

**Columbus Consolidated Government
Council Meeting Agenda Item**

TO:	Mayor and Councilors
AGENDA SUBJECT:	Increase in appearance per diem rate for court reporting services for the rapid resolution program
AGENDA SUMMARY:	Approval is requested to increase the appearance per diem rate from \$200 per day to \$500 per day for court reporters who are independent contractors providing services to the Rapid Resolution Program.
INITIATED BY:	Superior Court Judges

Recommendation: Approval is requested to increase the appearance per diem rate from \$200 per day to \$500 per day for court reporters who are independent contractors providing services to the Rapid Resolution Program.

Background: The Rapid Resolution Program (RRP) has, over time, significantly reduced the number of inmates housed in the Muscogee County Jail. During the first 8 months of 2022, between January 1, 2022 and August 15, 2022, Muscogee County's Rapid Resolution Program closed 250 of the approximately 1,800 cases closed by the District Attorney's Office for a clearance rate of 14%. The program operates with the utilization of resources from the District Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, and the Superior Court. In accordance with state law, the Rapid Resolution Program docket cannot go forward without a Georgia certified court reporter performing take-down of the proceedings. The Superior Court has faced obstacles with recruiting certified court reporters at the current appearance per diem rate. The current appearance per diem rate is determined by the Judicial Council of Georgia and is currently set as \$200 per day for court attendance. However, O.C.G.A. 15-5-21 (a)(3) provides that while the Judicial Council shall set the minimum per diem fee for official court reporters, the fee may be supplemented by the various counties within the circuits to which the court reporters are assigned.

Analysis: The efforts of the judicial circuit administration for the Superior Court has failed to receive any response to provide court reporting services at \$200 per day. This prohibits the program's expansion, and its existence is in jeopardy if a court reporter is not secured.

Financial Considerations: The Chief Superior Court Judge's budget will require an increase in its annual appropriation for the program in the amount of \$16,500 if the program is expanded to 4 days per month or \$10,500 if the program operates for 3 days per month.

Legal Considerations: Council's approval is required to increase budgeted appropriations as well as authorize supplementing the appearance per diem rate for court reporters who are independent contractors providing services to the Rapid Resolution Program.

Recommendations/Actions: Approve a resolution to increase the appearance per diem rate from \$200.00 per day to \$500.00 per day for court reporters who are independent contractors providing services to the Rapid Resolution Program.

RESOLUTION
NO. _____

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN INCREASE IN THE APPEARANCE PER DIEM RATE FROM \$200 PER DAY TO \$500 PER DAY FOR COURT REPORTERS WHO ARE INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS PROVIDING SERVICES TO THE RAPID RESOLUTION PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, , the Rapid Resolution Program docket cannot go forward without a Georgia certified court reporter performing take-down of the proceedings; and,

WHEREAS, the Superior Court has faced obstacles with recruiting certified court reporters at the current appearance per diem rate of \$200 per day; and,

WHEREAS, O.C.G.A. 15-5-21 (a)(3) provides that while the Judicial Council shall set the minimum per diem fee for official court reporters, currently \$200 per day, the fee may be supplemented by the various counties within the circuits to which the court reporters are assigned.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA, HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

That the court appearance per diem rate shall be increased from \$200 per day to \$500 per day for court reporters who are independent contractors providing services to the Rapid Resolution Program thereby increasing the budgeted appropriations for the program.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia held on the 25th day of October, 2022, adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of _____ members of said Council.

Councilor Allen voting	_____.
Councilor Crabb voting	_____.
Councilor Barnes voting	_____.
Councilor Davis voting	_____.
Councilor Garrett voting	_____.
Councilor House voting	_____.
Councilor Huff voting	_____.
Councilor Tucker voting	_____.
Councilor Thomas voting	_____.
Councilor Woodson voting	_____.

Sandra T. Davis, Clerk of Council

B.H. "Skip" Henderson, III, Mayor