

Open Records

How does the Supreme Court disclose information about its finances and operations?

The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania maintains a policy of openness, transparency and accountability with regard to its operations and finances. The court's budget, spending, personnel data and audits of finances all are considered public information.

The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania recently expanded its fiscal disclosure policy to include expenditure and personnel compensation for the Supreme, Superior and Commonwealth courts and the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, including:

- appropriation names, descriptions and annual funding amounts;
- expenditure data, including the name and address of entity receiving payment, payment amount, applicable appropriation and fiscal year; and
- employee complement information, including position title and current annual salary, updated on a monthly basis, along with a list of total compensation for the prior year.

The financial information is posted on [one website](#) for easy access by the public.

The expansion is consistent with the principles of the legislature's recently enacted PennWATCH Act, balanced with the Supreme Court's constitutional authority to independently administer the judicial branch.

Through the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, detailed financial information is also made available to other branches of state government and to the media. For example, each year an extensive series of financial and personnel reports, which track court spending and staff levels, are issued—some on a monthly basis—to the governor's office, the legislature, the treasurer and the auditor general.

The budget for the statewide court system is more than \$300 million. That sum represents less than one percent of the entire state budget. The annual budget proposal, which is submitted by the Supreme Court to the governor and the legislature, itemizes proposed spending in many categories, including those of the Supreme Court, the Superior Court, the Commonwealth Court and the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts.

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