



Administrative Policies
And Procedures
Tennessee Supreme Court
Administrative Office of the Courts

S.G.L.

Index #: 1.05	Page
Effective Date: 1/15/2015	
Supersedes: 1.05 (8-1-02) 1.05 (5-1.04)	

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Approved by: Chief Justice Sharon G. Lee and Deborah Taylor Tate, Director

Subject: Reimbursement of General Office Expenses For Judges

- I. Authority: T.C.A. Section 8-26-101
- II. Purpose: To establish policies and guidelines governing the reimbursement of general office expenses for state judges.
- III. Policy: All Judges shall be reimbursed for authorized necessary office rent, office supply, and equipment expenses as provided herein. Judges and staff should make every effort to use cost savings when purchasing. Decisions about judicial expenses are made on the basis of whether it is best for the judiciary as a whole in regard to policy and budget considerations.
- IV. Application: Justices of the Supreme Court, Judges of the Intermediate Appellate Courts, Criminal Court Judges, Circuit Court Judges, Chancellors, Senior Judges and Child Support Magistrates funded by the Administrative Office of the Courts.
- V. Definitions:
 - AOC – Administrative Office of the Courts
 - Judge(s) - Justices of the Supreme Court, Judges of the Intermediate Appellate Courts, Criminal Court Judges, Circuit Court Judges, Chancellors, and Child Support Magistrates funded by the Administrative Office of the Courts

VI. Reimbursable Office Expenses
A. Office Space

It is the responsibility of the counties comprising the judicial district to provide a judge, elected pursuant to § 16-2-506, with sufficient space and facilities in which to conduct the business and duties of the court. See Tenn. Code Ann. Sec. 16-2-505 (d) (1)

1. Location

All state trial judges' offices should be located in local courthouses or other county facilities. All judges are entitled to one primary office.

Judges who travel to several counties within a judicial district will be provided one primary office within the judicial district with necessary furnishings and equipment. A judge in a multi-county jurisdiction should be provided office space within his/her judicial district in a county courthouse or county facility. Regardless of the availability of office space in a county courthouse or other facility, a judge is not required to travel to a primary office located more than 30 miles from where she or he lives.

In multicounty districts, where a satellite office is provided by the county, but furnished by the AOC, it shall be available to any judge who is holding court in that county.

If a county cannot furnish suitable space within the courthouse or any other county building, then the County Mayor must provide to the judge in writing the reasons for refusal to furnish suitable space. Upon receipt of the notice from the County Mayor, the AOC may provide suitable space within the judicial district for the judge.

2. Leased Space for Judge's Offices

If it has been determined that none of the counties in a multi-county judicial district cannot furnish suitable space for a judge's office, then the AOC, with the assistance of the judge, will be responsible for finding suitable space within the judicial district. When suitable space is located, at least one independent, market value appraisal should be obtained in order to determine the fair market value of such space. The appraisal, the lease, the requested lease amount, and a copy of the County Mayor's statement regarding the unavailability of space shall be approved by the AOC before any lease is finalized. The lease will be negotiated and signed by the AOC and not by an individual judge.

A judge will not be reimbursed rent for office space owned by the judge or his/her spouse.

A judge will not be reimbursed for rent or expenses associated with a lease without the prior written approval of the AOC.

A judge may not terminate or extend a lease.

A judge may not incur expenses for improvements to a property that are not included in a lease without the prior written approval of the AOC. If the improvement is made without prior written approval, the Judge will be financially responsible for that improvement.

3. Office Location

The AOC will assist in the moving or moving expenses of State-owned property to furnish office space.

A judge should notify the AOC Director of the need for office space as soon as possible. A judge should also timely notify the AOC Technology Division of his or her anticipated move in order to transfer computer and telephone equipment.

4. Office Supplies

Judges are entitled to be reimbursed for reasonable and customary office expenses including, but not limited to office supplies, cleaning and standard bathroom supplies, and cleaning services. Judges and staff are encouraged to purchase generic brands or the most cost efficient brand when applicable. All office supplies and equipment paid for by the AOC is the property of the State of Tennessee and not the property of the individual judge.

a. Reimbursable

The AOC will reimburse the judge for reasonable and necessary office supplies. Requests for reimbursement must be submitted on a judicial monthly expense report and accompanied

by a receipt or invoice. Any individual item which exceeds \$100 in cost must receive prior written approval by the AOC before reimbursement will be made.

b. Not Reimbursable

Judges will not be reimbursed for items such as, but not limited to:

- personal hygiene items (such as, but not limited to, hand sanitizer, tissues, hand lotion);
- kitchen items (including but not limited to coffee, coffee pots, pots, pans, plates, forks, cups, etc.) and appliances (including but not limited to toaster ovens, water coolers, refrigerators, etc.);
- medications (including but not limited to aspirin, Tylenol, Advil, Band-Aids, etc.);
- magazine and/or newspaper subscriptions;
- political functions;
- receptions for judges or employees;
- travel deemed of a social nature;
- cell phone service;
- television or video services; and
- alarms or alarm permits;

5. Judicial Robes

Judges are entitled to reimbursement for the purchase of one robe, not to exceed \$275.00.

6. Furniture

A newly-elected or appointed judge should use the office furniture and equipment of the prior judge. If a judge believes the furniture of the prior judge is unusable, then the judge or his/her staff should notify the AOC of the need for furniture. Scratches and dents on furniture do not render it unusable. The AOC will determine the furniture to be used to furnish the Judge's office.

The AOC will first try to supply the office with furniture that is in surplus. If this is not possible, the AOC may purchase necessary furniture from the following list of furniture:

- Desk for judge
- Desk Chair (s)
- Credenza
- Staff Desk
- Left/Right return
- Hutch
- Bookcase
- Lateral or vertical filing cabinet
- 1-2 Guest chairs per desk if room allows

The AOC will purchase furniture for the judge from a designated vendor. The judge will be able to select within the different options available from that vendor that have been pre-selected by the AOC. Furniture purchased by a judge or their staff without the prior written approval of the AOC will not be reimbursed.

The AOC will not furnish the following items (including but not limited to): conference table and chairs; kitchen furniture and appliances, tables, couches, coffee tables, side tables, etc.

If a judge or staff member requires special furniture or devices to accommodate a disability, the judge or staff member should submit records to Human Resources to document the need for the accommodation. The AOC may ask for supplemental Medical records. See ADA Judicial Policy

7. Equipment

Upon request, the AOC may provide each office or office suite a copier, fax machine, scanner and digital recorder/transcription machine. This office equipment may not be used for the benefit of anyone but the judge and staff. The type of equipment supplied will be based on the number of users.

Copiers are rented by the AOC. Please contact the AOC Fiscal Division for details about service and supplies.

8. Inventory

Annual inventories of state property are conducted each year. Judges are required to participate yearly with inventories of all furniture, books, and equipment. A departing judge may be asked to assist in a special inventory before leaving service and will be personally responsible for any failure to return state equipment in good condition, normal wear and tear excepted.

In the case of transfer, removal, disposal, or theft of any office inventory, the judge must notify the AOC immediately.

Office inventory is the property of State of Tennessee and the AOC must comply with State surplus regulations in order to dispose of state property. Judges should contact the Fiscal Division to assist with surplus office inventory.

9. Books and Research Materials

Judges are encouraged to use online research services furnished by the AOC. The AOC technology division will provide passwords, other access information and training to judges and staff.

Judges should not order books or other publications directly from the publisher. All books must be ordered by the AOC. The following printed materials may be supplied to each judge:

- Criminal Justice Handbook (for judges with criminal jurisdiction)
- Tennessee Code Annotated
- Tennessee Rules of Court (State)
- Tennessee Law of Evidence by Paine or
- Tennessee Evidence Courtroom Manual
- Tennessee Pattern Jury Instruction Criminal (for judges with criminal jurisdiction)
- Tennessee Pattern Jury Instruction Civil (for judges with civil jurisdiction)

The Criminal Justice Handbook, the T.P.I. Criminal, and T.P.I. Civil are available on CD and each judge may request as many CDs as necessary. Retired judges are not eligible for these publications.

In addition, depending on the court's jurisdiction, the following print materials may, in the discretion of the AOC, be provided upon request:

- a. Tennessee Practice Vol. 3-4;
- b. Tennessee Practice Vol. 9-11;
Criminal Offenses and Defenses in Tennessee;
Tennessee Criminal Trial Practice; or
Tennessee Criminal Laws Annotated;
- c. Tennessee Practice Vol. 19-19A or
Richards on Tennessee Family Law

DO NOT ORDER BOOKS OR PUBLICATIONS DIRECTLY. If there is another publication that is essential to the operation of your office and subject matter jurisdiction and not practical to access online, submit a written request for the purchase of that publication to the AOC. Please include the publication title, author's name publisher's name and address and the cost. Should the AOC determine such purchases to be necessary and within budgetary guidelines, the AOC will order the book for the judge and will notify the judge of the order.

Judges who elect to have the state update their own sets of previously purchased books are deemed to have donated those books to the state. At the conclusion of service those supplemented or replaced sets remain the property of the state.

Upon receipt of books/publications, send any shipping or packing receipts to the AOC for records purposes. If no receipt was included, please notify the AOC verifying receipt with your monthly expense claims to the AOC.

If a judge would like to discontinue books or supplements, please notify the legal department in writing and those publications will be discontinued.

10. Telephone Equipment

Telephone systems purchased and installed by the State will be billed directly to the State on a monthly basis. No personal calls may be billed to phone lines purchased and installed by the State. Telephone service will only be provided in a judge's office where judicial business is conducted.

Trial Judge Offices: Telephone systems will consist of not more than 2 phone lines and 3 telephones in each office space: a phone for the judge, a phone for the administrative assistant and (optional) a phone for a library or conference room. The office is entitled to voicemail or an answering system, caller ID, and conference calling. Additional features will be reviewed on an "as needed" basis and prior written approval is required by the AOC. When space is available for judges at a county provided facility, the telephone service will be

set up, maintained and provided by the county. Judges housed in space outside a county facility may make arrangements for local phone systems/service with prior written approval from the AOC. Judges who obtain telephone services through a local phone provider will be reimbursed for expenses after proper approval is obtained. Agreements and pricing must be preapproved by the Assistant Director of Technology Services or designee.

Appellate Judge Offices: Telephone systems are provided by the State and billed directly to the State. No other telephone service is permitted unless specifically authorized and approved by the AOC.

Cell phones are provided only to Supreme Court Justices for business use.

11. Computers

The Technology Services Division will provide each judge and state paid staff member with a computer. State-provided computer equipment is for business use only, and only state approved software may be operated on the equipment. See Policy 1.03, Policy Regarding the Use of State Owned Computers.

Trial Judges: The judge has an option of receiving a desktop or a laptop computer. Judges who are hear child support cases may be provided a laptop as well as a desktop by written request to the Assistant Director of Technology Services.

The judge may also make a written request for a low-volume laser printer for his or her desk. Administrative assistants may be provided with high-volume laser printers.

12. Internet

Judges located in areas which do not allow for access to the state's network may seek Internet services from a local provider. Services normally include a cable modem physically wired to a single desktop computer. Wireless services offered by the local ISP may be considered; however, if pricing or security levels are not satisfactory, AOC Technology Services may install a wireless router to allow for the connection of additional desktops or laptops.

Agreements and pricing must be preapproved by the Assistant Director of Technology Services or designee.

Costs incurred must be paid locally and added to the judge's monthly expense claim.

13. General Provisions

- a. No reimbursements will be allowed without original receipts or invoices.
- b. No gifts, money, or anything of value whatsoever should be accepted from any person or firm with whom purchases of materials, supplies or equipment are made.

- c. Claims for reimbursement should be submitted no later than thirty (30) days after the invoice is paid. Claims submitted after thirty (30) days must include an explanation of the delay. Expenses for the prior fiscal year will not be paid if received after August 15th of the next fiscal year.
- d. Reimbursement forms (electronic or hardcopy) available from the AOC must be submitted for all expense claims. All requested information must be provided.
- e. Charges for long distance personal calls will not be reimbursed.
- f. No reimbursement will be allowed to anyone reimbursed by another government entity for same expense.
- g. When a judge is appointed or elected to office, the judge should contact the AOC in order to coordinate staffing, furniture, books, benefits, and technology.
- h. Requests for supplies, reimbursement or other correspondence related to this policy should be made to the following:

Administrative Office of the Courts
Finance Division
511 Union Street, Suite 600
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
615-741-2687

Requests for books and online research tools should be made to the Legal Division.