



Legislation Text

File #: 21-2785, Version: 1

To: Harris County Commissioners Court
Through: Marilyn Burgess, Harris County District Clerk
Prepared By: Araceli Carrizales, Financial Services Administrator, District Clerk’s Office

Subject: Supplemental Agenda Item - Juror Participation Plan Part 1: Initiatives to increase convenience and the juror experience along with associated costs.
Project ID (If applicable):

Purpose and Request:

Request by the District Clerk for approval for an additional budget appropriation for FY2021-22 in the amount of \$500,500 to implement Part 1 of the Juror Participation Plan, as recommended by the Budget Management Department, which includes initiatives to increase convenience and improve the juror experience: meal vouchers at NRG, provide free parking at 1401 Congress, distinct signage for juror parking, free coffee, and an awareness campaign.

Background and Discussion:

On 03/30/2021, at a regular meeting of Commissioners Court, it was ordered that Budget Management convene the Commissioners Court’s Analyst’s Office, the Justice Administration Department, the District Clerk, and relevant stakeholders and bring back a recommendation regarding our jury initiative 30 days or less. Please find the attached Supplemental Agenda Item letter for the District Clerk to be authorized to implement Part 1 which include five initiatives of the Juror Participation Plan as recommended by the Budget Management Department. The five initiatives include: meal vouchers while at NRG for prospective jurors onsite after 11:00 a.m. and prior to selection as a seated juror, provide free parking at the 1401 Congress Parking Garage, distinct signage for Juror Parking on 1401 Congress Parking Garage, free coffee, and an awareness campaign. This implementation requires approval from Commissioners Court for an additional budget appropriation to the District Clerk for Fiscal Year 2021-22 in the amount of \$500,500. The estimated ongoing costs include \$115,000 for free coffee. For FY2021-22, the Parking Facilities Enterprise Fund would have a potential lost revenue of \$285,600 as a result of reserving parking spaces for jurors at no cost. The estimated lost revenue for the next fiscal year is \$828,000 for reserving parking spaces for jurors at no cost.

Fiscal Impact:

The proposal to implement Part 1 will be a direct financial impact to Harris County General Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-22 Budget.

Fiscal Summary			
Expenditures	FY 20-21	FY 21-22 Projected	Future Years Projected [3 additional years]
Service Impacted: <i>Jury</i>			
Existing Budget	\$38,978,000	\$40,197,507	
Additional Appropriation	0	\$500,500	\$345,000

Total Expenditures	\$38,978,000	\$40,698,347	
Funding Sources			
Existing Department Budget	\$38,978,000	\$40,197,507	
Please Identify Funding Sources Special Revenue, Grant, etc.			
[General Fund]*			\$345,000
Total Sources	\$38,978,000		

Alternatives:

In addition, we request consideration of Part 2 of the Juror Participation Plan for an initiative to pilot a juror pay increase to \$50 for the first day and \$80 for subsequent days to further improve appearance rates, especially low income, minority participation. We will continue to work with the designated County Departments and stakeholders to plan the rollout of this phase. We respectfully ask for approval of this phase at least 6 weeks prior to effective date in order to adequately publicize the initiative to ensure wide-spread knowledge of and response to the new pay rates.

Alignment with Strategic Objective:

Department Strategic Objectives aligned SO1, SO6, SO8, SO22 (Found under Budget Form 3. Goals and Objectives).

Attachments:

Please find the attached Agenda Item letter for Commissioners Court Agenda 06/08/2021, copy of original request from Commissioners Court 03/30/2021, the table of Juror Participation Part 1- Full Cost of Convenience Initiative as supporting documentation for the District Clerk. Also attached is the Commissioners Court’s Analyst’s Office Juror Pay Report.

Table 1 - Cost Projection

	FYE 2/28/22 Returning DT 11/1	FYE 09/30/22 (seven-month Fiscal Period)	FYE 9/30/23 (new approved Fiscal Year October 1- September 30)
Coffee	\$80,000	\$75,000	\$115,000
Meal Voucher at NRG	\$220,500		
Signage	\$0		
Campaign	\$200,000		
Total from GF	\$500,500	\$75,000	\$115,500
Current Rate Parking	\$285,600	\$540,000	\$828,000