

**RCW 10.01.160 Costs—What constitutes—Payment by defendant—
Procedure—Remission—Medical or mental health treatment or services.**

(1) Except as provided in subsection (3) of this section, the court may require a defendant to pay costs. Costs may be imposed only upon a convicted defendant, except for costs imposed upon a defendant's entry into a deferred prosecution program, costs imposed upon a defendant for pretrial supervision, or costs imposed upon a defendant for preparing and serving a warrant for failure to appear.

(2) Costs shall be limited to expenses specially incurred by the state in prosecuting the defendant or in administering the deferred prosecution program under chapter 10.05 RCW or pretrial supervision. They cannot include expenses inherent in providing a constitutionally guaranteed jury trial or expenditures in connection with the maintenance and operation of government agencies that must be made by the public irrespective of specific violations of law. Expenses incurred for serving of warrants for failure to appear and jury fees under RCW 10.46.190 may be included in costs the court may require a defendant to pay. Costs for administering a deferred prosecution may not exceed \$250. Costs for administering a pretrial supervision other than a pretrial electronic alcohol monitoring program, drug monitoring program, or 24/7 sobriety program may not exceed \$150. Costs for preparing and serving a warrant for failure to appear may not exceed \$100. Costs of incarceration imposed on a defendant convicted of a misdemeanor or a gross misdemeanor may not exceed the actual cost of incarceration. In no case may the court require the offender to pay more than \$100 per day for the cost of incarceration. Payment of other court-ordered financial obligations, including all legal financial obligations and costs of supervision take precedence over the payment of the cost of incarceration ordered by the court. All funds received from defendants for the cost of incarceration in the county or city jail must be remitted for criminal justice purposes to the county or city that is responsible for the defendant's jail costs. Costs imposed constitute a judgment against a defendant and survive a dismissal of the underlying action against the defendant. However, if the defendant is acquitted on the underlying action, the costs for preparing and serving a warrant for failure to appear do not survive the acquittal, and the judgment that such costs would otherwise constitute shall be vacated.

(3) The court shall not order a defendant to pay costs if the defendant at the time of sentencing is indigent. In determining the amount and method of payment of costs for defendants who are not indigent, the court shall take account of the financial resources of the defendant and the nature of the burden that payment of costs will impose. For the purposes of this section, a defendant is "indigent" if the defendant: (a) Meets the criteria defined in RCW 10.101.010(3) (a) through (c); (b) is homeless or mentally ill as defined in RCW 71.24.025; (c) has household income above 125 percent of the federal poverty guidelines and has recurring basic living costs, as defined in RCW 10.101.010, that render the defendant without the financial ability to pay; or (d) has other compelling circumstances that exist that demonstrate an inability to pay.

(4) A defendant who has been ordered to pay costs and who has not willfully failed to pay the obligation, as described in RCW 9.94A.6333, 9.94B.040, and 10.01.180, may at any time petition the sentencing court for remission of the payment of costs or of any unpaid portion thereof. If it appears to the satisfaction of the court

that payment of the amount due will impose manifest hardship on the defendant or the defendant's immediate family, the court may remit all or part of the amount due in costs, modify the method of payment under RCW 10.01.170, or convert the unpaid costs to community restitution hours, if the jurisdiction operates a community restitution program, at the rate of no less than the state minimum wage established in RCW 49.46.020 for each hour of community restitution. Manifest hardship exists where the defendant is indigent as defined in subsection (3) of this section.

(5) Except for direct costs relating to evaluating and reporting to the court, prosecutor, or defense counsel regarding a defendant's competency to stand trial as provided in *RCW 10.77.400, this section shall not apply to costs related to medical or mental health treatment or services a defendant receives while in custody of the secretary of the department of social and health services or other governmental units. This section shall not prevent the secretary of the department of social and health services or other governmental units from imposing liability and seeking reimbursement from a defendant committed to an appropriate facility as provided in *RCW 10.77.635 while criminal proceedings are stayed. This section shall also not prevent governmental units from imposing liability on defendants for costs related to providing medical or mental health treatment while the defendant is in the governmental unit's custody. Medical or mental health treatment and services a defendant receives at a state hospital or other facility are not a cost of prosecution and shall be recoverable under RCW *10.77.129 and 70.48.130, chapter 43.20B RCW, and any other applicable statute. [2022 c 260 s 9; 2018 c 269 s 6; 2015 3rd sp.s. c 35 s 1; 2010 c 54 s 1; 2008 c 318 s 2; 2007 c 367 s 3; 2005 c 263 s 2; 1995 c 221 s 1; 1994 c 192 s 1; 1991 c 247 s 4; 1987 c 363 s 1; 1985 c 389 s 1; 1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 96 s 1.]

***Reviser's note:** These RCW references have been corrected to reflect the reorganization of chapter 10.77 RCW by 2025 c 358 s 2.

Construction—Effective date—2022 c 260: See notes following RCW 3.66.120.

Construction—2018 c 269: See note following RCW 10.82.090.

Findings—Intent—2008 c 318: "The legislature finds that because of the decision in *Utter v. DSHS*, 165 P.3d 399 (Wash. 2007), there is unintended ambiguity about the authority of the secretary of the department of social and health services under the criminal procedure act to seek reimbursement from defendants under RCW 10.77.250 who are committed for competency evaluation and mental health treatment under RCW 10.77.060 and 10.77.084, and the general provision prohibiting a criminal defendant from being charged for prosecution related costs prior to conviction provided in RCW 10.01.160. Mental health evaluation and treatment, and other medical treatment relate entirely to the medically necessary care that defendants receive at state hospitals and other facilities. The legislature intended for treatment costs to be the responsibility of the defendant's insurers and ultimately the defendant based on their ability to pay, and it is permissible under chapters 10.77, 70.48, and 43.20B RCW for the state and other governmental units to assess financial liability on defendants who become patients and receive medical and mental health care. The legislature further finds that it intended that a court

order staying criminal proceedings under RCW 10.77.084, and committing a defendant to the custody of the secretary of the department of social and health services for placement in an appropriate facility involve costs payable by the defendant, because the commitment primarily and directly benefits the defendant through treatment of their medical and mental health conditions. The legislature did not intend for medical and mental health services provided to a defendant in the custody of a governmental unit, and the associated costs, to be costs related to the prosecution of the defendant. Thus, if a court orders a stay of the criminal proceeding under RCW 10.77.084 and orders commitment to the custody of the secretary, or if at any time a defendant receives other medical care while in custody of a governmental unit, but prior to conviction, the costs associated with such care shall be the responsibility of the defendant and the defendant's insurers as provided in chapters 10.77, 70.48, and 43.20B RCW. The intent of the legislature is to clarify this reimbursement requirement, and the purpose of this act is to make retroactive, remedial, curative, and technical amendments in order to resolve any ambiguity about the legislature's intent in enacting these chapters." [2008 c 318 s 1.]

Effective date—2008 c 318: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [April 1, 2008]." [2008 c 318 s 3.]

Commitment for failure to pay fine and costs: RCW 10.70.010, 10.82.030.

Defendant liable for costs: RCW 10.64.015.

Fine and costs—Collection and disposition: Chapter 10.82 RCW.