their \$154,000 base salary (\$184,800). Justice salaries are funded through an estimated and non-transferrable strategy isolating required compensation appropriations and providing flexibility to adjust funding levels for unanticipated changes in compensation obligations resulting from tenure changes and elections or appointments of persons with years of service credits differing from the previous position holder.

The Judicial Compensation Commission has requested a 30.0 percent increase to the base salary of a district judge from \$140,000 per year to \$182,000. Recommendations do not include additional funding that would be statutorily required if the base salary was adjusted.

2. **Article-Wide 6.0 Percent Salary Increase for Non-Judicial Staff.** Recommendations do not include \$9.8 million in All Funds, including \$9.6 million in General Revenue and \$0.2 million in Other Funds, requested by all Article IV agencies to provide a 6.0 percent salary increase for non-judicial staff.

The total portion of this request for the Courts of Appeals totals \$4.8 million in General Revenue funding for the 2026-27 biennium (See also, Items Not Included in the Recommendations Item).

3. **15th Court of Appeals.** Senate Bill 1045, 88th Legislature, Regular Session, created the 15th Court of Appeals and provided \$2.4 million in General Revenue funds and 17.0 FTE's each fiscal year in the 2024-25 biennium. Under the provisions of the bill, the 15th Court of Appeals was statutorily established at the beginning of fiscal year 2025 (September 1, 2024). As a result, fiscal year 2024 appropriations were transferred to the Office of Court Administration to aid in the construction of facilities and hiring of court personnel.

Recommendations include \$6.3 million in GR, an increase of \$4.0 million over 2024-25 spending levels. Included in these amounts are \$2.3 million in General Revenue to biennialize appropriations for court salaries and operations, \$0.5 million for a new Staff Services Officer position and a 10.0 percent increase to vacant positions that did not receive the salary adjustment provided by the 88th Legislature, and \$1.2 million for the construction of a dedicated courtroom.

Recommendations do not include the courts request for an additional \$0.2 million in General Revenue funds for a 6.0 percent increase for non-judicial staff.

**The 15 Court of Appeals Districts
Rider Highlights - Senate**

New Riders

1. Recommendations add Rider 2, Capital Budget, to the bill pattern of the 15th Court of Appeals to provide capital budget authority for the buildout of a dedicated courtroom.

**The 15 Courts of Appeals Districts
Items Not Included in Recommendations - Senate**

		2026-27 Biennial Total			Information Technology Involved?	Contracting Involved?	Estimated Continued Cost 2028-29
		GR & GR-D	All Funds	FTEs			
Court Exceptional Items Not Included (in agency priority order)							
Metropolitan Courts							
First Court of Appeals District, Houston							
1)	Judiciary - Wide Adjustment for Inflation, Retention, and continued Recruitment	\$514,988	\$514,988	0.0	No	No	\$514,988
Fifth Court of Appeals District, Dallas							
1)	Judiciary - Wide Adjustment for Inflation, Retention, and continued Recruitment	\$681,958	\$681,958	0.0	No	No	\$681,958
Fourteenth Court of Appeals District, Houston							
1)	Judiciary - Wide Adjustment for Inflation, Retention and continued Recruitment	\$517,980	\$517,980	0.0	No	No	\$517,980
All Other Courts of Appeals							
Second Court of Appeals District, Fort Worth							
1)	Judiciary - Wide Adjustment for Inflation, Retention and continued Recruitment	\$410,756	\$410,756	0.0	No	No	\$410,756
Third Court of Appeals District, Austin							
1)	Judiciary - Wide Adjustment for Inflation, Retention and continued Recruitment	\$359,558	\$359,558	0.0	No	No	\$359,558
Fourth Court of Appeals District, San Antonio							
1)	Judiciary - Wide Adjustment for Inflation, Retention and continued Recruitment	\$400,770	\$400,770	0.0	No	No	\$400,770
Sixth Court of Appeals District, Texarkana							
1)	Judiciary - Wide Adjustment for Inflation, Retention and continued Recruitment	\$183,926	\$183,926	0.0	No	No	\$183,926
Seventh Court of Appeals District, Amarillo							
1)	Judiciary - Wide Adjustment for Inflation, Retention and continued Recruitment	\$230,666	\$230,666	0.0	No	No	\$230,666
Eighth Court of Appeals District, El Paso							
1)	Judiciary - Wide Adjustment for Inflation, Retention and continued Recruitment	\$185,452	\$185,452	0.0	No	No	\$185,452

**The 15 Courts of Appeals Districts
Items Not Included in Recommendations - Senate**

		2026-27 Biennial Total			Information Technology Involved?	Contracting Involved?	Estimated Continued Cost 2028-29
		GR & GR-D	All Funds	FTEs			
Ninth Court of Appeals District, Beaumont							
1)	Judiciary - Wide Adjustment for Inflation, Retention and continued Recruitment	\$235,134	\$235,134	0.0	No	No	\$235,134
2)	Recruitment of 1.0 Central Staff Attorney position.	\$263,326	\$263,326	1.0	No	No	\$263,326
Tenth Court of Appeals District, Waco							
1)	Judiciary - Wide Adjustment for Inflation, Retention and continued Recruitment	\$183,203	\$183,203	0.0	No	No	\$183,203
Eleventh Court of Appeals District, Eastland							
1)	Judiciary - Wide Adjustment for Inflation, Retention and continued Recruitment	\$185,098	\$185,098	0.0	No	No	\$185,098
Twelfth Court of Appeals District, Tyler							
1)	Judiciary - Wide Adjustment for Inflation, Retention and continued Recruitment	\$183,686	\$183,686	0.0	No	No	\$183,686
Thirteenth Court of Appeals District, Corpus Christi-Edinburg							
1)	Judiciary - Wide Adjustment for Inflation, Retention and continued Recruitment	\$351,166	\$351,166	0.0	No	No	\$351,166
Fifteenth Court of Appeals District, Austin							
1)	Judiciary - Wide Adjustment for Inflation, Retention and continued Recruitment	\$206,170	\$206,170	0.0	No	No	\$206,170
Total Funding for Judiciary Wide Salary Increase		\$4,830,511	\$4,830,511	0.0	No	No	\$4,830,511
Total Funding for Items Not Included in Recommendations		\$5,093,837	\$5,093,837	1.0	No	No	\$5,093,837

**The 15 Courts of Appeals Districts
Appendices - Senate**

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* Appendix is not included - no significant information to report

**The 15 Court of Appeals Districts
Funding Changes and Recommendations by Strategy - Senate -- ALL FUNDS**

Strategy/Goal	2024-25 Base	2026-27 Recommended	Biennial Change	% Change	Comments
Metropolitan Courts					
First Court of Appeals District, Houston					
APPELLATE COURT OPERATIONS A.1.1	\$8,481,821	\$8,692,542	\$210,721	2.5%	Recommendations reflect an increase of \$203,721 in funding to biennialize the statewide salary adjustments included in the 2024-25 appropriations and an increase of \$7,000 in Appropriated Receipts anticipated to be collected in the 2026-27 biennium.
APPELLATE JUSTICE SALARIES A.1.2	\$3,073,014	\$3,053,656	(\$19,358)	(0.6%)	Recommendations reflect a decrease of \$19,358 in General Revenue due to changes in judicial tenure during the 2026-27 biennium. (See also, Selected Fiscal and Policy Issue #1)
SUBTOTAL	\$11,554,835	\$11,746,198	\$191,363	1.7%	
Fifth Court of Appeals District, Dallas					
APPELLATE COURT OPERATIONS A.1.1	\$12,082,855	\$12,347,851	\$264,996	2.2%	Recommendations reflect an increase of \$264,996 in funding to biennialize the statewide salary adjustments included in the 2024-25 appropriations.
APPELLATE JUSTICE SALARIES A.1.2	\$4,398,440	\$4,398,440	\$0	0.0%	
SUBTOTAL	\$16,481,295	\$16,746,291	\$264,996	1.6%	
Fourteenth Court of Appeals District, Houston					
APPELLATE COURT OPERATIONS A.1.1	\$8,764,228	\$8,990,096	\$225,868	2.6%	Recommendations reflect an increase \$145,868 in funding to biennialize the statewide salary adjustments included in the 2024-25 appropriations and a increase of \$80,000 in Appropriated Receipts anticipated to be collected in the 2026-27 biennium.
APPELLATE JUSTICE SALARIES A.1.2	\$3,225,824	\$3,256,919	\$31,095	1.0%	Recommendations reflect an increase of \$31,095 in General Revenue due to changes in the salary, benefits, and longevity costs for anticipated increases in judicial tenure during the 2026-27 biennium.
SUBTOTAL	\$11,990,052	\$12,247,015	\$256,963	2.1%	

**The 15 Court of Appeals Districts
Funding Changes and Recommendations by Strategy - Senate -- ALL FUNDS**

Strategy/Goal	2024-25 Base	2026-27 Recommended	Biennial Change	% Change	Comments
All Other Courts of Appeals					
Second Court of Appeals District, Fort Worth					
APPELLATE COURT OPERATIONS A.1.1	\$6,839,344	\$6,967,936	\$128,592	1.9%	Recommendations include an increase of \$152,802 to biennialize the statewide salary adjustments included in the 2024-25 appropriations, offset by a decrease of \$24,210 in Appropriated Receipts .
APPELLATE JUSTICE SALARIES A.1.2	\$2,531,960	\$2,531,960	\$0	0.0%	
SUBTOTAL	\$9,371,304	\$9,499,896	\$128,592	1.4%	
Third Court of Appeals District, Austin					
APPELLATE COURT OPERATIONS A.1.1	\$5,851,989	\$5,992,626	\$140,637	2.4%	Recommendations reflect an increase of \$140,637 to biennialize the statewide salary adjustments included in the 2024-25 appropriations.
APPELLATE JUSTICE SALARIES A.1.2	\$2,127,556	\$2,127,556	\$0	0.0%	
SUBTOTAL	\$7,979,545	\$8,120,182	\$140,637	1.8%	
Fourth Court of Appeals District, San Antonio					
APPELLATE COURT OPERATIONS A.1.1	\$6,621,622	\$7,504,850	\$883,228	13.3%	Recommendations reflect an increase of \$148,542 to biennialize the statewide salary adjustments included in the 2024-25 appropriations. Recommendations reflect an increase of \$734,686 to recruit two central staff attorney positions.
APPELLATE JUSTICE SALARIES A.1.2	\$2,580,836	\$2,596,172	\$15,336	0.6%	Recommendations reflect an increase of \$15,336 in General Revenue due to changes in the salary, benefits, and longevity costs for anticipated increases in judicial tenure during the 2026-27 biennium. (See also, Selected Fiscal and Policy Issue #1)
SUBTOTAL	\$9,202,458	\$10,101,022	\$898,564	9.8%	
Sixth Court of Appeals District, Texarkana					
APPELLATE COURT OPERATIONS A.1.1	\$3,006,478	\$3,069,428	\$62,950	2.1%	Recommendations reflect an increase of \$62,950 to biennialize the statewide salary adjustments included in the 2024-25 appropriations.
APPELLATE JUSTICE SALARIES A.1.2	\$1,035,448	\$1,035,448	\$0	0.0%	
SUBTOTAL	\$4,041,926	\$4,104,876	\$62,950	1.6%	
Seventh Court of Appeals District, Amarillo					
APPELLATE COURT OPERATIONS A.1.1	\$3,780,750	\$3,856,421	\$75,671	2.0%	Recommendations reflect an increase of \$75,671 to biennialize the statewide salary adjustments included in the 2024-25 appropriations.
APPELLATE JUSTICE SALARIES A.1.2	\$1,474,288	\$1,474,288	\$0	0.0%	
SUBTOTAL	\$5,255,038	\$5,330,709	\$75,671	1.4%	

**The 15 Court of Appeals Districts
Funding Changes and Recommendations by Strategy - Senate -- ALL FUNDS**

Strategy/Goal	2024-25 Base	2026-27 Recommended	Biennial Change	% Change	Comments
Eighth Court of Appeals District, El Paso					
APPELLATE COURT OPERATIONS A.1.1	\$3,036,396	\$3,295,717	\$259,321	8.5%	Recommendations reflect an increase of \$66,471 to biennialize the statewide salary adjustments included in the 2024-25 appropriations.
APPELLATE JUSTICE SALARIES A.1.2	\$1,000,469	\$1,032,624	\$32,155	3.2%	Recommendations reflect an increase of \$192,850 for an additional central staff attorney. Recommendations reflect an increase of \$32,155 in General Revenue due to changes in the salary, benefits, and longevity costs for anticipated increases in judicial tenure during the 2026-27 biennium. (See also, Selected Fiscal and Policy Issue #1)
SUBTOTAL	\$4,036,865	\$4,328,341	\$291,476	7.2%	
Ninth Court of Appeals District, Beaumont					
APPELLATE COURT OPERATIONS A.1.1	\$3,792,250	\$3,876,996	\$84,746	2.2%	Recommendations reflect an increase of \$84,746 to biennialize the statewide salary adjustments included in the 2024-25 appropriations.
APPELLATE JUSTICE SALARIES A.1.2	\$1,409,260	\$1,434,926	\$25,666	1.8%	Recommendations reflect an increase of \$25,666 in General Revenue due to changes in the salary, benefits, and longevity costs for anticipated increases in judicial tenure during the 2026-27 biennium. (See also, Selected Fiscal and Policy Issue #1).
SUBTOTAL	\$5,201,510	\$5,311,922	\$110,412	2.1%	
Tenth Court of Appeals District, Waco					
APPELLATE COURT OPERATIONS A.1.1	\$3,006,474	\$3,063,389	\$56,915	1.9%	Recommendations reflect an increase of \$56,915 to biennialize the statewide salary adjustments included in the 2024-25 appropriations.
APPELLATE JUSTICE SALARIES A.1.2	\$1,181,688	\$1,181,688	\$0	0.0%	
SUBTOTAL	\$4,188,162	\$4,245,077	\$56,915	1.4%	
Eleventh Court of Appeals District, Eastland					
APPELLATE COURT OPERATIONS A.1.1	\$3,047,848	\$3,099,686	\$51,838	1.7%	Recommendations reflect an increase of \$51,838 to biennialize the statewide salary adjustments included in the 2024-25 appropriations.
APPELLATE JUSTICE SALARIES A.1.2	\$1,088,928	\$1,088,928	\$0	0.0%	
SUBTOTAL	\$4,136,776	\$4,188,614	\$51,838	1.3%	
Twelfth Court of Appeals District, Tyler					
APPELLATE COURT OPERATIONS A.1.1	\$3,010,183	\$3,069,406	\$59,223	2.0%	Recommendations reflect an increase of \$59,223 to biennialize the statewide salary adjustments included in the 2024-25 appropriations.
APPELLATE JUSTICE SALARIES A.1.2	\$1,162,900	\$1,162,900	\$0	0.0%	

**The 15 Court of Appeals Districts
Funding Changes and Recommendations by Strategy - Senate -- ALL FUNDS**

Strategy/Goal	2024-25 Base	2026-27 Recommended	Biennial Change	% Change	Comments
SUBTOTAL	\$4,173,083	\$4,232,306	\$59,223	1.4%	
Thirteenth Court of Appeals District, Corpus Christi-Edinburg					
APPELLATE COURT OPERATIONS A.1.1	\$5,822,564	\$5,945,943	\$123,379	2.1%	Recommendations reflect an increase of \$123,379 to biennialize the statewide salary adjustments included in the 2024-25 appropriations.
APPELLATE JUSTICE SALARIES A.1.2	\$2,202,092	\$2,202,092	\$0	0.0%	
SUBTOTAL	\$8,024,656	\$8,148,035	\$123,379	1.5%	
Fifteenth Court of Appeals District, Austin					
APPELLATE COURT OPERATIONS A.1.1	\$1,856,101	\$5,423,092	\$3,566,991	192.2%	Recommendations reflect an increase of \$1,856,101 in General Revenue funds to biennialize appropriations for the establishment of the 15th Court of Appeals. (See also, Selected Fiscal and Policy Issue #3).
					Recommendations reflect an increase of \$1,197,036 in General Revenue for the construction of a dedicated courtroom.
					Recommendations reflect an increase of \$513,854 in General Revenue to provide a salary adjustment and an additional Staff Services Officer position.
APPELLATE JUSTICE SALARIES A.1.2	\$471,468	\$942,936	\$471,468	100.0%	Recommendations reflect an increase of \$471,468 in General Revenue funds to biennialize appropriations for the establishment of the 15th Court of Appeals. (See also, Selected Fiscal and Policy Issue #3).
SUBTOTAL	\$2,327,569	\$6,366,028	\$4,038,459	173.5%	
Total, Goal, APPELLATE COURT OPERATIONS A.1.1	\$79,000,903	\$85,195,979	\$6,195,076	7.8%	
Total, Goal, APPELLATE JUSTICE SALARIES A.1.2	\$28,964,171	\$29,520,533	\$556,362	1.9%	
Total, LBB Recommendations	\$107,965,074	\$114,716,512	\$6,751,438	6.3%	

**The 15 Court of Appeals Districts
FTE Highlights - Senate**

Full-Time-Equivalent Positions	Expended 2023	Expended 2024	Budgeted 2025	Recommended 2026	Recommended 2027
Cap	402.5	400.0	417.0	420.0	420.0
Actual/Budgeted	372.4	382.2	414.0	N/A	N/A

Schedule of Exempt Positions (Cap)					
1st - 14th Chief Justice (15)	\$156,500	\$156,500	\$156,500	\$156,500	\$156,500
1st - 14th Justice (83)	\$154,000	\$154,000	\$154,000	\$154,000	\$154,000
15th Chief Justice (1)	\$0	\$0	\$165,500	\$165,500	\$165,500
15th Justice (3)	\$0	\$0	\$163,000	\$163,000	\$163,000

Notes:

- a) The 15 Courts of Appeals are exempted from Article IX, Section 6.10, which limits the number of FTEs paid from appropriated funds to the amounts specified in the General Appropriations Act.
- b) The base salaries for the Courts of Appeals justices are linked to the base salary of a district judge under the tiered, tenure-based compensation structure established by Government Code §659.012. Statute sets the base salary for a justice, other than a chief justice, of the 15 Courts of Appeals at 110.0 percent of the district judge base salary (\$154,000) for the first four years of their tenure. When their tenure is between 4 and 8 years, the court of appeals justice earns 110.0 percent of their \$154,000 base salary (\$169,400). A court of appeals justice with over 8 years of tenure earns a salary that's 120.0 percent of their \$154,000 base salary (\$184,800).
- c) Pursuant to Government Code §659.012(a)(3), the base salary of a justice on the 15th Court of Appeals is \$5,000 less than 120% of the state base salary of a district judge and serves as the benchmark for salary increases based on years of service. The chief justice of the 15th Court of Appeals is entitled to an additional \$2,500.
- d) State Auditor's Office is the source for the fiscal year 2023 and 2024 annual average (actual) FTE level.