

**Judiciary - Superior Court**

**Arizona Constitution Article VI  
A.R.S. § 12-121**

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	<b>FY 2006 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2007 Estimate</b>	<b>FY 2008 Approved</b>
<b>SPECIAL LINE ITEMS</b>			
<i>Full Time Equivalent Positions</i>	227.8	227.4	234.5 <sup>1/</sup>
Judges Compensation	15,707,700	17,206,800	17,956,900
Adult Standard Probation	12,226,200	13,334,900	13,991,300
Adult Intensive Probation	11,083,200	11,393,400	11,616,600
Community Punishment	1,579,900	2,854,800	2,873,700 <sup>2/</sup>
Interstate Compact	622,400	640,500	658,100
Sex Offenders GPS Monitoring	0	0	756,800
Drug Court	0	1,000,000	1,013,600
Probation Surcharge	0	2,723,800	2,725,700
Juvenile Standard Probation	7,983,400	4,949,200	5,214,400
Juvenile Intensive Probation	13,587,200	10,200,000	10,410,700
Juvenile Treatment Services	22,250,000	22,454,200	22,504,700 <sup>3/</sup>
Juvenile Family Counseling	647,200	660,400	660,400
Progressively Increasing Consequences	9,700,400	10,168,500	10,334,300 <sup>3/</sup>
Juvenile Crime Reduction	3,243,400	5,198,200	5,221,800 <sup>4/</sup>
Special Water Master	20,000	20,000	20,000
<b>AGENCY TOTAL</b>	<b>98,651,000</b>	<b>102,804,700</b>	<b>105,959,000<sup>5/6/7/</sup></b>

**FUND SOURCES**

General Fund	94,307,600	92,552,300	95,681,100
<u>Other Appropriated Funds</u>			
Criminal Justice Enhancement Fund	3,843,400	7,028,600	7,052,200
Drug Treatment and Education Fund	500,000	500,000	500,000
Judicial Collection Enhancement Fund	0	2,723,800	2,725,700 <sup>8/</sup>
<b>SUBTOTAL - Other Appropriated Funds</b>	<b>4,343,400</b>	<b>10,252,400</b>	<b>10,277,900</b>
<b>SUBTOTAL - Appropriated Funds</b>	<b>98,651,000</b>	<b>102,804,700</b>	<b>105,959,000</b>
Other Non-Appropriated Funds	7,787,700	7,662,000	7,662,000
<b>TOTAL - ALL SOURCES</b>	<b>106,438,700</b>	<b>110,466,700</b>	<b>113,621,000</b>

**AGENCY DESCRIPTION** — The Superior Court, which has a division in every county, is the state’s only general jurisdiction court. Superior Court judges hear all types of cases except small claims, minor offenses, or violations of city codes and ordinances. In addition, the responsibility for supervising adults and juveniles who have been placed on probation resides in the Superior Court.

- <sup>1/</sup> Of the 234.5 FTE Positions, 171 FTE Positions represent Superior Court judges. One-half of their salaries are provided by state General Fund appropriations pursuant to A.R.S. § 12-128. This is not meant to limit the counties’ ability to add judges pursuant to A.R.S. § 12-121. (General Appropriation Act footnote)
- <sup>2/</sup> All Community Punishment Program receipts received by the Administrative Office of the Courts in excess of \$2,873,700 in FY 2008 are appropriated to the Community Punishment line item. Before the expenditure of any Community Punishment receipts in excess of \$2,873,700 in FY 2008, the Administrative Office of the Courts shall submit the intended use of the monies for review by the Joint Legislative Budget Committee. (General Appropriation Act footnote, as adjusted for statewide allocations)
- <sup>3/</sup> Up to 4.6% of the amounts appropriated for Juvenile Probation Services – Treatment Services and Progressively Increasing Consequences may be retained and expended by the Supreme Court to administer the programs established by A.R.S. § 8-322, and to conduct evaluations as needed. The remaining portion of the Treatment Services and Progressively Increasing Consequences programs shall be deposited in the Juvenile Probation Services Fund established by A.R.S. § 8-322. (General Appropriation Act footnote)
- <sup>4/</sup> All Juvenile Crime Reduction Fund receipts received by the Administrative Office of the Courts in excess of \$5,221,800 in FY 2008 are appropriated to the Juvenile Crime Reduction line item. Before the expenditure of any Juvenile Crime Reduction Fund receipts in excess of \$5,221,800 in FY 2008, the Administrative Office of the Courts shall submit the intended use of the monies for review by the Joint Legislative Budget Committee. (General Appropriation Act footnote, as adjusted for statewide allocations)
- <sup>5/</sup> Receipt of state probation monies by the counties is contingent on the county maintenance of FY 2004 expenditure levels for each probation program. State probation monies are not intended to supplant county dollars for probation programs. (General Appropriation Act footnote)
- <sup>6/</sup> General Appropriation Act funds are appropriated as Special Line Items by Agency.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2008
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Approved
• Customer satisfaction rating by states participating in the interstate compact (Scale 1-8)	7.3	7.0	6.7	7.0
<b><u>Juvenile Standard Probation:</u></b>				
• % of probationers successfully completing probation without a referral (a notice of misbehavior)	79	74	85	88
<b><u>Juvenile Intensive Probation (JIPS):</u></b>				
• % of probationers successfully completing probation without a referral (a notice of misbehavior)	73	69	66	68
<b><u>Adult Standard Probation:</u></b>				
• % of probationers exiting probation and not committed to county jail or prison	70	80	80	83
Comments: Adult Standard Probation measure revised to more accurately reflect data tracked by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). Data for above measure effective beginning with FY 2005 Actual column. Previous figures represent the % of probationers successfully completing probation without a new conviction.				
<b><u>Adult Intensive Probation (AIPS):</u></b>				
• % of probationers exiting intensive probation and not committed to county jail or prison	65	48	50	51
Comments: Adult Intensive Probation measure revised to more accurately reflect data tracked by AOC. Data for above measure effective beginning with FY 2005 Actual column. Previous figures represent the % of probationers successfully completing probation without a new conviction.				

### **Special Line Items**

#### **Judges Compensation**

The budget provides \$17,956,900 and 171 FTE Positions from the General Fund for Judges Compensation in FY 2008. This amount funds the following adjustments:

#### **Statewide Adjustments**

The budget provides a decrease of \$(411,400) from the General Fund in FY 2008 for statewide adjustments. (Please see the *Statewide Adjustments* section at the end of this Appropriations Report for details.)

#### **New Judgeships**

The budget provides an increase of \$416,500 and 5 FTE Positions from the General Fund in FY 2008 for previously-filled judgeships in Cochise, Maricopa, Navajo,

Pima and Pinal Counties. The judgeships in Pima and Pinal Counties began operating during FY 2006, and the Cochise, Maricopa and Navajo County judgeships were filled in FY 2007.

#### **Judicial Salary Increase**

The budget provides an increase of \$745,000 from the General Fund in FY 2008 for the annualization of a 12.5% salary increase for Superior Court judges. Laws 2005, Chapter 286 raised a Superior Court judge's annual salary from \$120,750 to \$135,844 beginning January 1, 2007.

Because the Legislature did not take action to change or disapprove the Governor's salary recommendations, a Superior Court judge's salary will also increase 6.7% to \$145,000 beginning January 1, 2009 (FY 2009), pursuant to A.R.S. § 41-1904. The salary increase is an adjustment

7/ By November 1, 2007, the Administrative Office of the Courts shall report to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee the FY 2007 actual, FY 2008 estimated and FY 2009 requested amounts for the following:

1. On a county-by-county basis, the number of authorized and filled case carrying probation positions and non-case carrying positions, distinguishing between Adult Standard, Adult Intensive, Juvenile Standard and Juvenile Intensive. The report shall indicate the level of state probation funding, other state funding, county funding and probation surcharge funding for those positions.
  2. Total receipts and expenditures by county and fund source for the Adult Standard, Adult Intensive, Juvenile Standard and Juvenile Intensive line items, including the amount of Personal Services expended from each revenue source of each account.
  3. The amount of monies from the Adult Standard, Adult Intensive, Juvenile Standard and Juvenile Intensive line items that the office does not distribute as direct aid to counties. The report shall delineate how the office expends these monies that are not distributed as direct aid to counties. (General Appropriation Act footnote)
- 8/ All Judicial Collection Enhancement Fund receipts received by the Administrative Office of the Courts resulting from the probation surcharge in excess of \$2,725,700 in FY 2008 are appropriated to the Superior Court. Before the expenditures of Judicial Collection Enhancement Fund receipts in excess of \$2,725,700 in FY 2008, the Administrative Office of the Courts shall submit the intended use of the monies for review by the Joint Legislative Budget Committee. (General Appropriation Act footnote)

to the recommendation from the Commission on Salaries for Elective State Officers, which had proposed a 13.1% increase. Funding for this January 2009 increase has not yet been addressed.

This line item provides funding for the state's 50% share of the salary and Employee Related Expenditures of Superior Court Judges. Pursuant to A.R.S. § 12-128, one-half of Superior Court Judges' salaries are provided by the state General Fund.

### **Adult Probation Programs**

The state and counties have typically shared the costs of adult probation. For the intensive programs, the state pays 100% of the costs (although the counties may provide offices and other support services). For the standard programs and treatment services, the state predominantly pays for the cost of additional probation officers. Counties typically contribute through Probation Service Fee collections, outside grants, and office space.

Since FY 2004, Maricopa County has assumed the state's share of its adult probation costs. Laws 2006, Chapter 261 made permanent this shift of adult probation costs to Maricopa County, including suspending the statutory adult probation officer caseload ratios for Maricopa County in FY 2008 and requiring the county to continue to submit monthly performance measures to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee for each of the probation programs, as well as allowing Maricopa County to retain monies collected from a \$10 surcharge assessed on civil and criminal traffic violations.

### ***Adult Standard Probation***

The budget provides \$13,991,300 and 10.8 FTE Positions from the General Fund for Adult Standard Probation in FY 2008. This amount funds the following adjustments:

#### **Statewide Adjustments**

The budget provides an increase of \$364,400 from the General Fund in FY 2008 for statewide adjustments.

#### **Probation Capacity Shift**

The budget provides an increase of \$238,000 from the General Fund in FY 2008 to shift funding from other probation line items for increased caseload in the Adult Standard Probation line item. This increase has a zero net effect on the overall budget due to transfers of surpluses from Adult Intensive Probation and Juvenile Intensive Probation.

The FY 2008 budget provides funding for the average predicted caseload of 14,177 probationers. The JLBC forecasts that Adult Standard Probation will grow by 3.8%, or an increase of 516 probationers, in non-Maricopa counties to reach an average caseload of 14,177 offenders in FY 2008. This caseload is based on the average actual monthly growth during the last 3 fiscal years. (*See Adult*

*Intensive Probation and Juvenile Intensive Probation for more information.*)

### **Corrections Officer Retirement Plan Administration**

The budget provides an increase of \$54,000 and a 0.6 FTE Position from the General Fund in FY 2008 for a project specialist and a support position to implement the decisions of a new statutory board created following the inclusion of probation officers in the Corrections Officers Retirement Plan (CORP). Laws 2006, Chapter 308 added probation officers to the class of state employees that could enroll in CORP. The retirement plan specialist and support position are responsible for the administrative duties needed to carry out decisions made by the board.

Duties of the board would include deciding member eligibility, conducting hearings on benefit awards, appointing a physician to evaluate employee medical examinations, and issuing reports to the Legislature on the board's activities.

This increase is the amount allocated for the Adult Standard Probation SLI and is a portion of the total \$192,300 appropriated for this issue. This allocation is based on the portion of probation and surveillance officers who supervise adult standard probationers. (*See Adult Intensive Probation, Juvenile Standard Probation, and Juvenile Intensive Probation for more information.*)

This line item provides funding for community supervision services for adults placed on standard probation by the Adult Division of the Superior Court. Supervision is intended to monitor compliance with the terms and conditions of probation imposed by the court. Pursuant to A.R.S. § 12-251A, an adult probation officer shall not supervise more than 60 adults on standard probation at one time. In funding caseload growth, this ratio is adjusted downward by 2% because of the distances officers in rural counties must travel to supervise probationers.

### ***Adult Intensive Probation***

The budget provides \$11,616,600 and 8.7 FTE Positions from the General Fund for Adult Intensive Probation in FY 2008. This amount funds the following adjustments:

#### **Statewide Adjustments**

The budget provides an increase of \$300,100 from the General Fund in FY 2008 for statewide adjustments.

#### **Probation Capacity Shift**

The budget provides a decrease of \$(119,000) from the General Fund in FY 2008 to shift surplus funding to the Adult Standard Probation line item for increased caseload. This increase will have a zero net effect on the overall budget because of an increase in Adult Standard Probation. The funded caseload in FY 2007 was 1,675 probationers. A revised analysis indicates that the average FY 2007 caseload will only be 1,593 probationers. Adult Intensive

Probation is forecasted to grow by 2.5%, or an increase of 40 probationers, in non-Maricopa counties to reach an average caseload of 1,633 offenders in FY 2008. This caseload is based on the average actual monthly growth during the last 3 fiscal years. (See *Adult Standard Probation and Juvenile Intensive Probation for more information.*)

With a FY 2007 funded level of 1,675 probationers and a projected FY 2008 caseload of 1,633, there are surplus funds in this program. By shifting \$119,000 to Adult Standard Probation, the FY 2008 funding level will support the projected caseload of 1,633.

**Corrections Officer Retirement  
Plan Administration**

The budget provides an increase of \$42,100 and a 0.4 FTE Position from the General Fund in FY 2008 for a project specialist and a support position to implement the decisions of a new statutory board created following the inclusion of probation officers in the Corrections Officers Retirement Plan (CORP). (See *Adult Standard Probation, Juvenile Standard Probation, and Juvenile Intensive Probation for more information.*)

This line item provides funding for a sentencing alternative intended to divert serious, non-violent offenders from prison. Supervision is intended to monitor compliance with the terms and conditions of probation imposed by the court. Pursuant to A.R.S. § 13-916, 1 team shall not supervise more than 25 intensive probationers at one time. In funding caseload growth, this ratio is adjusted downward by 5% because of the distances officers in rural counties must travel to supervise probationers.

**Community Punishment**

The budget provides \$2,873,700 and 1 FTE Position for Community Punishment in FY 2008. This amount consists of:

	<u><b>FY 2008</b></u>
General Fund	\$543,300
Drug Treatment and Education Fund	500,000
Criminal Justice Enhancement Fund	1,830,400

These amounts fund the following adjustment:

**Statewide Adjustments**

The budget provides an increase of \$18,900 from the General Fund in FY 2008 for statewide adjustments.

This line item provides behavioral treatment services for adult probationers and for enhanced supervision, such as electronic monitoring and specialized probation caseloads. The funding is intended to provide for diversion of offenders from prison and jail, as well as to enhance probation programs. Since FY 2007, Maricopa County has been required to assume the costs of its Community Punishment program. Laws 2006, Chapter 261 made this shift permanent.

**Interstate Compact**

The budget provides \$658,100 and 3.8 FTE Positions from the General Fund for Interstate Compact in FY 2008. This amount funds the following adjustment:

**Statewide Adjustments**

The budget provides an increase of \$17,600 from the General Fund in FY 2008 for statewide adjustments.

This line item provides funding for supervision and intervention to probationers transferring to Arizona and monitors the supervision of probationers transferred to other states from Arizona.

**Sex Offenders GPS Monitoring**

The budget provides \$756,800 and a 0.1 FTE Position from the General Fund for Sex Offenders Global Position System (GPS) Monitoring in FY 2008. This amount funds the following adjustments:

**Statewide Adjustments**

The budget provides an increase of \$6,800 from the General Fund in FY 2008 for statewide adjustments.

**GPS Funding Transfer**

The budget provides an increase of \$750,000 and a 0.1 FTE Position from the General Fund in FY 2008 to transfer funding for the statewide GPS monitoring of sex offenders from the Supreme Court budget.

Laws 2006, Chapter 368 appropriated \$750,000 from the General Fund in FY 2007 for GPS monitoring of sex offenders. Beginning November 1, 2006, the courts must require GPS monitoring of those who are convicted of committing a dangerous crime against children and who are imposed with a term of probation.

Chapter 368 also appropriated \$750,000 from the General Fund in FY 2007 to the Department of Corrections for GPS monitoring of those released on parole, community supervision or other release after being convicted of a dangerous crime against children, specifically sex offenses. The department was allowed to enter into contracts for the provision of GPS monitoring, which allows authorities to determine the location of the offender at all times.

**Drug Court**

The budget provides \$1,013,600 from the General Fund for Drug Court programs in FY 2008. This amount funds the following adjustment:

**Statewide Adjustments**

The budget provides an increase of \$13,600 from the General Fund in FY 2008 for statewide adjustments.

This line item provides funding for juvenile and adult drug courts within the Superior Court throughout the state. It provides funding for prosecuting, adjudicating and treating

drug-dependent offenders. Superior Court divisions in 9 counties have implemented or are planning the implementation of drug courts. These programs utilize drug education, intensive therapy, parent support, case management, socialization alternatives, aftercare and compliance monitoring for drug abstinence.

AOC has identified 4 levels of priority to determine which drug courts shall receive funding. Monies will be awarded first to drug court programs scheduled to lose federal funding in FY 2007. Monies will be contingent on meeting national standards and are not to be used to supplant existing county or federal monies. Second priority will be given to current programs to help meet national standards.

Third priority will be given to the initiation of new drug courts within counties that have been unsuccessful in obtaining federal funding, or in those courts in which funding has expired and the program is no longer operational. AOC will coordinate grant-writing assistance for these programs and assist in obtaining federal monies. The last priority will be given to the expansion of existing programs to serve additional participants.

#### ***Probation Surcharge***

The budget provides \$2,725,700 and a 0.8 FTE Position from the Judicial Collection Enhancement Fund (JCEF) for Probation Surcharge in FY 2008. This amount funds the following adjustment:

#### **Statewide Adjustments**

The budget provides an increase of \$1,900 from JCEF in FY 2008 for statewide adjustments.

This line item consists of monies collected from a \$10 surcharge applied to various criminal offenses, civil traffic violations, and game and fish statute violations throughout the state. Monies collected from the surcharge (excluding those collected in courts located within Maricopa County) are deposited into the JCEF and redistributed by AOC to all counties to supplement funding for the salaries of probation and surveillance officers and for the support of programs and services of the Superior Court adult and juvenile probation departments. These monies were transferred in FY 2007 to the Superior Court from the Supreme Court's Automation Special Line Item to more accurately represent how and for what purposes these monies are expended.

#### **Juvenile Probation Programs**

##### ***Juvenile Standard Probation***

The budget provides \$5,214,400 and 4.5 FTE Positions from the General Fund for Juvenile Standard Probation in FY 2008. This amount funds the following adjustments:

#### **Statewide Adjustments**

The budget provides an increase of \$218,900 from the General Fund in FY 2008 for statewide adjustments.

#### **Corrections Officer Retirement Plan Administration**

The budget provides an increase of \$46,300 and a 0.5 FTE Position from the General Fund in FY 2008 for a project specialist and a support position to implement the decisions of a new statutory board created following the inclusion of probation officers in the Corrections Officers Retirement Plan (CORP). (*See Adult Standard Probation, Adult Intensive Probation, and Juvenile Intensive Probation for more information.*)

Juvenile Standard Probation population is projected to grow by 1.1%, or an increase of 37 probationers, in non-Maricopa counties to reach an average caseload of 3,288 offenders in FY 2008. This caseload is based on the average actual monthly growth during the last 3 fiscal years.

The FY 2008 budget provides funding for an average caseload of 3,850 probationers, which is the same level as in FY 2007. Because the average predicted caseload is 562 probationers below the funded level, there may be a surplus of \$595,000 in this line item.

This line item provides funding for community supervision services for juveniles placed on standard probation by the Juvenile Division of the Superior Court. Supervision is intended to monitor compliance with the terms and conditions of probation imposed by the court. Pursuant to A.R.S. § 8-203B, a juvenile probation officer shall not supervise more than an average of 35 juveniles on standard probation at one time. In funding caseload growth, this ratio is adjusted downward by 5% because of the distances officers in rural communities must travel to supervise probationers.

#### ***Juvenile Intensive Probation***

The budget provides \$10,410,700 and 6.5 FTE Positions from the General Fund for Juvenile Intensive Probation in FY 2008. This amount funds the following adjustments:

#### **Statewide Adjustments**

The budget provides an increase of \$279,800 from the General Fund in FY 2008 for statewide adjustments.

#### **Probation Capacity Shift**

The budget provides a decrease of \$(119,000) from the General Fund in FY 2008 to shift surplus funding to the Adult Standard Probation line item for increased caseload. This increase will have a zero net effect on the overall budget because of an increase in Adult Standard Probation.

The funded caseload in FY 2007 is 1,117 probationers. A revised analysis indicates that the average FY 2007 caseload will only be 817 probationers. Juvenile Intensive

Probation is forecasted to remain at that level in FY 2008. Based on the average actual monthly growth during the last 3 fiscal years, caseload would be predicted to decline by (5.4)%. (See *Adult Standard Probation and Adult Intensive Probation for more information.*)

With a FY 2007 funded level of 1,117 probationers and a projected FY 2008 caseload of 817, there are surplus funds in this program. By shifting \$119,000 to Adult Standard Probation, the FY 2008 funding level will support a caseload of 1,075 and leave a surplus of \$753,700, or 258 probationers above the forecasted caseload of 817.

#### **Corrections Officer Retirement Plan Administration**

The budget provides an increase of \$49,900 and a 0.5 FTE Position from the General Fund in FY 2008 for a project specialist and a support position to implement the decisions of a new statutory board created following the inclusion of probation officers in the Corrections Officers Retirement Plan (CORP). (See *Adult Standard Probation, Adult Intensive Probation, and Juvenile Standard Probation for more information.*)

This line item provides funding for a sentencing alternative to divert serious, non-violent juvenile offenders from incarceration or residential care and to provide intensive supervision for high-risk offenders already on probation. Supervision is intended to monitor compliance with the terms and conditions of probation imposed by the court. Pursuant to A.R.S. § 8-353B, 1 JIPS team shall not supervise more than an average of 25 juveniles on intensive probation at one time. In funding caseload growth, this ratio is adjusted downward by 5% because of the distances officers in rural communities must travel to supervise probationers.

#### **Juvenile Treatment Services**

The budget provides \$22,504,700 and 19.7 FTE Positions from the General Fund for Juvenile Treatment Services in FY 2008. This amount funds the following adjustment:

##### **Statewide Adjustments**

The budget provides an increase of \$50,500 from the General Fund in FY 2008 for statewide adjustments.

This line item provides funding to the juvenile courts to meet the requirements of A.R.S. § 8-230.01 and A.R.S. § 8-230.02, relating to the assignment of youths referred for delinquency or incorrigibility to treatment programs, residential treatment centers, counseling, shelter care and other programs.

#### **Juvenile Family Counseling**

The budget provides \$660,400 from the General Fund for Juvenile Family Counseling in FY 2008. This amount is unchanged from FY 2007.

This line item provides funding to the Juvenile Division of the Superior Court for prevention of delinquency among juvenile offenders by strengthening family relationships. These monies are predominantly for non-adjudicated juveniles and their families and require a 25% county match.

#### **Progressively Increasing Consequences (PIC-Act)**

The budget provides \$10,334,300 from the General Fund for Progressively Increasing Consequences in FY 2008. This amount funds the following adjustment:

##### **Statewide Adjustments**

The budget provides an increase of \$165,800 from the General Fund in FY 2008 for statewide adjustments.

This program diverts youth from formal court proceedings in order to reduce court costs and prevent re-offending. A PIC-Act probation officer assigns consequences for the juvenile to complete, such as substance abuse education, graffiti abatement, counseling, or other community service programs. In FY 2005 there were approximately 20,300 juveniles diverted from formal court proceedings. Monies in this line item are distributed to all counties.

#### **Juvenile Crime Reduction**

The budget provides \$5,221,800 and 7.6 FTE Positions from the Criminal Justice Enhancement Fund (CJEF) for Juvenile Crime Reduction in FY 2008. This amount funds the following adjustment:

##### **Statewide Adjustments**

The budget provides an increase of \$23,600 from CJEF in FY 2008 for statewide adjustments.

This line item provides funding for the design and implementation of community-based strategies for reducing juvenile crime. Strategies include prevention, early intervention, effective intermediate sanctions, and rehabilitation. Through a grant process, AOC distributes monies in this line item to approximately 20 public and private entities.

#### **Special Water Master**

The budget provides \$20,000 from the General Fund for the Special Water Master line item in FY 2008. This amount is unchanged from FY 2007.

This line item provides funding for the Special Water Master assigned by the court in 1990 to the Little Colorado River water rights adjudication. The adjudication of water rights for the Little Colorado River was petitioned in 1978. Through FY 2005, about 3,100 individuals, communities, governments, and companies have filed about 13,300 water rights claims. The Special Water Master conducts hearings for each claimant and makes recommendations to a Superior Court judge.

Pursuant to statute, the costs of the Water Master are funded from claimant fees. If claimant fees are insufficient, statute requires the state General Fund to pay for these expenses in a Special Line Item within the Superior Court budget.