



Joint Budget Committee

Joint Budget Committee Operating Budget Request FY 2026-27

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How to Use this Document

The Department Overview contains a table summarizing the staff recommended incremental changes followed by brief explanations of each incremental change. A similar overview table is provided for each division, but the description of incremental changes is not repeated, since it is available under the Department Overview. More details about the incremental changes are provided in the sections following the Department Overview and the division summary tables.

Decision items, both department-requested items and staff-initiated items, are discussed either in the Decision Items Affecting Multiple Divisions or at the beginning of the most relevant division. Within a section, decision items are listed in the requested priority order, if applicable.

Department Overview

As the General Assembly's permanent fiscal and budget review agency, the Joint Budget Committee (JBC) studies the management, operations, programs, and fiscal needs of the departments of Colorado state government.¹ The JBC holds hearings and reviews the budget requests from executive and judicial branch agencies, and introduces the annual general appropriation bill (called the Long Bill) to fund the operations of state government. The JBC also reviews the need for mid-year adjustments to appropriations and introduces “supplemental” bills when necessary to make those changes.

The six-member JBC is comprised of two majority party members and one minority party member from each legislative chamber. Members serve two-year terms and are selected following the general election. A Senator serves as Chair and a Representative serves as Vice Chair in the first year following the general election, and then switch positions in the next year. The remaining four members are selected from the House and Senate Appropriations Committees’ membership.

The JBC has a non-partisan, full-time professional staff of fifteen budget and policy analysts, three administrative staff positions, and one Staff Director. The Staff Director assigns each analyst one or more departments and programs of state government. JBC analysts review related budget requests, statutes, and other pertinent information, and meet with agency personnel and other individuals to learn about the operations of assigned departments and programs. Over the course of the budget cycle, JBC analysts:

- Present departmental budget requests to the JBC and make recommendations for appropriations.
- May make recommendations concerning budget-related operational or policy issues.
- Draft supplemental bills and the Long Bill based on JBC actions.
- Draft amendments to supplemental bills and the Long Bill, and enroll any amendments that are adopted.

In addition, JBC analysts prepare fiscal analyses of other legislation that is referred to the Appropriations Committees, draft appropriation clauses for such bills, and provide staff support for both Appropriations Committees. Finally, JBC analysts respond to research requests from other committees, individual legislators, the press, and the public.

Summary of Staff Recommendations

Overall, staff recommends a total appropriation of \$3,240,084 General Fund and 19.7 FTE for FY 2026-27. That represents a net decrease of \$63 General Fund and a decrease of 0.6 FTE relative to FY 2025-26, as summarized in the table on the following page. As discussed below, the recommendation does not include any assumed appropriations for salary increases based on the Executive Committee’s February 17, 2026, decision not to include a placeholder for the legislative staff agencies prior to the Joint Budget Committee’s decisions for employee compensation common policies. Should the Joint Budget Committee and/or the Executive Committee change the common policy, staff requests permission to adjust the corresponding amounts for the appropriation.

¹ See Sections 2-3-201 through 2-3-210, C.R.S.

The recommendation represents a continuation-level of funding. Given the overall budgetary situation, staff has prioritized funds within the budget to support the needs of the existing staff.

**Joint Budget Committee Operating Budget: Staff Director Recommendation
FY 2026-27 Budget Request Summary**

	Total Funds	General Fund	Cash Funds	Reappropriated Funds	Federal Funds	FTE
FY 2025-26 Appropriation¹	\$3,240,147	\$3,240,147	\$0	\$0	\$0	20.3
Changes from the FY 2025-26 Appropriation						
Annualize prior year funding	\$32,321	\$32,321	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0
Employee compensation and benefits	12,323	12,323	0	0	0	0.0
1.5 percent base reduction	(32,907)	(32,907)	0	0	0	0.0
Eliminate communication payments to OIT	(11,800)	(11,800)	0	0	0	0.0
R1 FTE reduction and reallocations	0	0	0	0	0	(0.6)
Total FY 2026-27 Request¹	\$3,240,084	\$3,240,084	\$0	\$0	\$0	19.7
\$ Change from prior year	(\$63)	(\$63)	\$0	\$0	\$0	(0.6)
% Change from prior year	(0.0%)	(0.0%)	n/a	n/a	n/a	(3.0%)

1. Appropriation and request include centrally appropriated amounts for PERA Amortization Equalization Disbursement and PERA Supplemental Amortization Equalization Disbursement.

Annualize prior year funding: The recommendation includes an increase of \$32,321 General Fund to annualize/restore a 1.5 percent base reduction applied as a common policy in FY 2025-26. The Joint Budget Committee applied the base reduction to Health, Life, and Dental appropriations in the Executive Branch. Consistent with the other Legislative Branch staff agencies, staff is reflecting the reduction and the annualization in salaries within the Office’s program line item. Please note that the employee compensation placeholder approved by the Executive Committee effectively assumes extending a 1.5 percent base reduction for FY 2026-27 (discussed below).

Employee compensation and benefits: Staff recommends an increase of \$12,323 General Fund to cover increased costs for employee benefits. The recommendation is consistent with the Executive Committee decision not to add funding for salary increases at this time. Please note that the Executive Committee decision was a placeholder pending potential adjustments to common policies by the Joint Budget Committee. This total includes:

- An increase of \$10,086 for the employer contribution for Health, Life, Dental, and Vision insurance. Consistent with direction from the Executive Committee, the estimate includes increases necessary to maintain an 88/12 employer/employee split for premiums, pending the Joint Budget Committee’s common policy decision for FY 2026-27.
- An increase of \$2,237 for associated increases for the basic employer PERA contribution and the RTD Ecompass.

Staff requests permission to modify compensation and benefits amounts as necessary based on final decisions from the Joint Budget Committee and the Executive Committee. If the respective committees do approve appropriations to provide salary increases then it will drive small increases in the associated payments as well (PERA, short-term disability, FAMLI, etc.).

1.5 percent base reduction: The recommendation includes a decrease of a total of \$32,907 General Fund associated with a 1.5 percent personal services base reduction. Consistent with the Executive Committee’s decision not to add funding for salary increases, and consistent with the other staff service agencies, the recommendation continues a 1.5 percent personal services base reduction applied to estimated base salaries. Staff request permission to adjust this amount as necessary based on subsequent decisions by the Joint Budget Committee and the Executive Committee.

Eliminate communication payments to OIT: The recommendation includes a decrease of \$11,800 General Fund to eliminate funding for communications charges paid to the Office of Information Technology (OIT). The Legislative Branch has converted to a different phone system and is no longer contracting with OIT. All charges for the new phone system will be reflected in the Legislative Council Staff budget, so the staff recommendation eliminates the entire appropriation from the Joint Budget Committee line item. It is staff’s understanding that the change results in a reduction in funding branch-wide.

R1 FTE Reduction and reallocations: The recommendation includes a reduction of 0.6 FTE to eliminate the seasonal administrative position, without an associated decrease in funding. Given the fiscal situation, staff would prefer to prioritize those funds to support the existing staff and continue to operate without the position. The recommendation also includes net-zero technical adjustments to reallocate funding among different operating expenses categories to better align with usage.

→ R1 FTE Reduction and Reallocations

Request/Recommendation

Staff recommends reducing 0.6 FTE to eliminate a seasonal administrative assistant position without an associated decrease in funding. Given the State’s budgetary challenges, staff recommends prioritizing the use of that funding to support the needs of the existing staff and continuing to operate without the position. The recommendation includes additional net-zero reallocations to better align the budget with actual usage.

Analysis

Staff’s recommendation includes two components:

- Reduce 0.6 FTE to eliminate a seasonal administrative assistant position and prioritize the use of the associated funding for existing staff and ongoing uses. The recommendation would move \$5,000 from the salary appropriation to restore a current-year reduction to out-of-state travel for professional development and \$683 from associated expenses (PERA, Medicare, etc.) to support the purchase of food and supplies.
- Net-zero reallocations of operating expenses funding to better align the budget with actual usage. The largest change is a reduction of \$11,500 to the allocation for information technology maintenance and information technology subscriptions and allocate that amount across contract services (\$10,000), food purchases (\$1,300), and printing and reproduction (\$200). Detailed allocation estimates are shown in the table in the line item detail below.

The recommendation assumes a continued contract with the Evaluation and Action Lab at the University of Denver for the Lab’s support for the Office’s implementation of H.B. 24-1428 (Evidence-based Designations for Budget). The Office has contracted with the Lab for FY 2024-25 and FY 2025-26 to support those services. The recommendation assumes a contract of \$12,000 for FY 2026-27, a decrease from FY 2024-25 and FY 2025-26. The recommendation would support an ongoing “congruency analysis” where the Lab compares implementation of the bill’s requirements by the Executive Branch and by JBC Staff and reports on the results to inform improvement. The recommendation would also support increasing consultation with JBC Staff related to evidence-based decision making and budget requests.

JBC Staff has benefited greatly from the Lab’s support of the Office’s implementation of H.B. 24-1428. The prior congruency analyses have informed and improved implementation by the Executive Branch and JBC Staff in our budget documents. The Lab has previously provided annual training to the Office to discuss the legislation and the Office implementation as well as frequent support to the Office’s leads for evidence-based policy. Going forward, staff recommends continuing the congruency analysis (which has been paid for by both OSPB and JBC Staff) through at least FY 2026-27. With respect to other support, staff anticipates that the role of the Lab will shift from broader training efforts to more specific support for analysts with regard to budget requests and evidence evaluations.²

Line Item Detail – Legislative Appropriation Bill

Joint Budget Committee

This line item includes most funding to support office operations, including funding for:

- Salaries for 20.3 FTE (modified to 19.7 FTE for FY 2026-27).
- Associated costs of the employer contributions for PERA, Medicare, and short-term disability insurance;
- The employer’s share of health, life, and dental insurance benefits;
- Operating expenses; and
- Travel expenses.

Statutory Authority: Section 2-3-204, C.R.S.

Recommendation: Staff recommends an appropriation of \$3,014,066 General Fund and 19.7 FTE for this line item. This amount is based on the various changes outlined above and the allocations reflected in the table below.

Joint Budget Committee Operating Budget: Staff Director Recommendation

Description	FY 2024-25 Actual		FY 2025-26 Appropriation		FY 2026-27 Recommendation		% Change
	General Fund	FTE	General Fund	FTE	General Fund	FTE	
Personal Services							
<i>Salaries:</i>							
Staff Director		1.0		1.0		1.0	
Administrative Personnel		2.2		2.6		2.0	
Chief Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst		3.0		3.0		4.0	

² The recommendation does not include funding for Lab support to Committee members, though the Lab has offered to include such services in a contract for FY 2026-27.

Description	FY 2024-25 Actual		FY 2025-26 Appropriation		FY 2026-27 Recommendation		% Change
	General Fund	FTE	General Fund	FTE	General Fund	FTE	
Principal Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst		6.0		6.0		3.0	
Senior Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst		2.0		2.0		4.0	
Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst		4.0		5.0		5.0	
Interns/assistants		0.4		0.7		0.7	
Subtotal - Salaries and Payouts	\$2,042,915	18.6	\$2,165,988	20.3	\$2,227,523	19.7	
Salary Survey/Step-like increase	0		67,121		0		
Professional Services & IT Professional Services	4,950		9,000		9,000		
Subtotal: Salaries	\$2,047,865		\$2,242,109		\$2,236,523		-0.2%
<i>Associated Costs:</i>							
PERA: Employer Share	\$231,690		\$258,417		\$259,621		
Medicare Tax	29,798		33,445		33,372		
Short Term Disability Insurance	2,970		3,390		3,386		
Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance	8,608		10,001		9,978		
Health, Life, and Dental Insurance	248,832		352,947		363,033		
Transportation Stipend	46,166		44,800		44,800		
RTD Ecopass	1,300		1,300		1,750		
Subtotal - Associated Costs	\$569,364		\$704,300		\$715,940		1.7%
Total Personal Services	\$2,617,229	19.0	\$2,946,409	20.3	\$2,952,463	19.7	0.2%
OPERATING EXPENSES							
Equipment Maintenance	\$0		\$200		\$200		
IT Maintenance/ Noncapitalizable IT	5,700		19,552		8,052		
Rental of Equipment	4,306		4,300		4,300		
Advertising	0		200		200		
Communication Charges - OIT	8,073		11,800		0		
Printing and Reproduction Services	706		25		725		
Purchased Services	15,000		5,000		15,000		
Food and Food Services	8,547		4,300		8,508		
Books/Periodicals/Subscriptions	710		958		958		
Office Supplies	2,559		6,725		4,500		
Postage	54		400		400		
Official Functions	0		200		200		
Registration Fees/ Professional Development	4,858		3,560		3,560		
Subtotal - Operating Expenses	\$50,513		\$57,220		\$46,603		-18.6%
TRAVEL							
Rental/Motor Pool Mile Charge	\$530		\$700		\$700		
In-State Travel	5,659		4,300		4,300		
Out-of-State Travel	5,384		5,000		10,000		
Subtotal - Travel	\$11,573		\$10,000		\$15,000		50.0%
TOTAL JBC Before Additional PERA Payments	\$2,679,315		\$3,013,629		\$3,014,066		0.0%
JBC Supplemental PERA Payments	199,418		226,518		226,018		-0.2%
Grand Total	\$2,878,733	19.0	\$3,240,147	20.3	\$3,240,084	19.7	0.0%

PERA Unfunded Liability Amortization Payments

This line item consolidates what had previously been two separate line items for Amortization Equalization Disbursement Payments pursuant to S.B. 04-257 and Supplemental Amortization Equalization Disbursement Payments pursuant to S.B. 06-235. The funds provide additional funding to increase the state contribution for Public Employees' Retirement Association (PERA). The Legislative Appropriation Bill includes a single line item for unfunded liability payments for the entire branch. The recommendation in this document only represents the portion attributable to the JBC Staff.

Statutory Authority: Section 24-51-411, C.R.S.

Recommendation: Staff recommends appropriating \$226,018 General Fund, which is consistent with Committee common policy and current law (calculated as 10.0 percent of salaries). Staff requests permission to adjust this amount as necessary based on the JBC and Executive Committee decisions.