

Response to Questions on the FY 2008 Advertised Budget Plan

Request By: Supervisor DuBois

Question: Please provide a summary of County supplements of Magistrates' salaries, including information about proposed state salary adjustments and what, if any, impact they have on Magistrates.

Response:

As requested in a Consideration Item by the Board of Supervisors on March 26, 2007, funding of \$191,595 is requested to support the additional supplement of the state salaries of Magistrates. Funding of \$285,262 is included in the FY 2008 Advertised Budget Plan to continue a 25 percent supplement of the Magistrates' salaries regardless of years of service. The requested funding would provide for a 35 percent supplement after 2.5 years of service and a 50 percent supplement after four years of service. The Code of Virginia 19.2-46.1 states "the governing body of any county or city may add to the fixed compensation of Magistrates such amounts as the governing body may appropriate with the total amount not to exceed fifty percent of the amount paid by the Commonwealth to Magistrates." Currently, Loudoun and Fauquier counties provide a 50 percent supplement. According to the courts, the County has experienced a high degree of turnover among Magistrates resulting in Magistrates with less experience, a significant vacancy rate and potentially lower quality service to citizens.

It should be noted that amendments to the state 2006-2008 biennium budget (HB1650) include \$2.0 million for an additional 4.0 percent salary increase for state employees of the Supreme Court of Virginia; the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals of Virginia; the clerks' offices of the General District Courts, Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts, and Combined District Courts; and Magistrates' offices. This is in addition to the general salary increase of 4.0 percent; therefore, the total increase for these employees will be 8.0 percent, effective November 25, 2007. This results in additional annual costs of approximately \$13,500 for the General District Court based on our current 25 percent subsidy or \$40,000 if the supplement is increased as proposed in this item.