



Kentucky Judicial Branch

Budget and Updates
September 17, 2025



Judicial Branch Budget Overview

Zachary Ramsey

Director, Administrative Office of the Courts

Carole Henderson

Budget Director

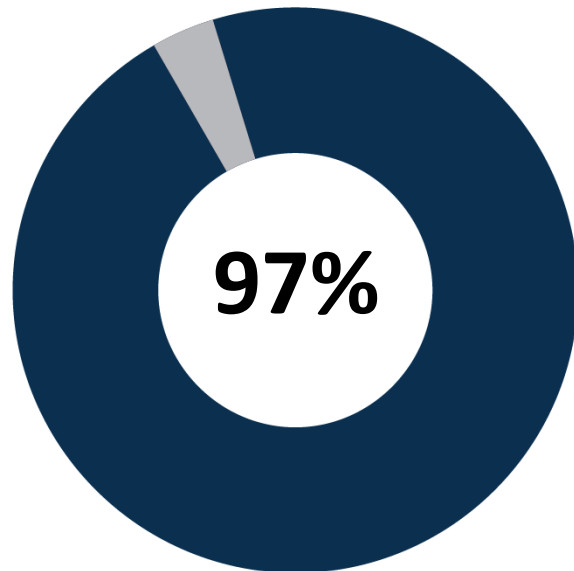


Judicial Branch Budget Overview

The Judicial Branch Budget comprises approximately 2.77% of the commonwealth's total General Fund budget. FY2026 General Fund Appropriations Total: **\$16,873,668,700**

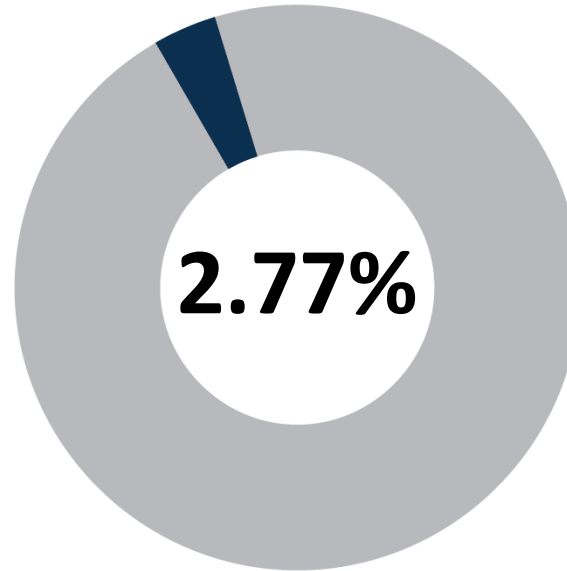
Executive Branch

\$16,314,989,200



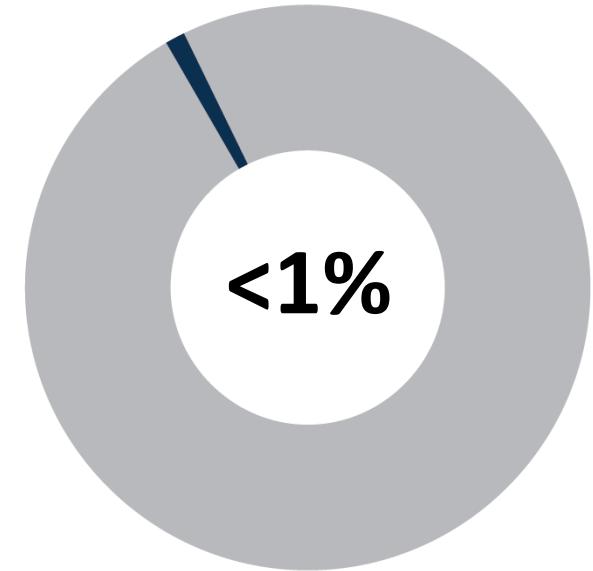
Judicial Branch

\$466,739,100



Legislative Branch

\$91,940,400

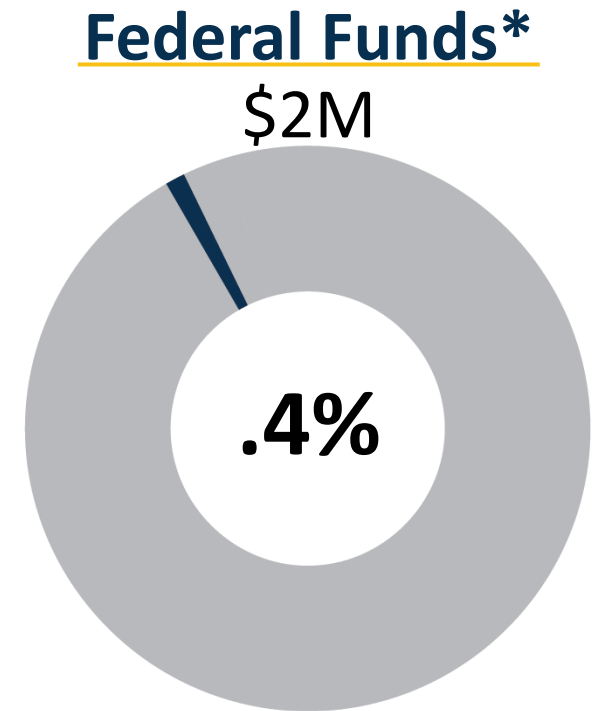
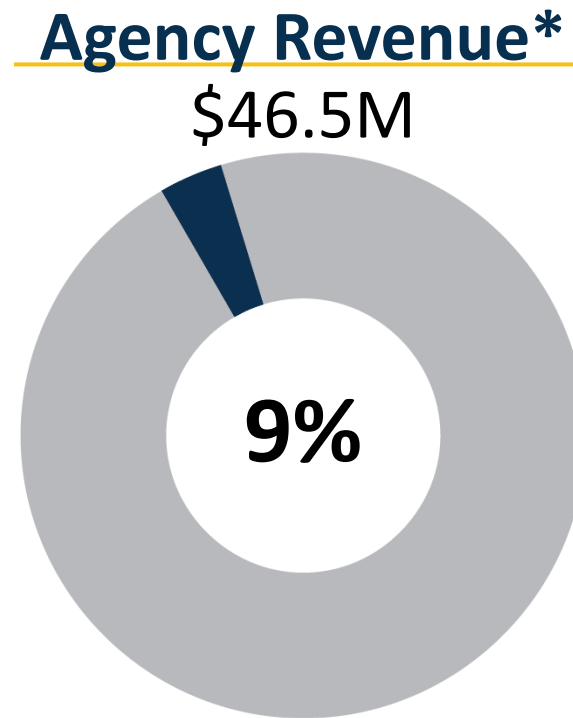
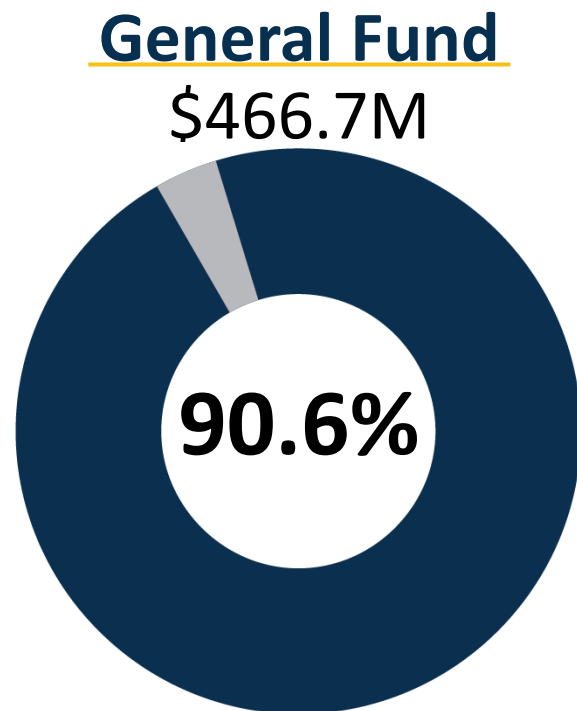




Judicial Branch Budget Overview

The Judicial Branch Budget is primarily comprised of General Fund appropriations.

FY2026 Source of Funds



**Projected*



Judicial Branch Budget Overview

Agency Revenue includes revenue generated during the fiscal year from civil filing fees, court technology fees, excess Master Commissioner fees, Deputy Clerk Enhancement Funds, criminal history records checks and various other program and subscription fees.

- Each agency revenue stream is tracked as a separate **Restricted Fund Account**.
- Statutes and court rules restrict how many, but not all, of these Restricted Fund Accounts may be used.



Judicial Branch Budget Overview

90.68% of the Judicial Branch General Fund appropriation is spent on personnel, bond payments and operating costs to counties for court facilities, all non-discretionary expenditures.

Expenditure Type	FY2025 Expenditures
Personnel	\$ 282,872,764
Use Allowance (Bonds)	74,993,297
Use Allowance and Operating Costs Paid to Counties	39,283,696
Supplies and Equipment	9,918,879
Information Technology	8,648,294
Misc. Support Services	7,884,429
Utilities / Telecommunications / Postage	7,392,769
Leases	3,583,574
Travel	2,692,088



Judicial Branch Budget Overview

The Judicial Branch Budget is comprised of four appropriation units.

Court Operations

- Salaries and benefits for all elected officials
- Salaries and benefits for all KCOJ staff
- Contractors
- Technical equipment and software for all KCOJ
- Office equipment for all KCOJ
- Travel expenses
- Services for all KCOJ functions and programs (language access, drug testing, treatment, etc.)

Local Facilities Fund

- Operating costs paid to counties
- Reimbursement to counties for nonrecurring maintenance and repair costs
- Bond payments for court facilities

Use Allowance Contingency Fund

Judicial Retirement



Judicial Branch Budget Overview

Since FY2010, the Judicial Branch has been using agency revenue and vacancy credits to balance the Court Operations appropriation unit.

- Projections indicate that agency revenue and vacancy credits are no longer sufficient to cover the shortfalls in Court Operations.
- In addition to agency revenue generated during the fiscal year, the Judicial Branch has historically had the ability to use its Restricted Funds Carryforward as needed to balance the Court Operations appropriation unit.

2025 SB 25 required the Judicial Branch to transfer \$34.5M of its Restricted Funds Carryforward to a reserve account.

- The Judicial Branch may not access the reserve account without an appropriation from the General Assembly.



Judicial Branch Budget Carryforward

General Fund (End of FY2025)

- Court Operations - \$329,100
- Local Facilities Fund - \$7.2M¹

Restricted Funds

- End of FY2024 - \$51.4M
- End of FY2025
 - \$31.3M in the Court of Justice Reserve Account²
 - \$11.9M in remaining Restricted Fund Carryforward

1 This carryforward amount is fully obligated by active repair projects authorized/contracted in FY2025.

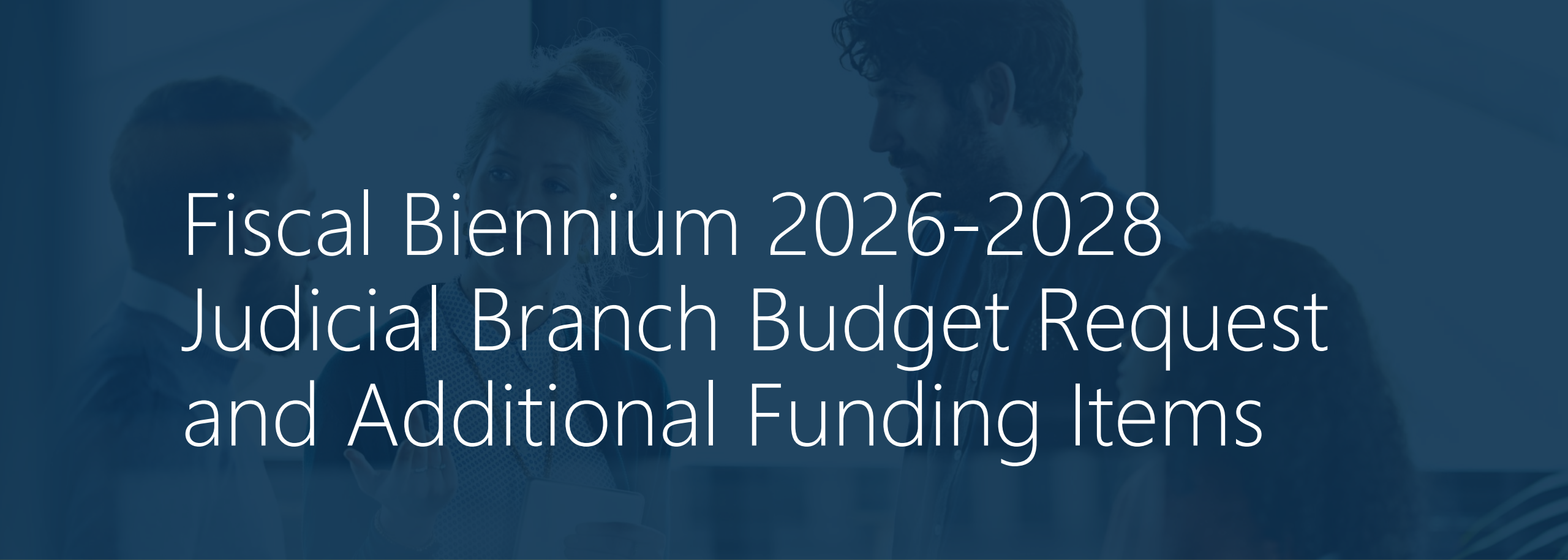
2 During FY2025, Senate Bill 25 created the Court of Justice Reserve Account and required the transfer of \$34.5M from the Restricted Fund Carryforward to the Reserve Account. Funds in the Reserve Account can be spent **only upon appropriation** of the General Assembly per 2025 SB 25.



Judicial Branch Immediate Need

The Judicial Branch needs access to the Reserve Account in FY2026 to meet its financial obligations.

- Current projections indicate the Judicial Branch will need about \$13.5M to pay all obligations and maintain current service levels for FY2026.
- Because annual operational expenses exceed the base appropriation, the Judicial Branch is including an additional funding request to raise the base appropriation for Fiscal Years 2027-2028.



Fiscal Biennium 2026-2028 Judicial Branch Budget Request and Additional Funding Items

Zachary Ramsey

Director, Administrative Office of the Courts

Carole Henderson

Budget Director



Judicial Branch Budget Request

Full Funding of Court Operations

The Judicial Branch requires an appropriation of **\$341M** annually to maintain current operations and programs, about **\$13.5M** over the current base budget.

The difference is due to:

- Inflation affecting the costs of goods, services and travel.
- Nondiscretionary increases such as health insurance and 2022 HB 214 nine(9) new judgeships not funded.
- Employee turnover with a trend of new personnel being hired at higher than entry salary due to qualifications.

Increasing the base appropriation would allow the Judicial Branch to maintain current services without relying on vacancy credits and agency revenues.



Judicial Branch Budget Request

Court Operations

In addition to adjusting the base appropriation to reflect FY2026 expenses, additional funding items requested include:

- Pay Parity Plan – 15% salary increase across all KCOJ
- Non-discretionary increases in expenses for FY2027 and FY2028
- Replacement of Restricted Funds
- Technology Subscription Fees
- JAVS system upgrades
- Installation of AEDs and medical kits in courthouses statewide
- Necessary additional positions

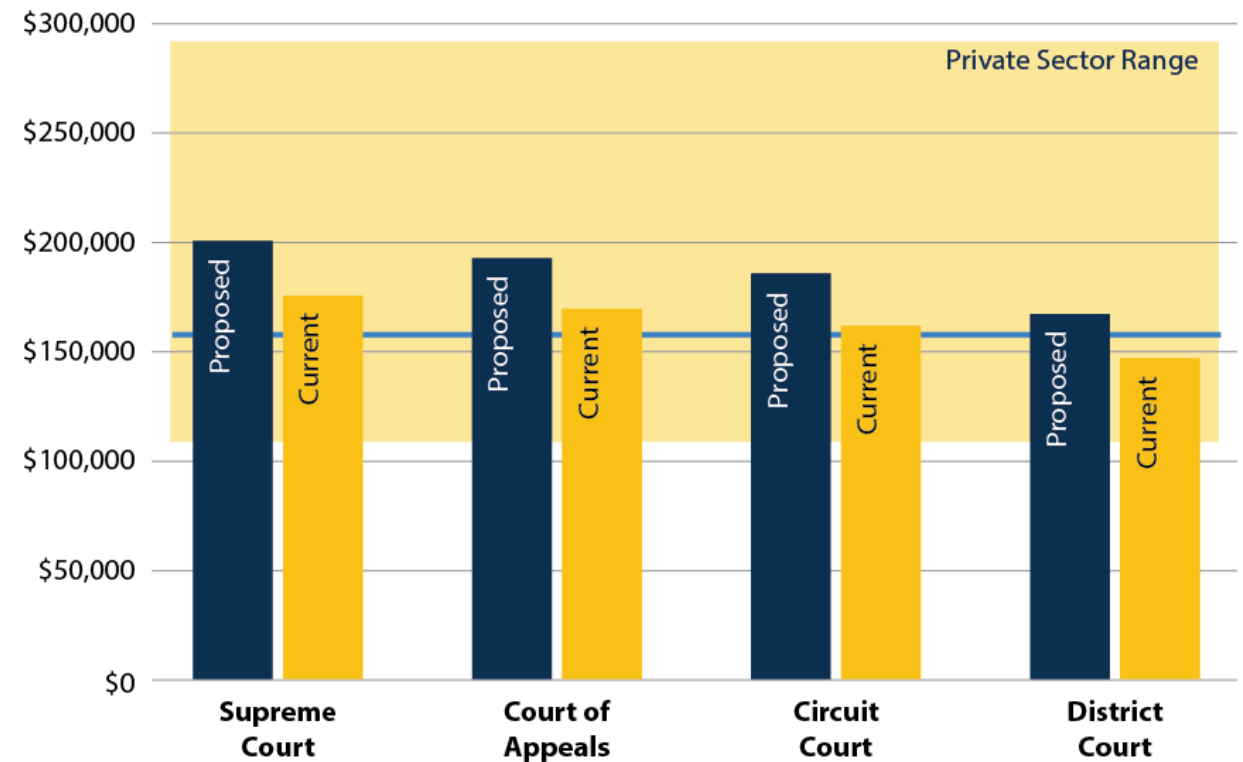


Judicial Branch Budget Request

Attracting Best and Brightest to the Bench

Frequently judges are paid significantly less than attorneys presenting before them.

Judicial salaries lag significantly behind the rising salaries of attorneys in the private sector, particularly for experienced lawyers.





Judicial Branch Budget Request

Circuit Court Clerks

- On average, make 11.3% less than county clerks and other local officials, with disparity reaching as high as 15%
- County officials receive a salary increase in January of each year based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) certified by the Department of Local Government.

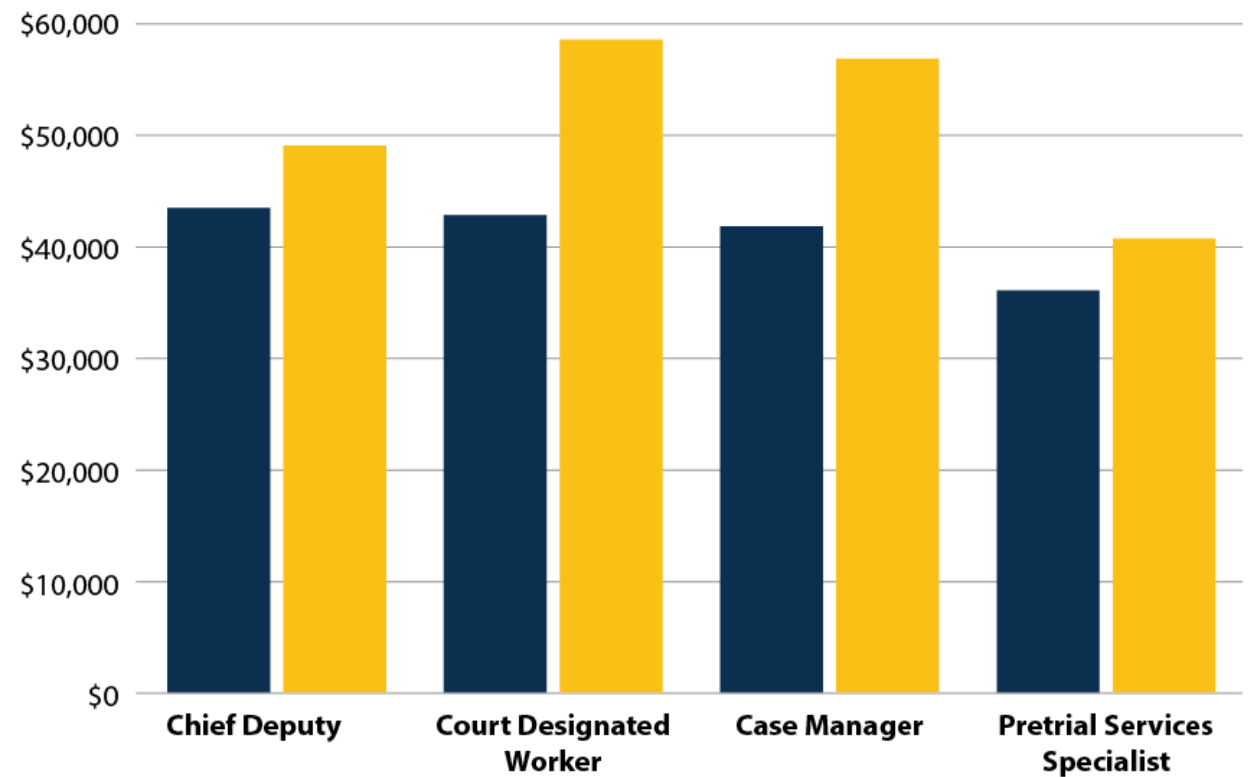
Population	Circuit Court Clerk	County Clerk	\$ Disparity	% Disparity
< 9,999	\$ 92,916	\$ 101,011	\$ 8,095	-8%
10,000 - 19,999	99,384	110,658	11,274	-10%
20,000 - 29,999	105,984	118,602	12,618	-11%
30,000 - 44,999	112,679	125,281	12,602	-10%
45,000 - 59,999	119,813	133,735	13,922	-10%
60,000 - 89,999	125,561	141,238	15,677	-11%
90,000 - 499,999	132,124	149,293	17,170	-12%
500,000 >	138,716	158,893	20,177	-13%



Judicial Branch Budget Request

Historical Salary Disparity

- **Chief Deputy:** 13.1% behind Admin Branch Manager
- **Court Designated Worker:** 35-36% below Social Worker
- **Case Manager:** 35-36% below Case Management Specialist
- **Pretrial Services Specialist:** 12.3% below Probation & Parole Officer





Judicial Branch Budget Request

Technology Subscription Fees

FB2026-2028

- **CaseWorx:** New case management system for statewide programs
- **DocuSign:** To manage judicial branch requisitions and contracts
- 5% Increase for all existing subscriptions

Future

- \$7.5M for annual fees for the Trial Court CMS beginning in FB2030-2032
- Annual subscription fee increases (typically 5%)



Judicial Branch Budget Request

Full Funding of Local Facilities Fund

The Judicial Branch requires an appropriation of **\$136.1M** annually to maintain current service levels in court facilities statewide, about **\$2.6M** over the current base budget amount.

The difference is due to inflation affecting the costs of insurance, utilities, supplies, and services that counties incur in the maintenance and operation of court facilities statewide.

Increasing the base appropriation would allow the Judicial Branch to continue to fully reimburse counties for their actual costs to operate and maintain court facilities.



Judicial Branch Budget Request

Local Facilities Fund

In addition to adjusting the base appropriation to reflect costs paid by counties to operate and maintain court facilities in FY2026, additional funding items requested include:

- 10% increase each year in operating costs paid to counties to keep up with inflation
- Insurance premiums to cover remediation and restoration of paper court records stored in each court facility
- Temporary space and fit up for court operations in Boyle County
- Indirect rate to be paid to counties to compensate for overseeing operations and maintenance of court facilities



Judicial Branch Debt Service

Savings from Debt Service Roll-off

Total annual savings beginning in FY2027: \$549,024

Total annual savings beginning in FY2028: \$2,338,528

Counties Rolling Off in FY2026 and FY2027

- Bullitt
- Floyd
- Gallatin
- Hart
- Henderson
- Hopkins
- Letcher
- Lewis
- Lincoln
- Mason
- McCracken
- McLean
- Washington
- Webster



Capital Construction Projects

Danny Rhoades

Executive Officer, Department of Court Facilities



Judicial Branch Capital Construction

Madison County Courthouse Renovation and Addition

- Square Footage: 35,364
- Completed: April 2025
- Building Dedication:
May 23, 2025





Judicial Branch Capital Construction

Bath County Judicial Center

- Square footage: 21,500
- Phase D: Construction 85% Complete
- Expected Completion: **January 2026**





Judicial Branch Capital Construction

Crittenden County Judicial Center

- Square footage: 23,050
- Phase D: Construction 10% Complete
- Foundation work has started
- Expected completion: **January 2027**





Judicial Branch Capital Construction

Oldham County Courthouse Renovation and Addition

- Square footage: 53,838
- Phase D: Construction 96% Complete
- Expected Completion: **January 2026**





Judicial Branch Capital Construction

Scott County Judicial Center

- Square footage: 68,500
- Phase D: Construction 20% Complete
- Expected Completion: **November 2026**





Judicial Branch Capital Construction

Barren County Judicial Center

- Square Footage: 58,329
- Phase C-CM:
Bids received August 2025
- Expected Completion:
September 2027





Judicial Branch Capital Construction

Butler County Judicial Center

- Square Footage: 24,000
- Phase B: Design Development
- Anticipated to go to bid early 2026





Judicial Branch Capital Construction

Clinton County Judicial Center

- Square Footage: 31,177
- Phase C: Construction Documents
- Early site package will be out for bid September 2025
- Remainder of building packages to be let in December 2025





Judicial Branch Capital Construction

Graves County Judicial Center

- Square Footage: 30,000
- Phase A: Schematic Design
- Site selection made and offers accepted for a 2.08 acre site at the corner of Broadway and 7th Street.
- Preliminary site studies will begin in the coming months.





Judicial Branch Capital Construction

Court of Appeals Building

- Square footage: 21,500
- Phase B: Design Development
- Anticipated to go to bid mid-2026





Judicial Branch Capital Construction

Projects Currently Selecting Professional Service Providers

- Caldwell County Judicial Center
- Clark County Judicial Center
- Greenup County Judicial Center
- Knox County Judicial Center
- Owsley County Judicial Center





Judicial Branch Capital Construction

Court Facility Rankings

Critical Need

0% - 39.9%

Rank	County	Score
1	Leslie*	30.91%
2	Owsley*	31.97%
3	Spencer**	34.13%
4	Caldwell*	34.14%
5	Fulton	34.66%
6	Estill**	34.68%
7	Lee**	35.45%
8	Elliott**	37.16%
9	Edmonson**	37.98%
10	Clark*	38.17%
11	Larue**	38.17%
12	Greenup*	38.25%
13	Graves*	39.42%
14	Meade**	39.62%

High Need

40% - 54.9%

Rank	County	Score
15	Montgomery	40.05%
16	Knox*	40.05%
17	Ballard**	40.05%
18	Union	41.27%
19	Trimble	42.20%
20	Martin	42.35%
21	Ohio	42.86%
22	Carroll	43.33%
23	Powell	43.61%
24	Lincoln**	43.92%
25	Hickman**	44.72%

Moderate Need

55% - 69.9%

Rank	County	Score
36	Floyd	58.73%
37	Daviess	58.85%

* Already authorized

** Included in the Capital Plan for 2026-2032



Judicial Branch Capital Construction

Spencer County Current State

- Court operations are currently located in multiple facilities.
- Security limitations due to size and entry points.
- Age of the facility.
- Multiple building components at end of life.





Judicial Branch Capital Construction

Spencer County Request

- Authorization to construct a 25,100 ft² facility for circuit, family and district courts, circuit court clerk, specialty courts, pretrial and juvenile services.
- Maximum annual debt service payments of \$3,231,000.





Judicial Branch Capital Construction

Lincoln County Current State

- Court operations located in multiple facilities.
- Multiple building components at end of life.
- Persistent water from a spring under the building leading to health, safety and structural concerns.





Judicial Branch Capital Construction

Lincoln County Request

- Authorization to construct a 30,000 ft² facility for circuit, family and district courts, circuit court clerk, specialty courts, pretrial and juvenile services.
- Maximum annual debt service payments of \$3,844,000.

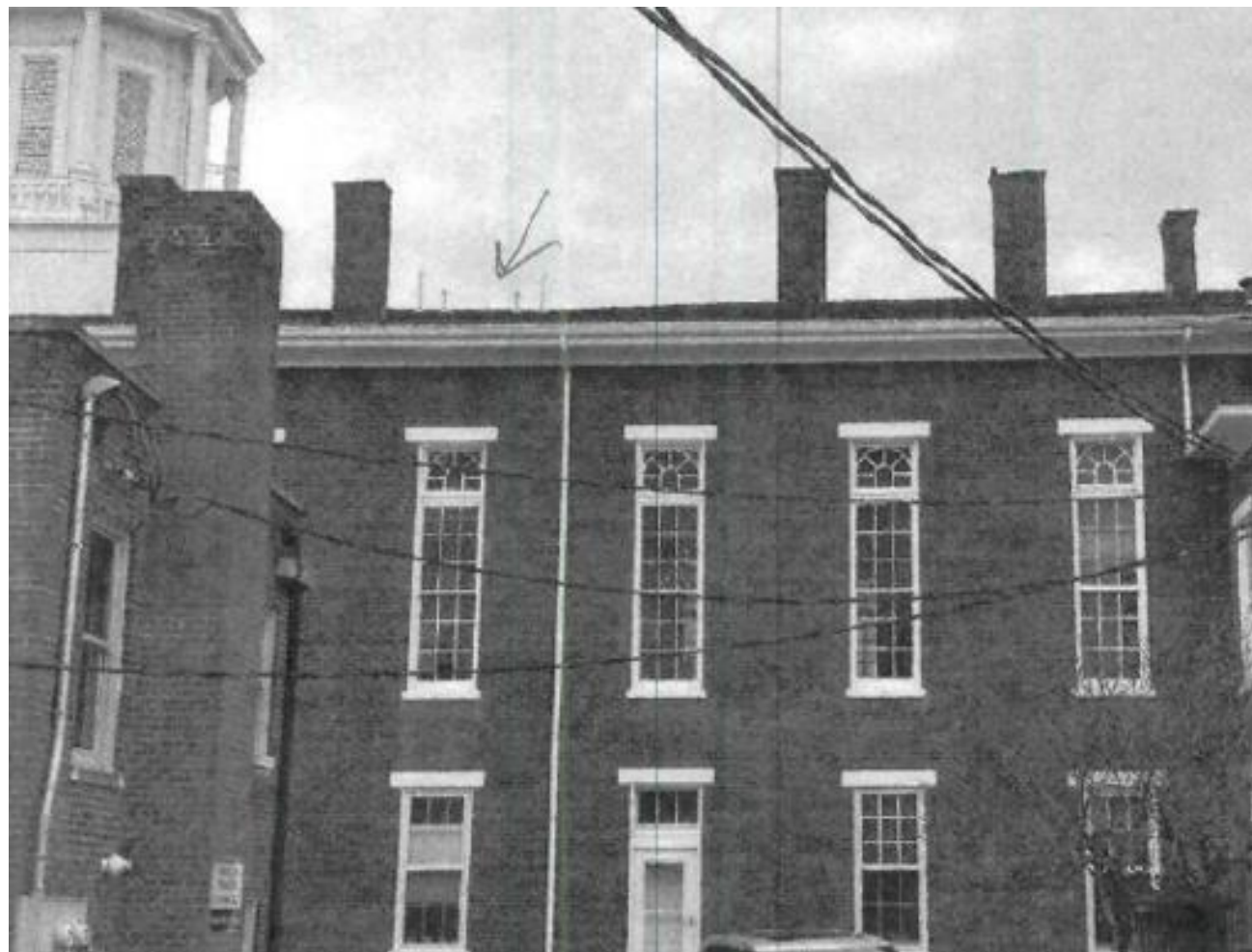




Judicial Branch Capital Construction

Boyle County Current State

- Court operations located in multiple facilities.
- Roof and bell tower require replacement. 2nd floor courtrooms must close during the project.
- Multiple building components at end of life.
- Security limitations due to size and entry points



Sagging ridge line from right side of building.



Judicial Branch Capital Construction

Boyle County Request

- Authorization to Construct a 37,000 ft² facility for circuit, family and district courts, circuit court clerk, specialty courts, pretrial and juvenile services.
- Maximum annual debt service payments of \$4,734,000.



Damaged rear belfry column.



Status of New Case Management System

Zachary Ramsey

Director, Administrative Office of the Courts

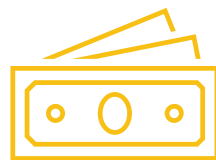
Elizabeth Lucas

Director of Implementation & Court Services



Judicial Branch CMS Project

Highlights



Received \$38M in ARPA Funds (2022 HB 244)



Launched partnership with Tyler Technologies (2024)

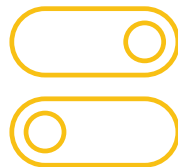


Bound by Supreme Court Guiding Principles

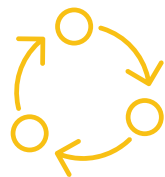


Judicial Branch CMS Project

Technical Currency & Process Consistencies



Replaces trial court
CMS/eFiling applications



Provides springboard for
implementing consistent
processes/procedures



Leverages parallel track for
File & Serve (eFiling
replacement)



Judicial Branch CMS Project

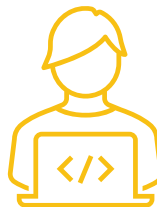
Next Steps



Project Schedule
Refinement



Contractual Modification
Development & Delivery



Additional Configuration,
Testing, System Validation



Enterprise Justice Go-Lives:
Fayette, Hart, Larue, Nelson
File & Serve Go-Lives:
Jefferson, Fayette



Mental Health Court Expansion

Zachary Ramsey

Director, Administrative Office of the Courts

Debbie Hall

Director of Office of Statewide Services



Mental Health Courts

Site Selection & Implementation Strategies

- Sites determined based on volume of mental health-related court cases, community resources available to treat and support cases, and judicial/stakeholder engagement.
- Phased approach with intentional community engagement and structured training curriculum.
- Coordinated strategies developed and documented ahead of program implementation.
- Data collection strategies created to support accountability measures.



Mental Health Courts

Partnership Engagement Timeline



0-3 Months

Identify & Coordinate

- Identify core team
- Invitation sent to team members to gauge support and recognize need for MHC docket
- Conduct first official meeting of MHC team
- Identify target populations, discuss confidentiality, and team function



3-6 Months

Strategize and Prepare

- Develop a strategic plan and set MHC team schedule
- Host BPS and other applicable training series for team
- Identify agencies for MHC Partnership Connection Committee
- Schedule initial listening session with MHC Partnership Connection Committee



6-9 Months

Initiate & Expand

- MHC Partnership Connection Committee assembles to discuss resource capacity
- Finalize necessary workflows, points of contact, docket schedule, and any applicable partnership MOUs



9-12 Months

MHC Implementation


- Begin accepting MHC participants
- Document feedback on processes, referral engagement, and community support
- MHC team evaluates goals and develops plan for upcoming year post implementation



1 Year (+)

Evaluate and Grow

- Evaluate available data to maximize participant experience and outcomes
- Decrease frequency of team and committee meetings
- Utilize outreach material and partnership engagement to continually increase program visibility



- Newly Implemented Programs
- Grant Funded Programs
- Established Programs





Mental Health Courts

2024 HB 264 Expansion Sites

County	Referrals	Active	In Treatment
Bourbon / Scott / Woodford	5	17	0
Christian	6	9	0
Clark / Madison	3	1	1
Floyd	3	10	2
Franklin <i>Program operations delayed due to recent flooding in the County</i>	0	0	0
Harlan	2	0	4
Hopkins	4	4	1
McCracken	12	7	0
Perry	1	7	0
Pulaski	2	2	2
Total	38	57	10



Thank You

Kentucky Judicial Branch Budget and Updates