

**Proposed Budget
of the
Unified Judicial System
2026-27**

SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

*Chief Justice Debra Todd
Justice Christine Donohue
Justice Kevin M. Dougherty
Justice David N. Wecht
Justice Sallie Updyke Mundy
Justice P. Kevin Brobson
Justice Daniel D. McCaffery*



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AOPC

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

PROPOSED BUDGET OF THE UNIFIED JUDICIAL SYSTEM, FY 2026-27

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FISCAL YEAR 2026-27 JUDICIARY BUDGET REQUEST
(\$000)

<u>APPROPRIATION</u>	AVAILABLE	REQUESTED	GOV. REC.
	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
<i>Supreme Court</i>			
(A) <i>Act 49/Supplemental</i>	21,257	24,420	24,320
(A) <i>Miscellaneous</i>	5,866	5,002	5,002
<i>Justices' Expenses</i>	447	475	475
<i>Judicial Council</i>	118	118	118
<i>Rules Committees</i>	141	141	141
(A) <i>Medicare D</i>	1,595	1,945	1,945
<i>Subtotal</i>	12	12	12
	<u>29,436</u>	<u>32,113</u>	<u>32,013</u>
<i>Superior Court</i>			
(A) <i>Act 49/Supplemental</i>	40,721	47,570	45,339
(A) <i>Miscellaneous</i>	7,536	5,817	5,817
<i>Judges' Expenses</i>	286	287	287
<i>Subtotal</i>	183	183	183
	<u>48,726</u>	<u>53,857</u>	<u>51,626</u>
<i>Commonwealth Court</i>			
(A) <i>Act 49/Supplemental</i>	25,602	30,026	29,264
(A) <i>Miscellaneous</i>	4,550	2,737	2,737
<i>Judges' Expenses</i>	182	182	182
<i>Subtotal</i>	132	132	132
	<u>30,466</u>	<u>33,077</u>	<u>32,315</u>
<i>Court Administrator</i>			
(A) <i>Act 49/Supplemental</i>	15,515	17,884	17,760
(A) <i>Miscellaneous</i>	6,302	5,178	5,178
(F) <i>Court Improvement Program</i>	853	853	853
(F) <i>STOP Violence Against Women Program</i>	1,130	1,400	1,400
<i>Judicial Center Operations</i>	300	300	300
(A) <i>Act 49/Supplemental</i>	1,228	1,298	1,298
(A) <i>Miscellaneous</i>	636	788	788
<i>Subtotal</i>	355	355	355
<i>District Court Administrators</i>			
(A) <i>Act 49/Supplemental</i>	27,470	32,786	32,673
(A) <i>Medicare D</i>	9,541	7,454	7,454
<i>Office of Elder Justice in the Courts</i>	144	142	142
(A) <i>Medicare D</i>	531	1,275	531
(F) <i>Elder Justice Innovation Grant</i>	1	1	1
(A) <i>Act 49/Supplemental</i>	500	1,000	1,000
<i>Court Management Education</i>	219	0	0
<i>Judicial Education</i>	78	78	78
(A) <i>Act 49/Supplemental</i>	1,532	1,593	1,593
<i>Treatment Courts</i>	744	655	655
<i>Unified Judicial System Security</i>	219	0	0
(A) <i>Act 49/Supplemental</i>	2,129	2,783	2,783
<i>Subtotal</i>	314	0	0
	<u>70,870</u>	<u>77,248</u>	<u>76,267</u>
<i>(R) Statewide Judicial Computer System</i>			
(A) <i>Online Payment Fees</i>	43,417	46,181	46,181
(A) <i>Miscellaneous</i>	5,219	5,219	5,219
<i>Integrated Criminal Justice System (JNET)</i>	1,564	1,668	1,668
(A) <i>Act 49/Supplemental</i>	2,522	3,521	3,521
<i>UJS Cyber Security and Disaster Recovery</i>	999	0	0
(A) <i>Act 49/Supplemental</i>	3,490	4,652	3,490
<i>Subtotal</i>	1,162	0	0
	<u>58,373</u>	<u>61,241</u>	<u>60,079</u>

FISCAL YEAR 2026-27 JUDICIARY BUDGET REQUEST
(\$000)

<u>APPROPRIATION</u>	AVAILABLE <u>2025-26</u>	REQUESTED <u>2026-27</u>	GOV. REC. <u>2026-27</u>
<i>Courts of Common Pleas</i>	154,680	175,591	165,126
(A) Act 49/Supplemental	25,172	22,212	22,212
(A) Medicare D	451	449	449
<i>Common Pleas Senior Judges</i>	4,480	4,480	4,480
Subtotal	<u>184,783</u>	<u>202,732</u>	<u>192,267</u>
<i>Magisterial District Judges</i>	105,378	120,871	119,179
(A) Act 49/Supplemental	12,090	7,843	7,843
(A) Medicare D	554	551	551
<i>Magisterial District Judge Education</i>	1,161	1,025	1,025
(A) Miscellaneous	15	15	15
<i>Philadelphia Municipal Court</i>	10,074	11,755	11,027
(A) Act 49/Supplemental	2,104	1,797	1,797
(A) Medicare D	32	31	31
Subtotal	<u>131,408</u>	<u>143,888</u>	<u>141,468</u>
<i>County Court Reimbursement Grant</i>	23,136	23,136	23,136
<i>Senior Judge Support Reimbursement Grant</i>	1,375	1,375	1,375
<i>Juror Cost Reimbursement Grant</i>	1,118	1,118	1,118
<i>Court Interpreter County Grant</i>	2,629	2,629	2,629
Subtotal	<u>28,258</u>	<u>28,258</u>	<u>28,258</u>
<i>Judicial Ethics Advisory Board</i>	259	369	369
(A) Act 49/Supplemental	556	517	517
<i>Interbranch Commission (PCFJ)</i>	358	571	509
(A) Act 49/Supplemental	45	0	0
(A) Medicare D	1	1	1
<i>Judicial Conduct Board</i>	2,555	2,970	2,970
(A) Medicare D	11	11	11
<i>Court of Judicial Discipline</i>	618	618	618
(A) Medicare D	2	2	2
Subtotal	<u>4,405</u>	<u>5,059</u>	<u>4,997</u>
STATE FUNDS	453,413	518,338	500,155
(A) AUGMENTATIONS - ACT 49/SUPPLEMENTAL	77,836	60,000	60,000
(A) AUGMENTATIONS - ALL OTHER	10,129	10,254	10,254
(R) RESTRICTED REVENUES	43,417	46,181	46,181
(F) FEDERAL FUNDS	1,930	2,700	2,700
TOTAL, ALL SOURCES	<u>586,725</u>	<u>637,473</u>	<u>619,290</u>

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL
Supreme Court

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	21,168	21,257	24,420	24,320
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	4,696	6,313	5,477	5,477
Total	25,864	27,570	29,897	29,797

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	18,359	18,626	21,209	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	4,307	5,925	5,077	0
Total	22,666	24,551	26,286	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec #
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	2026-27
State Funds:							
Justices	7	7	7	7	7	7	0
Staff	*	117	104	*	117	104	*
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	124	111	124	111	123	109	0

* Includes 8 summer interns

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	2,809	2,631	3,211	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	389	388	400	0
Total	3,198	3,019	3,611	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

^Fiscal Year 2025-26 – Personnel: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$5,866 in Act 49 of 2009 revenues and/or supplemental funds.

^^Fiscal Year 2026-27 – Personnel: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$5,002 in anticipated Act 49 of 2009 revenues.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Act 30 of 2007 provides for annual increases in judges' salaries, including per diem compensation paid to senior judges, effective each January 1 to reflect the latest 12-month change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey and Maryland area. This budget request includes a 3.5% increase in judicial salaries effective January 1, 2027. Assumptions regarding Justices' salaries are as follows:

	July – December, 2026	January - June, 2027
Chief Justice	\$278,496	\$288,244
Justices (6)	\$270,622	\$280,094

Nonrecurring:

-Decrease in Act 49/supplemental funds available in FY 2026-27 to supplement state funds -	(\$864,000)
-Increase in state funds needed due to decrease in available Act 49/supplemental funds -	\$864,000

Personnel:

-Increase in salaries and benefits for active Justices and retired Justices annuitant health insurance benefits -	\$170,000
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-Increase in salaries and benefits for filled and vacant staff positions and retired staff annuitant health insurance benefits -	\$1,562,000
-Increase in leave payouts -	\$3,000

Operating:

-Increase in miscellaneous operating expenses -	\$580,000
-Increase in filing fees -	\$12,000

8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial 2026-27</u>
Employee Factor			
Justices	82.38%	86.65%	89.12%
Staff	80.55%	85.01%	91.79%

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

2025-26: None

2026-27: None

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

Pennsylvania's Supreme Court is the oldest in the nation, predating the United States Supreme Court by 67 years. In matters of law, the state Supreme Court is Pennsylvania's court of last resort. In matters of administration, the Court's seven Justices are responsible for the effective management of the Commonwealth's Unified Judicial System, including the intermediate appellate courts, the Courts of Common Pleas, the magisterial district judge courts and related minor courts, and all staff who contribute to the system's administration. Justices are elected to 10-year terms, with the Chief Justice being the member having the longest continuous service among the seven.

This appropriation provides funding for the salaries and benefits of the Supreme Court Justices, their staff and the staff of the prothonotary offices in Harrisburg, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, in addition to necessary operating expenses and fixed assets. This budget request reflects an estimate of the expenses required for the Supreme Court to carry out the programs mandated under the laws of the Commonwealth and to give the Court the ability to manage the workload of the entire judicial system.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Art.V, Sec. 2, PA Constitution
42 Pa.C.S.A. Sec. 501, et seq.

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL

Justices' Expenses

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	118	118	118	118
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	118	118	118	118

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec #
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	118	118	118	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	118	118	118	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

The Judiciary requests that the same level of funding be provided as in Fiscal Year 2025-26.

8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

No salaries are paid from this appropriation.

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

No purchases are made from this appropriation.

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

This appropriation provides funding to cover the actual expenses incurred by the seven justices of the Supreme Court to enable them to fulfill their mandated constitutional responsibilities of the Unified Judicial System. Allowable business expenses are reimbursed under a voucherized system implemented by the Supreme Court.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Annual Appropriation Act.

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL
Judicial Council

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec
			<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	141	141	141	141
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	141	141	141	141

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget	Gov Rec #
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled		
State Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	61	141	141	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	61	141	141	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u>	<u>Gov Rec #</u>
			<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u>	<u>Gov Rec #</u>
			<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	80	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

Fiscal Year 2024-25 – Non-expense/Interagency consists of \$80 transferred to other UJS appropriations in accordance with 72 P.S. Section 1793-E.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

The Judiciary requests that the same level of funding be provided as in Fiscal Year 2025-26.

8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

No salaries are currently paid from this appropriation.

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

2025-26: None

2026-27: None

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

In accordance with the Pennsylvania Constitution and the provisions of Rule of Judicial Administration 301, the Supreme Court establishes advisory bodies to assist the Court in managing the Commonwealth's Unified Judicial System. The appropriation funds selected program initiatives.

These advisory bodies make recommendations on matters referred by the Court and, from time to time, on their own initiative including the revitalization of the Commission on Judicial Independence.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Art. V, Sec. 10(c) Pa Constitution
42 Pa.C.S.A. Sec. 1722, et.seq.

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL Rules Committees

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec 2026-27
State Funds	1,595	1,595	1,945	1,945
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	8	12	12	12
Total	1,603	1,607	1,957	1,957

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	1,283	1,401	1,735	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	8	12	12	0
Total	1,291	1,413	1,747	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec # 2026-27
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	
State Funds	6	6	6	6	8	6	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	6	6	6	6	8	6	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	212	194	210	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	212	194	210	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u> <u>2026-27</u>	<u>Gov Rec #</u> <u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u> <u>2026-27</u>	<u>Gov Rec #</u> <u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	100	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	100	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

Fiscal Year 2024-25 – Non-expense/Interagency consists of \$100 transferred to other UJS appropriations in accordance with 72 P.S. Section 1793-E.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Personnel:

-Increase in salaries and benefits for filled and vacant staff, and annuitant health insurance benefits -	\$188,000
-Increase in leave payouts -	\$146,000

Operating:

-Increase in operating expenses -	\$16,000
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8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u> <u>2026-27</u>
Employee Factor	93.40%	100.27%	90.83%

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

2025-26: None

2026-27: None

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

This appropriation funds the eight Supreme Court standing rules committees: Criminal Procedural Rules, Civil Procedural Rules, Domestic Relations Procedural Rules, Juvenile Court Procedural Rules, Appellate Court Procedural Rules, Orphans' Court Procedural Rules, Committee on Rules of Evidence, and Minor Court Rules.

The rules committees assist the Supreme Court in fulfilling its constitutional responsibility to prescribe general rules governing court proceedings in Pennsylvania's Unified Judicial System. Acting as advisory bodies, the rules committees study and recommend procedural and evidentiary rules to the Court. In executing this role, the committees coordinate with members of the bench, bar, public, and the legislative and executive branches to receive information, comments, and suggestions regarding the rules and rule proposals. The committees also monitor recent legislation and court opinions to maintain rules that are current with the Commonwealth's developing law.

Another committee function is rules drafting. During this process, the committee may direct staff to investigate and prepare proposed changes, additions, or deletions to the rules. After consideration by the full committee, which may or may not have been preceded by a subcommittee review, a proposed recommendation proceeds in accordance with Pennsylvania Rule of Judicial Administration 103. Under Rule 103, a proposed recommendation is published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin. Subsequently, the committee reviews the public comments received and, as necessary, the committee may modify the proposal before submitting to the Court a final recommendation for its consideration.

In aggregate, the eight rules committees have approximately 100 members serving without compensation and supported by four attorneys and two administrative staff. The rules committees meet several times a year, generally for one- to two-day meetings. Some committees use standing or ad hoc subcommittees, which meet at other times to work on specific issues. During Fiscal Year 2025-2026, the various rules committees are scheduled to convene approximately 24 times at various locations throughout Pennsylvania, including the Pennsylvania Judicial Center.

The work of the rules committees in 2025 has included:¹

- The **Juvenile Court Procedural Rules Committee** published a proposal concerning expungement procedures for delinquency cases.

The Court adopted committee recommendations concerning: 1) juveniles' place of detention at the time of apprehension pursuant to a bench warrant; and 2) "potential kinship care resources" in dependency proceedings.

¹ To avoid repetition, recommendations both published and adopted in calendar year 2024 are listed only once hereafter as adopted.

- The **Orphans' Court Procedural Rules Committee** published proposals on the following topics: 1) identifying nonjudicial methods for discharging trustees; 2) discovery in orphans' court proceedings; and 3) waiver of service of hearing notices and scheduling orders in termination of parental rights proceedings.
- The **Domestic Relations Procedural Rules Committee** published proposed omnibus amendments to PFA forms and procedures.

The Court adopted committee recommendations concerning: 1) the use of facsimile signatures; 2) unreimbursed medical expenses; 3) rules to implement the Uniform Family Law Arbitration Act; 4) procedures to implement the statutory requirement that custody courts consider criminal records, abuse history, and county agency involvement with the parties and their household members; and 5) updating the support guidelines and procedures.

- The **Minor Court Rules Committee** published a proposal concerning requests for subpoenas.

The Court adopted committee recommendations concerning: 1) the time frame for a victim of domestic violence to appeal from a residential landlord-tenant judgment; 2) orders denying petitions for emergency protective relief; 3) emergency PFA proceedings and companion animals; 4) mediation in landlord-tenant actions; and 5) ex parte communications and procedures for stipulated judgments.

- The **Appellate Court Procedural Rules Committee** published proposals on the following topics: 1) transmission of exhibits to the appellate court; 2) notice to the Attorney General on appeal; and 3) fees and costs recoverable on appeal.

The Court adopted committee recommendations concerning: 1) adding delinquency appeals to Children's Fast Track; 2) clarifying the practice of cross-appeals and petitions for allowance of appeal; and 3) the notice of appeal form.

- The **Criminal Procedural Rules Committee** published proposals on the following topics: 1) the reduction or waiver of costs and fines, elimination of the requirement of collateral in certain summary matters, enlargement of the time for responding to a summary citation or summons, consolidation of summary sentencing procedures, and sentencing procedures in criminal cases; 2) providing notice to the attorney general in court cases; 3) detention of defendants on out-of-county bench warrants; and 4) aids in imposing sentences.

The Court adopted a committee recommendation concerning suppression motions in summary cases.

- The following **Committee on Rules of Evidence's** recommendations were adopted by the Court: 1) revised commentary distinguishing Pa.R.E. 803.1 and F.R.E. 803(5); and 2) revised commentary distinguishing Pa.R.E. 106 and F.R.E. 106.

- The **Civil Procedural Rules Committee** published proposals on the following topics 1) consolidation of actions and the coordination of actions; 2) sanctions for violating the certification of pleadings, written motions, or other papers; and 3) timing for filing a motion for award of counsel fees and expenses.

The Court adopted committee recommendations concerning: 1) voir dire of jurors; 2) updating references to statutes governing depositions; and 3) revising the commentary pertaining to the discovery of treating physicians.

Additionally, the rules committees continue to review proposed local rules pursuant to Pa.R.J.A. 103(d).

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Art. V, sec. 10(c), PA Constitution
42 Pa.C.S. §§ 1722, *et seq.*

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2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL

Superior Court

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	38,761	40,721	47,570	45,339
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	4,747	7,822	6,104	6,104
Total	43,508	48,543	53,674	51,443

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	^2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			^^2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	37,862	40,721	46,659	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	156	1,901	125	0
Total	38,018	42,622	46,784	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget	Gov Rec #	
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	2026-27
State Funds:							
Judges	15	14	15	14	15	15	0
Staff	* 231	195	* 227	196	* 224	194	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	246	209	242	210	239	209	0

* Includes 16 summer interns

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	^2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			^^2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	899	0	911	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	4,591	5,921	5,979	0
Total	5,490	5,921	6,890	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

[^]Fiscal Year 2025-26 – Personnel and Operating: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$7,536 in Act 49 of 2009 revenues and/or supplemental funds.

^{^^}Fiscal Year 2026-27 – Personnel and Operating: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$5,817 in anticipated Act 49 of 2009 revenues.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Act 30 of 2007 provides for annual increases in judges' salaries, including per diem compensation paid to senior judges, effective each January 1 to reflect the latest 12-month change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey and Maryland area. This budget request includes a 3.5% increase in judicial salaries and per diem compensation effective January 1, 2027. Assumptions regarding judges' salaries and senior judge per diems are as follows:

	July - December, 2026	January - June, 2027
President Judge	\$263,216	\$272,429
Judge (14)	\$255,346	\$264,284
Senior Judge per Diem	\$731	\$757

Nonrecurring:

- Decrease in Act 49/supplemental funds available in FY 2026-27 to supplement state funds - (\$1,719,000)
- Increase in state funds needed due to decrease in available Act 49/supplemental funds - \$1,719,000

Personnel:

-Increase in salaries and benefits for active judges and retired judges annuitant health insurance benefits -	\$655,000
-Increase in salaries and benefits for filled and vacant staff and retired staff annuitant health insurance benefits -	\$3,780,000
-Increase in senior judge per diem and social security due to increased rates -	\$14,000
-Decrease in annual/sick leave payout -	(\$287,000)

Operating:

-Increase in operating expenses -	\$969,000
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8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

Employee Factor	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u> <u>2026-27</u>
Justices	80.79%	82.28%	87.08%
Staff	87.52%	93.10%	101.65%

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

2025-26: None

2026-27: None

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

The Superior Court was established by the Pennsylvania General Assembly in 1895 to hear appeals from certain decisions of the Commonwealth's Courts of Common Pleas. Since the court's inception, the General Assembly has periodically expanded the Superior Court's jurisdiction, and today it decides appeals touching almost every aspect of life and commerce in the Commonwealth. These appeals include family matters such as child custody, visitation, adoption, divorce, and support; criminal cases; matters concerning wills and estates; property disputes; and cases involving damages for breach of contract or personal injury. Superior Court judges also hear applications made by the Attorney General and district attorneys under the Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance Control Act. The Superior Court is often the final arbiter of legal disputes in Pennsylvania. Although the Supreme Court may grant a petition for an appeal from a decision of the Superior Court, in most cases, such petitions are denied.

The Superior Court is comprised of 15 commissioned judges but operated with only 14 commissioned judges throughout calendar year 2025. Currently, three senior judges assist in the work of the court. Except for cases in which the court orders consideration by an en banc panel of nine judges, the court sits in three-judge panels, hearing oral arguments an average of three times per month throughout the Commonwealth. Other judicial duties include voting and writing on other judges' panel decisions; reviewing re-argument petitions and en banc certifications; serving on motions panels and as a monthly motions assignment judge; wiretap assignments; and court committee assignments.

According to the National Center for State Courts, the Pennsylvania Superior Court continues to be one of the busiest intermediate state appellate courts in the country. As of December 2025, 6,592 appeals were filed, and the Court concluded 6,623. The Court heard 676 oral arguments. To meet the rigorous workload of the court in 2025, each judge wrote an average of 196 written decisions. Additionally, the Court received 12,283 filed motions and issued 17,092 orders related to its cases. These numbers represent a significant amount of work product for an appellate court.

This appropriation provides funding for the salaries and benefits for judges, their staff, administrative staff, and the staff of the prothonotary offices in Harrisburg, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, in addition to necessary operating expenses and fixed assets. Funding of this budget request is essential to continue the efficient and effective operation of the court.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Art. V, Sec. 3, PA Constitution
42 Pa.C.S.A.Sec. 541, et seq.

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL
Superior Court – Judges' Expenses

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec 2026-27
State Funds	183	183	183	183
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	183	183	183	183

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec 2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec 2026-27
State Funds	105	183	183	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	105	183	183	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec 2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u> <u>2026-27</u>	<u>Gov Rec</u> <u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u> <u>2026-27</u>	<u>Gov Rec</u> <u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	78	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	78	0	0	0

Fiscal Year 2024-25 – Non-expense/Interagency consists of \$78 transferred to other UJS appropriations in accordance with 72 P.S. Section 1793-E.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

The Judiciary requests the same level of funding as provided in Fiscal Year 2025-26.

8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

No salaries are paid from this appropriation.

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

No purchases are made from this appropriation.

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

This appropriation funds the vouchered Court-related business expenses incurred by the 15 commissioned judges of the Superior Court, including expenses incurred when traveling to other locations within Pennsylvania to hear oral arguments, and performing Court work outside of their chambers. Expenses include travel reimbursement, food, and lodging.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Annual Appropriation Act.

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL

Commonwealth Court

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec 2026-27
State Funds	24,344	25,602	30,026	29,264
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	366	4,732	2,919	2,919
Total	24,710	30,334	32,945	32,183

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	^2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	22,273	24,990	29,765	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	98	1,989	176	0
Total	22,371	26,979	29,941	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget	Gov Rec #	
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	2026-27
State Funds							
Judges	9	9	9	8	9	8	0
Staff	* 139	111	* 136	109	* 137	108	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	148	120	145	117	146	116	0

* Includes 10 summer interns

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	^2025-26	^^2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	2,071	612	261	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	268	2,743	2,743	0
Total	2,339	3,355	3,004	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

^Fiscal Year 2025-26 – Personnel and Operating: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$4,550 in Act 49 of 2009 revenues and/or supplemental funds.

^^Fiscal Year 2026-27 – Personnel and Operating: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$2,737 in anticipated Act 49 of 2009 revenues.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Act 30 of 2007 provides for annual increases in judges' salaries, including per diem compensation paid to senior judges, effective each January 1, to reflect the latest 12-month change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey and Maryland area. This budget request includes a 3.5% increase in judicial salaries and per diems effective January 1, 2027. Assumptions regarding judges' salaries and senior judge per diem compensation are as follows:

	<u>July - December, 2026</u>	<u>January - June, 2027</u>
President Judge	\$263,216	\$272,429
Judge (8)	\$255,346	\$264,284
Senior Judge per diem	\$731	\$757

Nonrecurring:

- Decrease in Act 49/supplemental funds available in FY 2026-27 to supplement state funds - (\$1,813,000)
- Increase in state funds needed due to decrease in available Act 49/supplemental funds - \$1,813,000

Personnel:

-Increase in salaries and benefits for active judges and retired judge annuitant health insurance benefits -	\$436,000
-Increase in salaries and benefits for filled and vacant staff positions and retired staff annuitant health insurance benefits -	\$2,571,000
-Decrease in senior judge per diems and social security -	(\$45,000)

Operating:

-Decrease in operating expenses -	(\$351,000)
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8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial <u>2026-27</u>
Employee Factor			
Judges	77.27%	80.10%	83.09%
Staff	88.62%	91.37%	98.96%

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

2025-26: None

2026-27: None

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

The Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania came into existence January 1, 1970, created by the Pennsylvania Constitution of 1968. The court hears appeals from county Courts of Common Pleas and state administrative agencies. From county courts, the Commonwealth Court hears appeals in matters involving zoning, taxation, civil service, negligence cases involving state and local government, and eminent domain, among others. From state administrative agencies, the court hears appeals in matters involving workers' and unemployment compensation, environmental issues, welfare claims, public utility rate disputes, and taxation, among others. In addition, the court acts as a trial court in certain types of cases where the Commonwealth is a party, including actions in equity, mandamus, and declaratory judgment, as well as hearing cases arising under the Election Code in both its original and appellate jurisdiction. The court also actively supervises insolvent insurance company estates in various stages of rehabilitation or liquidation. These matters, which are akin to bankruptcy proceedings, involve complex, protracted litigation, and present unique case management challenges requiring significant judicial and staff resources.

The court's overall caseload remained relatively stable in 2025. Overall, 2,610 new actions were filed in the court in calendar year 2025. The court continued to handle considerable original jurisdiction litigation: 506 new original jurisdiction cases were filed in 2025, including 344 actions filed by prisoners. In the court's appellate jurisdiction, it received 780 new appeals from the courts of common pleas. The court received 896 appeals from state administrative agency decisions, including 355 unemployment compensation appeals, among other categories. The Court received 412 new tax appeals from the Board of Finance and Revenue. The Court resolved 23 expedited cases (both original and appellate jurisdiction) arising under the Election Code and affecting the 2025 primary and general election ballots.

In 2025 the Commonwealth Court disposed of 2,402 cases. The court's mediation program continued to be successful in 2025: 120 cases were referred to mediation, and 95 cases were resolved, eliminating the need for further litigation.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Art. V, Sec. 4, PA Constitution
42 Pa.C.S.A. Sec. 561, et seq.

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL
Commonwealth Court – Judges' Expenses

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	132	132	132	132
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	132	132	132	132

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	
State Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	132	132	132	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	132	132	132	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec
			<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec
			<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

7. ASSUMPTIONS

The Judiciary requests the same level of funding as provided in Fiscal Year 2025-26.

8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

No salaries are paid from this appropriation.

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

No purchases are made from this appropriation.

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

This appropriation provides funding for vouchered expenses of the Commonwealth Court's authorized complement of judges. The requested level of funding is the amount necessary to fund the reimbursement of allowable business expenses of the full complement.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Annual Appropriation Act.

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL
Court Administrator

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec
			<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	15,515	15,515	17,884	17,760
Federal Funds:	1,103	1,088	1,700	1,700
CIP	836	821	1,400	1,400
STOP Grant	267	267	300	300
Other Funds	5,981	7,155	6,031	6,031
Total	22,599	23,758	25,615	25,491

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>^2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			<u>^^2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	15,515	15,515	17,884	0
Federal Funds	730	768	889	0
Other Funds	2,285	4,094	3,318	0
Total	18,530	20,377	22,091	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec #
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	
State Funds	* 104	98	* 99	98	* 99	96	0
Federal Funds	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Other Funds	8	8	8	8	8	8	0
Total	113	107	108	107	108	105	0

* Includes two interns

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>^2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec
			<u>^^2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	373	320	811	0
Other Funds	3,696	3,061	2,713	0
Total	4,069	3,381	3,524	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

^Fiscal Year 2025-26 – Personnel and Operating: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$6,302 in Act 49 of 2009 revenues and/or supplemental funds.

^^Fiscal Year 2026-27 – Personnel and Operating: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$5,178 in anticipated Act 49 of 2009 revenues.

The federal funds shown each year in this presentation consist primarily of funds under Title IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families for the Court Improvement Program (CIP) involving the dependency courts. Each year also includes federal funds provided by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) from the STOP Violence Against Women grant program to provide training and technical assistance to Pennsylvania's judiciary.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Nonrecurring:

- Decrease in Act 49/supplemental funds available in FY 2026-27 to supplement state funds - (\$1,124,000)
- Increase in state funds needed due to decrease in available Act 49/supplemental funds - \$1,124,000

Personnel:

- Increase in salaries and benefits for filled staff, vacancies, and annuitant health insurance benefits - \$1,458,000
- Increase in leave payouts - \$135,000

Operating:		
-Decrease in operating expenses -		(\$348,000)
Federal Funds:		
Personnel:		
-Increase in federal funds to support CIP operating costs -		\$121,000
Operating:		
-Increase in federal funds to support CIP operating costs -		\$458,000
-Increase in federal funds to support STOP grant operating costs -		\$33,000

8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial 2026-27</u>
Employee Factor	78.94%	88.13%	94.19%

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

2025-26: None

2026-27: None

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

Pennsylvania's Constitution of 1968 created a Unified Judicial System (UJS) and formalized the Supreme Court's authority to supervise all the Commonwealth's courts. That Constitution also created the position of Court Administrator of Pennsylvania, with the responsibility of leading the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) in assisting the Supreme Court to carry out its supervisory and administrative roles.

The AOPC provides services for jurists, court staff, court users, and the citizens of the Commonwealth. Those duties include providing statewide support in the areas of technology, communications, human resources, payroll, budgeting and accounting, law, intergovernmental relations, court programs, research, and education.

Funding for AOPC operations comes mainly from appropriated state funds, and from fee funding and a small amount of federal funds. Funding for its information technology operations—known as the Judicial Computer System (JCS)—is provided by appropriations of restricted receipts contained within the JCS Augmentation Account. More information can be found under the Statewide Judicial Computer System tab later in this book.

On behalf of the UJS, the AOPC continues to focus on making justice accessible for all court users with a focus on conceptualization, development, and implementation of programs and services that bring new and innovative benefits and offerings to the courts, legal community, media and the public. Over the last year, the courts focused on addressing issues of importance to the effective administration of justice including:

Office of Behavioral Health

With the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) program, the AOPC is committed to improving outcomes for individuals with complex behavioral health needs, through collaborative judicial leadership. The Judiciary is committed to enhancing specialized knowledge and courtroom practices, through the development and implementation of an enhanced behavioral health curriculum for judges. In 2025, the OBH accomplished the following:

- In the summer of 2025, OBH worked with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to complete all outstanding items related to the \$100,000 federal grant, including completing interviews, analyzing findings and drafting a report with findings and recommendations. AOPC had been awarded a State Justice Institute (SJI) project management grant in the amount of \$100,000 to offset costs for a statewide Behavioral Health Summit, as well as retain consultants from the National Center for State Courts to provide support before, during, and after the Summit;
- In the Fall of 2025, OBH launched seven judicially-led Behavioral Health Regional Councils. The two judicial co-chairs for each region, in collaboration with OBH, facilitated inaugural regional council meetings attended by county action teams, organized summit planning committees, recruited presenters, and prepared summit materials, to implement best practices and address gaps identified at the 2024 statewide summit; and
- In 2025, OBH planned and presented six different webinars on topics such as competency dockets, the Attorney General’s law enforcement treatment initiative, and behavioral health best practices for Magisterial District Judges.

Office of Elder Justice in the Courts

The Office of Elder Justice in the Courts (OEJC) was created in January 2015 to support the Supreme Court’s Advisory Council on Elder Justice. OEJC identifies areas of need and improves the ability of Pennsylvania courts to meet those needs as well as educates court personnel, lawyers, and the public about warning signs of elder abuse and how to respond to it. OEJC has accomplished the following in 2025:

- Executed a three-day Guardianship Summit for about 200 stakeholders;
- Completed over 40 speaking engagements;
- Produced the second series of instructional videos targeting attorneys in the elder justice space; and

- The OEJC worked with AOPC/IT to implement the first of its kind process to monitor the ongoing criminal matching of Pennsylvania's guardians with new criminal activity entered into the UJS statewide criminal case management system.

Office of Children and Families in the Courts

The Office of Children and Families in the Courts (OCFC) seeks to ensure that every child grows up in a safe, nurturing, and permanent family through protecting children, promoting strong families; promoting child well-being; and providing timely permanency. During the past year, OCFC worked on behalf of the courts and Pennsylvania families to:

- Decrease trauma by placing more children being placed in Kinship Care and increased involvement with the Family Engagement Initiative, resulting in more children staying in their homes, not entering the child dependency system, and strengthening natural supports;
- Continue to see increases in autism awareness for dependent children and families, allowing for increased special accommodations to be made by dependency courts; and
- Provide mental health education to dependency judges and juvenile court hearing officers to bring more awareness and responsiveness to the mental health needs of children and families in dependency.

Treatment Courts

Pennsylvania's treatment courts were developed to supervise the treatment and rehabilitation of defendants for their wellbeing and the larger community. Instead of a jail sentence, defendants received counseling, treatment for their addictions or illnesses, educational assistance, and healthcare support. During the previous year, treatment courts successes include the following:

- Four new treatment courts opened in 2025.
- Successful completion of treatment courts increased 4% statewide;
- Awarded approximately \$467,000 in discretionary and implementation funding to 50 programs including:
 - Drug Treatment Court: 18 awards;
 - Drug/Driving Under the Influence Hybrid Court: 3 awards;
 - Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Court: 5 awards;
 - Mental Health Court: 12 awards (including one for implementation);
 - Veterans Treatment Court (VTC): 9 awards (including the Regional Court);
 - Co-occurring Court: 1 award; and
 - Juvenile Drug Treatment Court: 2 awards.

Supreme Court & AOPC Cybersecurity/IT Initiatives

Following AOPC's large-scale DDoS attack in February 2024 and as part of the ongoing commitment to enhancing cybersecurity awareness and resilience, AOPC implemented a comprehensive new cybersecurity program requiring staff to take annual formal cybersecurity training sessions, perform quarterly phishing campaigns, and a few additional measures to address emerging threats. In 2025, the following Cyber Security team accomplished the following:

- Security awareness remains a top priority for AOPC and they have partnered with a security awareness firm to enhance awareness;
- AOPC/IT celebrated Cybersecurity Awareness Month in October 2025;
- The Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) conducted a risk assessment where they attempted to breach AOPC's security defenses and could not break through. CISA also provided ways to enhance our security posture; and
- Tool revitalization through company acquisitions and feature updates provided a significant boost to security.

Artificial Intelligence

In 2024, the Supreme Court established the Artificial Intelligence Advisory Committee ("Committee") to monitor the development of artificial intelligence ("AI") and generative artificial intelligence ("GenAI") technology, assess its use in the legal field, and propose guidance for responsible use of AI/GenAI within the Unified Judicial System. The Committee includes jurists from all levels of court, as well as representatives from court administration, county filing offices, and the Supreme Court's rules committees.

The Supreme Court adopted an Interim Policy on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence by Judicial Officers and Court Personnel, effective December 8, 2025. The Interim Policy provides rules and standards for the safe and appropriate use of GenAI for work-related purposes by judicial officers and Unified Judicial System personnel. Under the Interim Policy, judicial officers and Unified Judicial System personnel may use GenAI tools for work purposes such as summarizing documents, conducting preliminary research, and drafting initial versions of documents. Judicial officers and Unified Judicial System personnel must adhere to high standards of conduct to safeguard the integrity and independence of the judiciary. They must also obtain and maintain proficiency in the technical capabilities and limitations of GenAI before using GenAI tools.

Two new webpages were launched on the UJS website. One focuses on the role of the AI advisory committee and its members, while the second provides literacy on the subject. The latter webpage is designed to assist and educate judicial officers and court staff by increasing artificial intelligence literacy. It contains educational materials, including training documents, training videos, and webinars. Relevant content continues to be added to the webpage.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Art. V, Sec. 10(b), PA Constitution
42 Pa.C.S.A. Sec. 1901, et seq.

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL

Judicial Center Operations

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	1,228	1,228	1,298	1,298
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	1,123	991	1,143	1,143
Total	2,351	2,219	2,441	2,441

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	^2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			^^2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	1,209	1,228	1,298	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	2	133	202	0
Total	1,211	1,361	1,500	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec #
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	2026-27
State Funds	11	11	10	10	11	10	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	11	11	10	10	11	10	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	^2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			^^2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	19	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	1,121	858	941	0
Total	1,140	858	941	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

^Fiscal Year 2025-26 – Personnel and Operating: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$636 in Act 49 of 2009 revenues/supplemental funds.

^^Fiscal Year 2026-27 – Personnel and Operating: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$788 in anticipated Act 49 of 2009 revenues.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Nonrecurring:

-Increase in Act 49/supplemental funds available in FY 2026-27 to supplement state funds -	\$152,000
-Decrease in state funds needed due to increase in available Act 49/supplemental funds -	(\$152,000)

Personnel:

-Increase in salaries and benefits for staff and annuitant health insurance benefits -	\$139,000
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Operating:

-Increase in operating expenses -	\$83,000
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8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u> <u>2026-27</u>
Employee Factor	93.51%	99.27%	107.66%

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

2025-26: None

2026-27: None

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

This appropriation funds the centralized costs to operate the Judicial Center in the capitol complex. This budget request provides full-year funding for staff and related operating costs required to support this facility.

The majority of centralized operating costs consist of janitorial, telephone and data circuits, equipment maintenance, facilities management, and mail room expenses required for central support of building occupants and building operations of the Judicial Center. Augmentations of \$354,000 are expected to be collected from tenants to offset on-going operating costs.

The Judicial Center continues to be an example of intergovernmental cooperation with the move of the grand jury courtroom from Strawberry Square to the sixth floor of the Judicial Center. In addition, meeting rooms within the Judicial Center are routinely offered to and used by executive and legislative branch agencies.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Annual Appropriation Act.

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL
District Court Administrators

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec
			<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	26,136	27,470	32,786	32,673
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	7,258	9,685	7,596	7,596
Total	<u>33,394</u>	<u>37,155</u>	<u>40,382</u>	<u>40,269</u>

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	26,136	27,470	32,786	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	7,218	9,591	7,556	0
Total	<u>33,354</u>	<u>37,061</u>	<u>40,342</u>	<u>0</u>

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec #
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	
State Funds	200	195	200	194	200	195	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	<u>200</u>	<u>195</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>194</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>195</u>	<u>0</u>

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	40	94	40	0
Total	<u>40</u>	<u>94</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>0</u>

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

[^]Fiscal Year 2025-26 – Personnel: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$9,541 in Act 49 of 2009 revenues/supplemental funds.

[^]Fiscal Year 2026-27 – Personnel: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$7,454 in anticipated Act 49 of 2009 revenues.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Non-recurring:

-Decrease in Act 49/supplemental funds available in FY 2026-2027 to supplement state funds -	(\$2,087,000)
-Increase in state funds needed due to decrease in available Act 49/supplemental funds -	\$2,087,000

Personnel:

-Increase in salaries and benefits for staff and annuitant health insurance benefits -	\$3,231,000
-Increase in annual/sick leave payouts and related benefits -	\$52,000
-Decrease in Medicare D subsidies -	(\$2,000)

Operating:

-Decrease in operating expenses -	(\$54,000)
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8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial 2026-27</u>
Employee Factor	87.19%	94.16%	101.44%

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

2025-26: None

2026-27: None

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

This appropriation funds the salaries, benefits and related expenses of the district court administrative positions transitioned to state service January 1, 2000 in accordance with Act 12 of 1999 and those created subsequently. Act 12 authorized those transfers as a means of developing a solid management infrastructure between the state and district courts as components of the overall Unified Judicial System. Judicial district (county) administrative positions have been held steady for some years, but future requests to increase funding to fulfill long-standing staff needs are under consideration.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Art. V, Sec. 10(b), PA Constitution
42 Pa.C.S.A. Sec. 1905

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL
Office of Elder Justice in the Courts (OEJC)

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	531	531	1,275	531
Federal Funds:	997	0	1,000	1,000
Other Funds	1	220	1	1
Total	1,529	751	2,276	1,532

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	389	390	1,000	0
Federal Funds	363	0	334	0
Other Funds	1	1	1	0
Total	753	391	1,335	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget	Filled	Gov Rec #
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled			
State Funds	2	2	2	2	6	2	0
Federal Funds	3	3	3	3	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	5	5	5	5	6	2	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	142	141	275	0
Federal Funds	634	0	666	0
Other Funds	0	219	0	0
Total	776	360	941	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

^Fiscal Year 2025-26 – Operating: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$219 in Act 49 of 2009 revenues and/or supplemental funds.

The federal funds shown in this presentation consist of funds from the Administration for Community Living, Elder Abuse Prevention Interventions Program. The grant will aid Pennsylvania's efforts to assess and implement improvements in the handling of adult guardianship cases. The three-year grant is set to expire on August 31, 2026. OEJC anticipates applying for another ACL grant in the Spring of 2026. If awarded, the grant would commence September 1, 2026.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Non-recurring:

-Decrease in Act 49/supplemental funds available in FY 2026-27 to supplement state funds -	(\$219,000)
-Increase in state funds needed due to decrease in available Act 49/supplemental funds -	\$219,000

Personnel:

-Increase in salaries and benefits for staff positions and annuitant health insurance benefits -	\$610,000
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Operating:

-Decrease in operating expenses -	(\$85,000)
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Federal Funds:

Personnel:

-Increase in salaries and benefits for federally funded staff - \$334,000

Operating:

-Increase in operating expenses - \$666,000

8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial <u>2026-27</u>
Employee Factor	76.07%	81.75%	91.95%

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

2025-26: None

2026-27: None

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

This appropriation funds the Office of Elder Justice in the Courts (OEJC) in support of its mission to address access to justice issues affecting older Pennsylvanians. The OEJC was created by the Supreme Court in January 2015 and is one of the recommendations developed by the Elder Law Task Force. The OEJC is responsible for implementing other relevant recommendations identified by the Elder Law Task Force. This appropriation also funds the Advisory Council on Elder Justice.

Among the activities and accomplishments of the OEJC in 2025 were the following:

- Executed a three-day Guardianship Innovation Summit for roughly 200 guardianship stakeholders. The event included roughly 90 expert panelists.
- The OEJC worked with AOPC/IT to implement the first of its kind process to monitor the ongoing criminal matching of Pennsylvania's guardians with new criminal activity entered into our statewide criminal case management systems.

- Completed over 40 speaking engagements in 2025 at conferences, multi-disciplinary groups, and workshops, including four national conferences.
- Authored an article featured in NCSC's national publication Trends in State Courts and provided content for two podcast episodes on Death and Dirt and Age of Aging by Advisory Council members.
- Produced our second series of high-quality instructional videos, this series targeting attorneys entering the elder justice space.
- Collaborated with Pennsylvania's Law School Consortium and PA Bar Association to expand the pro bono court visitor program to Cumberland County. The plan is to continue facilitating the court visitor model in additional counties.
- Created a comprehensive guardian report review protocol and conducted new interactive training for report reviewers. The OEJC has defined a process for the centralized review of professional guardians as needed. Continued training and support for report reviewers in all counties is an ongoing project.
- As of December 31, 2025, there were 20,666 active guardianship cases in the GTS. Currently there are 348 professional guardians overseeing 2,685 cases, and 21,407 non-professional (family/lay) guardians with access to the GTS. The total amount of guardianship assets under court supervision was \$2.321 billion. Over 88% of all guardianship reports received by the courts were electronically filed using GTS.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Art. V, Sec. 7, PA Constitution
42 Pa.C.S.A. Sec. 1501, et seq.
42 Pa.C.S.A. Sec. 3532

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL
Court Management Education

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	78	78	78	78
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	78	78	78	78

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec #
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget	Gov Rec #	
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec #
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	78	78	78	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	78	78	78	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec #
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u> <u>2026-27</u>	<u>Gov Rec #</u> <u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u> <u>2026-27</u>	<u>Gov Rec #</u> <u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

The Judiciary requests that the same level of funding be provided as in Fiscal Year 2025-26.

8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

No salaries are funded from this appropriation.

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

No purchases are made from this appropriation.

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

The funding provided by this appropriation enables the provision of ongoing education programs for the Judiciary. A variety of educational programs offered throughout the year are designed to further develop and strengthen the professional competence of state and county personnel.

This budget request provides for continued professional education presented in various formats, including regional workshops, webinars, topic specific-seminars, professional conferences, and

other formats as appropriate. An annual course is offered each spring in Harrisburg for all new district court administration staff, and an annual symposium for Magisterial District Court Administration staff is held in the fall.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Annual Appropriation Act.

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL

Judicial Education

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec 2026-27
State Funds	1,532	1,532	1,593	1,593
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	448	744	655	655
Total	1,980	2,276	2,248	2,248

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	867	960	1,040	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	867	960	1,040	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec # 2026-27
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	
State Funds	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	5	5	5	5	5	5	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	^2025-26	Judicial ^2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	665	572	553	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	448	744	655	0
Total	1,113	1,316	1,208	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

[^]Fiscal Year 2025-26 – Operating: Other Funds consist of augmenting revenues of \$744 in Act 49 of 2009 revenues and/or supplemental funds.

^{^^}Fiscal Year 2026-27 – Operating: Other Funds consist of augmenting revenues of \$655 in anticipated Act 49 of 2009 revenues.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Nonrecurring:

-Decrease in Act 49/supplemental funds available in FY 2026-27 to supplement state funds -	(\$89,000)
-Increase in state funds needed due to decrease in available Act 49/supplemental funds -	\$89,000

Personnel:

-Increase in salaries and related benefits for staff -	\$80,000
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Operating:

-Decrease in operating expenses -	(\$108,000)
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8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial 2026-27</u>
Employee Factor	73.53%	78.55%	83.59%

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

2025-26: None

2026-27: None

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania adopted continuing education requirements on December 9, 2016, effective January 1, 2017, for all state trial and appellate court judges. The order required each judge to earn annually three hours of judicial ethics education and nine hours of substantive continuing education in judicial practice and related areas.

On February 7, 2020, the Supreme Court adopted Rules for Continuing Judicial Education (CJE), effective March 7, 2020. The rules replaced the Court's Order of December 9, 2016. While the new rules provided structure to the CJE requirements established in the December 2016 order, they made only minor changes to the infrastructure and mandates established thereunder. Under the CJE Rules, Pennsylvania's trial and appellate court judges must earn a minimum of 12 hours of continuing judicial education annually, three of which must be in judicial ethics. Four of the annual credits must be earned through courses developed by or under the supervision of the AOPC Judicial Education Department. A 12-member, Continuing Judicial Education Board of Judges meets quarterly, and oversees the implementation of the rules, including both compliance and course accreditation. The Board is supported by the AOPC Judicial Education Department. It reports to the Supreme Court annually, or whenever directed to do so.

This appropriation provides the funding for a robust program of professional continuing education for judges conducted through conferences and seminars presented in both statewide and in regional settings and through remote, web-based courses under the auspices of AOPC's Judicial Education Department. The department works closely with the Pennsylvania Conference of State Trial Judges and other providers to develop a state-of-the-art curriculum that includes timely and relevant continuing education courses presented to judges throughout the state.

This appropriation funds conferences, seminars, and educational programs as well as two professional educators and an education specialist to plan, implement and support the vital continuing education program for jurists.

It also funds orientation programs offered biennially for newly elected common pleas judges, informational mailings, and records maintenance. These programs are supplemented by specialized symposia designed for specific judicial audiences, such as annual meetings for president judges and district court administrators to discuss issues pertinent to their responsibilities.

Funding requested in this appropriation will allow increased course offerings and judicial participation, and costs associated with tracking and reporting compliance with the education requirements. It also funds the Continuing Judicial Education Board of Judges noted above, who are charged with, *inter alia*, making accreditation decisions, granting waivers and deferrals, and hearing non-compliance appeals.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Annual Appropriation Act.

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL

Treatment Courts

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	1,348	1,348	1,425	1,425
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	1,348	1,348	1,425	1,425

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	347	371	390	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	347	371	390	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec #
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	2026-27
State Funds	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	1	1	1	1	1	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	601	577	635	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	601	577	635	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	400	400	400	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	400	400	400	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Act 30 of 2007 provides for annual increases in judges' salaries, including per diem compensation paid to senior judges, effective each January 1 to reflect the latest 12-month change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, and Maryland area. This budget request includes an assumed 3.5% increase in per diems effective January 1, 2027. The resulting per diem compensation rates used in this budget are as follows:

<u>July - December, 2026</u>	<u>January - June, 2027</u>
\$731	\$757

Personnel:

-Increase in salaries and benefits for one filled staff position -	\$11,000
-Increase in senior judge per diems and social security due to increased rates -	\$8,000

Operating:

-Increase in miscellaneous operating expenses -	\$58,000
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8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial 2026-27</u>
Employee Factor	70.77%	80.02%	84.93%

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

2025-26: None

2026-27: None

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

Treatment courts continue to be seen as an effective means of rehabilitating individuals charged with criminal behavior stemming from problems better treated outside the traditional punitive corrections process. We believe these courts are both cost-effective and beneficial in providing meaningful help to people to address behavior that contributes to criminality.

In 2005, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court endorsed the drug court model for judicial districts throughout the Commonwealth and sanctioned the nationally-recognized template which sets forth a protocol for their operation, and applied it to the operation of treatment courts in general. The Court's endorsement included the creation of performance standards to guide the operation and measurement of the efficacy of all treatment courts, and served as an impetus to their creation.

The increased number of these courts over recent years increases the ability to deliver effective and efficient programs in response to local needs and desires to benefit court management and constituents. As of January 2026, there were 138 treatment courts in operation in Pennsylvania, including drug courts, mental health courts, domestic violence courts, and veterans courts which address specific problems that contribute to criminal behavior, and their numbers continue to grow. Although there are differences in structure and operation among the various courts, all follow the foundation provided by the national drug court model in format and content. The AOPC provides education, training and support for these programs and assists in the coordination of related activities.

This appropriation provides the resources used to assist counties in managing these courts in accordance with nationally-recognized standards for best practices. Such assistance takes the form of staff training, monitoring program performance, and costs associated with maintaining the case management system that provides data on program performance. This Fiscal Year 2026-27 budget request includes funding for professional services, training/conference expenses, travel, monthly software maintenance, hosting costs for the Treatment Adult and Juvenile Courts Information System (TAJCIS), grant funding to counties to implement new treatment courts, and discretionary grants designed to support program functions of existing treatment courts.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Annual Appropriation Act.

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL

Unified Judicial System Security

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	2,129	2,129	2,783	2,783
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	314	0	0
Total	2,129	2,443	2,783	2,783

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	665	731	792	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	665	731	792	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec #
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	
State Funds	* 5	5	* 5	5	* 5	5	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	5	5	5	5	5	5	0

* Includes one intern position

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	246	221	306	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	246	221	306	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	2024-25	^2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	1,218	1,177	1,685	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	314	0	0
Total	1,218	1,491	1,685	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

^Fiscal Year 2025-26 – Grants and Subsidies: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$314 in Act 49 of 2009 revenues and/or supplemental funds.

Note: The Fiscal Year 2024-25 and 2025-26 appropriations were provided in the form of continuing appropriations per Acts 1-A of 2024 and 2025, respectively. Likewise, it is requested that the Fiscal Year 2026-27 funding also be provided in the form of a continuing appropriation.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Non-recurring:

-Decrease in Act 49/supplemental funds available in FY 2026-27 to supplement state funds -	(\$314,000)
-Increase in state funds needed due to decrease in available Act 49/supplemental funds -	\$314,000

Personnel:

-Increase in salaries and benefits for filled staff -	\$61,000
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Operating:

-Increase in miscellaneous operating expenses -	\$85,000
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Grants and Subsidies:

-Increase in grants to counties -	\$194,000
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8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial 2026-27</u>
Employee Factor	77.43%	82.90%	88.62%

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

2025-26: None

2026-27: None

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

The goal of the Unified Judicial System's Security Program is to make every court facility a safe place for the general public, litigants and their families, jurors, witnesses, and victims of crime to conduct their business.

Current year funding builds up the past year's work of enhancing physical security and safety features for common pleas courts to mitigate and respond to the spectrum of risks posed by natural and man-made emergencies (e.g., active shooter/assailants, mass casualty events). In 2025, there were 446 incidents reported at common pleas courts, and 451 at magisterial district courts, for a total of 897.

The Fiscal Year 2026-27 requested funds will provide similar physical security enhancements at magisterial district courts and to 'at-risk' counties to elevate low scoring security postures.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Annual Appropriation Act.

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2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL

Statewide Judicial Computer System

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec 2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	<u>46,799</u>	<u>50,200</u>	<u>53,068</u>	<u>53,068</u>
Other Funds Itemized				
-JCS Restricted				
Revenues	40,000	43,417	46,181	46,181
-Miscellaneous	1,580	1,564	1,668	1,668
-Online Fees	5,219	5,219	5,219	5,219
Total	<u>46,799</u>	<u>50,200</u>	<u>53,068</u>	<u>53,068</u>

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	<u>25,400</u>	<u>28,120</u>	<u>31,023</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	<u>25,400</u>	<u>28,120</u>	<u>31,023</u>	<u>0</u>

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec #
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	* <u>173</u>	** <u>162</u>	*** <u>171</u>	156	177	168	0
Total	<u>173</u>	<u>162</u>	<u>171</u>	<u>156</u>	<u>177</u>	<u>168</u>	<u>0</u>

* Included are an additional 13 positions funded through contract staff.

** Included are an additional 12 positions funded through contract staff.

*** Included are an additional 20 positions funded through contract staff and two interns

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	<u>21,399</u>	<u>22,080</u>	<u>22,045</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	<u>21,399</u>	<u>22,080</u>	<u>22,045</u>	<u>0</u>

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

Note: JCS restricted revenues shown above consist of revenues from Act 64 – 1987, and Act 59 – 1990 as amended by Act 122 – 2002.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Personnel:

- Increase in salaries and benefits for all filled staff and annuitant health insurance benefits - \$2,821,000
- Increase in annual/sick leave pay and related benefits - \$82,000

Operating:

- Decrease in miscellaneous operating expenses - (\$35,000)

JCS is funded primarily from a dedicated funding stream consisting of restricted revenues. Act 64 of 1987 instituted this funding mechanism based on future increases in fine collections and court costs resulting from automated court systems. The funding was later supplemented by filing fees created by Act 59 of 1990, as amended by Act 122 of 2002. Revenue collections are deposited into a restricted revenue account within the state Treasury, from which annual appropriations are made to JCS.

Under Act 42 of 2018, \$15 million of revenue otherwise due for deposit in the Judicial Computer System Augmentation Account (JCSAA) is diverted to the school safety account - \$45 million was diverted between 2018 and 2021. Additionally, a one-time \$30 million diversion to the general fund was enacted pursuant to Act 114 of 2020. A total of \$75 million has been diverted from the JCSAA since 2018. The annual diversion has been statutorily suspended in numerous fiscal years and remains so through June 30, 2026, but the diversion language remains in statute. To maintain existing case management systems for the courts and continue providing services and data to the many Commonwealth agencies that rely on these systems operated by the AOPC/IT department, sufficient funding must be provided. Budget projections indicate that unless the annual diversion is repealed and additional steps taken to stabilize funding, the account balance will be insufficient to fund JCS operations (i.e., the statewide case management systems and ancillary functionality provided to state and local government, court users, and the public) beginning in Fiscal Year 2026-27. HB 331 amends 42 Pa.C.S. § 3733 to direct an additional \$7.5 million to the Judicial Computer System Augmentation Account (JCSAA) in FY 2025-26 and subsequent fiscal years without raising fees. Passage of HB 311, along with the requested line item increases for Cybersecurity and JNET in FY 2025-26, are projected to stabilize the JCSAA and JCS operations until FY 2030-31.

Other revenues, estimated at \$6.887 million in Fiscal Year 2026-27, are designed to offset costs of specific JCS functions and include online payment fees, expungement fees, public access fees levied on nongovernmental users of information captured by the Magisterial District Judge System (MDJS) and Common Pleas Criminal Court Case Management System (CPCMS). Restricted revenues for the Jen and Dave program derived from fees established by Act 119 of 1996 are also available to support costs of this statutorily-required operation.

8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial 2026-27
Employee Factor	87.31%	94.59%	100.64%

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

2025-26: None

2026-27: None

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

Pennsylvania continues to be a national leader in judicial computerization. The IT department within AOPC has been recognized for making court information significantly more accessible, improving collection of fines, fees, costs and restitution, and administrative efficiencies throughout the court system.

Funded by revenues derived from court costs, filing fees and designated fines, rather than tax dollars, AOPC's IT department creates, maintains, and updates statewide case management systems for all three levels of Pennsylvania's courts (Appellate, Common Pleas Criminal/Juvenile and Magisterial District courts). Local court officials can access court case information about parties related to cases anywhere in the state. Most importantly, the systems are linked, allowing millions of cases to be shared as each case moves through the court system.

To gain a better understanding of the financial and program needs of the AOPC/IT department, Act 70 of 2021 created the Judicial Computer System Financial Audit Committee (JCSFAC), a bi-partisan committee that included legislative members and appointees, within PCCD. JCSFAC's duties included a review of the policy goals, purpose, and programs of the JCS, as well as the annual financial needs and revenue streams that support the system.

JCSFAC's final report was issued on January 31, 2022, and is available here: [https://www.pa.gov/search.html?q=FINAL%20JCSFAC%20Report%20\(January%2031%202022\).pdf](https://www.pa.gov/search.html?q=FINAL%20JCSFAC%20Report%20(January%2031%202022).pdf). Notably, the report found that the JCS "provides a critical service to the Commonwealth, counties, attorneys, participants in the legal system and citizens," and emphasized the importance of "ensur[ing] predictable funding to support [its] continuous operation."

Access to Data

- 2.45 million cases were docketed in 2025 by utilizing one of the three case management systems – the MDJS, the CPCMS, and Pennsylvania's Appellate Court Management System (PACMS).
- 112.3 million docket sheets were viewed for free on the Unified Judicial System website in 2025.
- 32,000 law enforcement and public safety officials representing more than 20 criminal justice partners and law enforcement agencies depended on the case management systems to perform their daily duties during 2025.

Docket sheets and customized court reports provide valuable information to media, academics, attorneys, legislators, government agencies, for-profit and nonprofit organizations, and others.

Value and Savings

The data maintained and shared by the judiciary is valuable and widely-used by courts, government agencies, public safety and law-enforcement officials, members of the public, media and attorneys to name a few.

- 229,000 electronic case transfers from the MDJS to the CPCMS during 2025 saved county court staff countless hours by eliminating the need for redundant data entry.
- AOPC/IT has reduced the cost of manually compiling and mailing boxes of official case records and transcripts through the development of an electronic original record system. A total of 58 counties and agencies are e-filing original records with 5,319 cases e-filed in 2025.
- During 2025, 1,745 individual law enforcement entities/filing types used e-filing for traffic, parking, and non-traffic citations, and criminal complaints. In addition to improving accuracy and saving court staff thousands of hours a year, e-filing also cuts down on the time needed to complete traffic stops.

Court Collections

Features Features within the case management systems help court staff collect and process fines, court costs and restitution – and the very popular PAePay®, an online payment application developed by AOPC/IT, allows people to pay these costs online. the case management systems help court staff collect and process fines, court costs and restitution – and the very popular PAePay®, an online payment application developed by AOPC/IT, allows people to pay these costs

- PAePay saw \$170.3 million collected online in 2025, a 4.9% increase over last year.
- Over the last 10 years, AOPC/IT collected and processed approximately \$4.5 billion in fines, costs, and restitution.
- The case management systems also enhance court collections by allowing court officials to identify unpaid balances and actively collect on old and new cases.

Electronic Filing/Document Storage Initiatives

Pennsylvania's courts continue to move towards a paperless operation. PACFile® saves time by allowing the direct electronic filing of documents with the courts by attorneys and self-represented litigants.

- By the end of 2025, 53 counties were using PACFile to electronically submit filings into CPCMS, and 61 counties were using the electronic records management system (ERMS) for electronic document management.

- By the end of 2024, 59 counties were using the ERMS solution for electronic document management in the MDJS.

Clean Slate

Act 56 of 2018, which became effective June 28, 2019, expanded the criminal case sealing mandate to include additional offenses meeting specific criteria which required significant systems changes to the two case management systems (MDJS and CPCMS). Act 83 of 2020, referred to as Clean Slate II, further expanded the category of eligible cases to include pardoned offenses and reduced the financial eligibility requirements for those with convictions to satisfy only court-ordered restitution and statutorily mandated fee authorized to carry out Clean Slate. Likewise, the financial requirement for non-convictions was also reduced to only satisfying restitution to be eligible. Act 36 of 2023, referred to as Clean Slate III, provided a second expansion to the original 2018 law and extended Clean Slate to low-level, non-violent drug felonies. It also reduces the waiting period for the automated sealing of misdemeanors to seven years and summary convictions to five years. All Clean Slate changes, including those made by the Pennsylvania State Police, were in place by October 1, 2024.

- As of January 2026, 49.8 million cases have been fully or partially sealed across the MDJS and CPCMS under the auspices of the Clean Slate law.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 42 Pa.C.S.A. Sec. 3731, *et seq*

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL

Integrated Criminal Justice System (JNET)

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	2,522	2,522	3,521	3,521
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	999	0	0
Total	2,522	3,521	3,521	3,521

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	485	645	696	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	485	645	696	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec #
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	2026-27
State Funds	* 4	3	* 4	3	3	3	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	4	3	4	3	3	3	0

* Not included is an additional 1 filled position funded through contract staff.

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	^2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	2,037	1,877	2,825	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	999	0	0
Total	2,037	2,876	2,825	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u>	<u>Gov Rec #</u>
			<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u>	<u>Gov Rec #</u>
			<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

[^]Fiscal Year 2025-26 – Operating: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$999 in Act 49 of 2009 revenues and/or supplemental funds.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Non-recurring:

- Decrease in Act 49/supplemental funds available in FY 2026-27 to supplement state funds - (\$999,000)
- Increase in state funds needed due to decrease in available Act 49/supplemental funds - \$999,000

Personnel:

- Increase in salaries and benefits for staff - \$51,000

Operating:

- Decrease in miscellaneous operating expenses - (\$51,000)

8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial 2026-27</u>
Employee Factor	71.18%	75.28%	79.72%

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

2025-26: None

2026-27: None

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

This appropriation funds portions of UJS activities in support of the Commonwealth's multi-agency Integrated Criminal Justice Information System (JNET). The UJS has been an active participant in JNET since its inception, and the source for important data from its automated systems.

JNET is a statewide effort that allows information from criminal justice and other related resources to be shared among federal, state, county and municipal agencies. Information makes its way to the end user through two sources - a secure Web-based interface and Extensible Markup Language (XML)-based messaging.

The Fiscal Year 2026-27 budget request seeks continued funding for limited staff and related operating costs in support of JNET functions, and a portion of the telecommunications costs between the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Court's Information Technology (AOPC/IT) department and magisterial district judge (MDJ) offices to allow JNET traffic to flow to and from MDJ offices and other supporting systems and provide JNET access to the district courts.

This budget request also seeks funding for the continuing development and maintenance of messages published by AOPC/IT and automated use of messages published by other criminal justice and related agencies. Messaging is a method JNET and AOPC/IT use to move information between agency computer systems in order to share case data and to reduce redundant data entry.

A number of messages are in various stages of the product development lifecycle including initial development and maintenance. These messages continue to assist in supporting the statewide Magisterial District Judge System (MDJS), Common Pleas Criminal Court Case Management System (CPCMS) and other criminal justice agency related systems:

- The Court Case Event (CCE) messages are event-triggered messages published from the CP and MDJ systems. County agencies filing electronic information into the CPCMS will receive updated case information through this JNET messaging structure. The public CCE message is also used by the Pennsylvania State Employee Retirement System (SERS) and the Public School Employees' Retirement System (PSERS) to support compliance monitoring of member benefits.

- AOPC/IT provides JNET with data to be used for a new JNET Recidivism Dashboard initiative. In 2022, JNET began to use the CCE messages to acquire information, process it through a data analysis tool and deliver secure information for recidivism statistics.
- AOPC/IT provides information to JNET's Federated Warrant Search application and its Federated Address application and continues to report dispositions electronically through the JNET infrastructure updating the Criminal History Repository (CHR). AOPC/IT implemented an enhancement project with JNET and PSP to improve the statewide warrant process that allows the electronic filing of warrants into the Commonwealth Law Enforcement Assistance Network (CLEAN) and National Crime Information Center (NCIC) if all required information is filed on the initiating criminal complaint and entered into the MDJS. This eliminates the need for the manual entry of warrant information by local law enforcement officers.
- AOPC/IT implemented a message that allows users of the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing's (PCS) Web-based Sentencing Guideline Software (SGS) to query basic case information from the CPCMS and MDJS to assist with data entry and to reduce errors. Per a request by the PCS, functionality was added to support their mandate to implement a recidivism risk assessment tool. AOPC/IT continues to work with the PCS in support of this interface that allows the PCS to make a CCE Request/Reply that will return case information on all cases where an identified offender (as determined by personal demographic information) was the defendant. The Department of Corrections (DOC) is using this functionality as well.

AOPC/IT continues to work with JNET to make additional information available via the JNET interface or use JNET to facilitate the transfer of data. Examples include the following:

- A mechanism for electronic matching of victims that allows for relevant case data to be sent back to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) through a message. This information will be used in making restitution claims at the Courts of Common Pleas.
- Ongoing support of various electronic filing methods for criminal complaints, traffic, and non-traffic citations. AOPC/IT and PSP implemented a statewide project to file traffic citations electronically into the MDJS system, and AOPC/IT continues to work with local police agencies to replicate this same functionality on a municipal level. Electronic filing at both the state and municipal level has been expanded to include parking citations, non-traffic citations and criminal complaints. During 2025, over 1,100 law enforcement agencies (including each filing type) facilitated electronic filings, saving district court staff and law enforcement officers numerous hours by averting the need for manual data entry and reducing the travel time to deliver the physical copy of the citation to the court. AOPC/IT worked with numerous agencies and vendors to enable 203 new services.
- In January 2019, the AOPC, PSP, JNET, and the Chiefs of Police Association were awarded a National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP) sub grant under PCCD to support an update to the electronic criminal complaint e-filing and OTN single source generator system which will enhance the quality of records contained in the FBI and National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). In addition to enhancing the availability of arrest and

disposition records at the state and national level, it will also provide a uniform tool for state and municipal police to file criminal complaints electronically with the courts. Both the JNET electronic compliant application and the OTN single source generator system were deployed in late 2021. AOPC/IT, JNET, and PSP continue to provide support to law enforcement as this is implemented statewide. PSP received grant monies to develop and implement a data exchange between the PSP TraCS system and the LiveScan. In 2025, AOPC in concert with JNET and PSP developed an online OTN issue resolution portal to streamline customer service support.

- Creation of Web interfaces that allow police departments to review court schedules and case information saving the officers and MDJ offices valuable time.
- Maintenance of an interface to electronically transfer juvenile delinquency case information from the CPCMS Juvenile Court Module to the Juvenile Court Judges Commission's (JCJC's) Juvenile Tracking System (JTS) through JNET on a statewide basis providing near real-time updates throughout the lifecycle of the delinquency case.
- Providing access to secure Web docket sheets and court calendars for all cases in the CPCMS and MDJS.
- Maintaining search services to support JNET application search modules including warrant search, address search, personal identifier search, and offense search for the Office of Victim Advocates.
- Providing real time messaging to support JNET's notification service providing law enforcement and criminal justice agencies with proactive information on individuals that they are tracking.
- Receiving updated inmate location information from the county jails and information on assigned probation officers for population within the MDJS and CPCMS applications through JNET's Electronic Reporting (ER) II (jail) and ER2P (probation) projects.
- Participation with PCCD, JNET, PSP, Chiefs of Police, and the Attorney General's Office in maintenance of fingerprint compliance reports to ensure that PSP has appropriate identifying information resulting from an arrest.
- Ongoing work with PSP and Attorney General's Office to provide case information needed for Megan's Law/Walsh Act compliance tracking.
- Receiving information from Central Participant Subscription Services related to activations, terminations and address changes for sheriffs and constables.
- Receiving death record data from the PA Department of Health to provide timely information on participants in GTS, CPCMS and MDJS.
- Providing/receiving case information to/from DA offices.

- Working with JNET and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Information Sharing (MARIS) to provide access to court data in support of their federated person search initiative.
- Providing the State Employees Retirement System (SERS), the Pennsylvania Public School Employees' Retirement System (PSERS) and the Department of State (DOS) with public CCE messages to assist in the identification of individuals who should have their pensions forfeited and/or their state licenses revoked due to convictions.
- AOPC/IT supports the Guardianship Tracking System (GTS) which uses a JNET interface. The interface provides a mechanism for the GTS to receive electronic case initiation data as new petitions are filed in the counties' Orphans' Courts proprietary case management systems. This reduces the necessity for the court staff to manually enter this information into both local systems and the GTS.
- AOPC/IT developed and implemented an essential service required to support the Clean Slate Law (Act 56 of 2019). Utilizing the JNET infrastructure, the AOPC/IT department provides PSP with candidates for removal of approved cases/charges from public view, and when a common pleas judge issues a Clean Slate order, communication of that order is transmitted to criminal justice agencies via JNET so that records may be marked as "limited access". AOPC/IT has updated the service process multiple times to support additional legislative requirements.
- AOPC/IT worked with PSP and JNET to coordinate processing of Clean Slate 3.0 (Act 36 of 2023) candidates.
- PSP is continuing to move forward with extending their non-traffic module to municipal police agencies through PA Tracs To Local (PATT). The AOPC supported the effort to electronically file non-traffic citations by working with PSP and JNET in 2025 to onboard 77 agencies, expanding the availability of this service to municipalities.
- AOPC/IT will be working with JNET as they modernize their messaging process and protocols. This will require collaborative requirements gathering, process design, development, and testing through this reporting fiscal year.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Annual Appropriation Act.

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL

UJS Cyber Security and Disaster Recovery

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	3,490	3,490	4,652	3,490
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	1,162	0	0
Total	3,490	4,652	4,652	3,490

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	^2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	235	177	1,386	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	808	0	0
Total	235	985	1,386	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget	Gov Rec	#
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	2026-27
State Funds	1	1	1	1	8	1	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	1	1	1	8	1	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	^2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	3,255	3,313	3,266	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	354	0	0
Total	3,255	3,667	3,266	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

^Fiscal Year 2025-26 – Personnel and Operating: Other Funds include \$1,162 in augmenting revenues of Act 49 of 2009 revenues funding and/or supplemental funds.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Non-recurring:

-Decrease in Act 49/supplemental funds available in FY 2026-2027 to supplement state funds -	(\$1,162,000)
-Increase in state funds needed due to decrease in available Act 49/supplemental funds -	\$1,162,000

Personnel:

-Increase in salaries and benefits for staff positions -	\$401,000
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Operating:

-Decrease in operating expenses -	(\$401,000)
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8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	N/A	N/A	N/A

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
Employee Factor	65.97%	84.65%	91.04%

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

2025-26: None

2026-27: None

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

The Judicial Computer System Financial Audit Committee (JCSFAC) was established within the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) by Act 70 of 2021. The committee issued a final report in January 2022. That report acknowledged the Judicial Computer System (JCS) provides a critical service to the Commonwealth, counties, attorneys, participants in the legal system and citizens and included four findings with recommendations.

Recommendation one of the third finding recognized the need to ensure continuity of JCS and governmental functions for disaster recovery purposes. Further, JCSFAC's fourth finding recognized the downward fluctuation of fee revenues, which provide the only funding for the continued support and maintenance of JCS, and that the long-term viability of these fee funding streams to adequately support the needs of JCS was unclear.

Since the 2022 report, fee revenues continued to precipitously decline and were not sufficient to support current JCS operating needs, specifically for these high priority areas of cyber security and disaster recovery which protect systems and mitigate risks to ensure business continuity for court operations statewide. To partially address this shortfall in funding, a new appropriation was provided in FY 2024-25 to support these Cyber Security and Disaster Recovery needs. This appropriation currently funds one full-time Security Specialist, the cost to maintain a disaster recovery site, and funding for cyber security products and training.

Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity is paramount in the judiciary, where the integrity, confidentiality, and availability of sensitive data are critical to upholding administration of justice. State court systems handle vast amounts of personal and case-related information that, if compromised, could undermine legal proceedings and public trust. Robust cybersecurity measures protect against data breaches, ransomware attacks, and unauthorized access, while ensuring that judicial processes remain secure, and uninterrupted.

As digital transformation accelerates, including the proliferation of artificial intelligence, safeguarding the court system's digital infrastructure becomes not just a technical necessity but a foundational element of our defensive approach. Advancements in technology have strengthened public access and transparency, yet they have also significantly enlarged the judiciary's digital footprint. As this footprint grows, so does the complexity and urgency of ensuring robust protection for the information in the courts' care.

AOPC/IT continues to manage and maintain three statewide case management systems, for more than 21,000 jurists and court staff members. Numerous other systems support public and justice

partner access to case data and events through a broad range of tools, website applications, and data exchange transmissions downstream to Pennsylvania Justice Network (JNET) and other agencies and commissions to support their valuable work efforts. Additionally, AOPC/IT supports the entire infrastructure for local Magisterial District courts, from hardware, network, and cybersecurity footprints.

Disaster Recovery

AOPC/IT maintains two separate data centers within the Commonwealth. A Change Management process is used to ensure that all configurations and code are kept in sync between the two data centers.

AOPC/IT performs recurring disaster recovery exercises in which all the complex and mission-critical supported software solutions are moved from the primary data center to the secondary center and back. Many of the systems and services that JCS provides to the courts run active/active from both data center locations to ensure a better state of readiness, as all configurations and software are naturally in sync if running continuously. When an end user accesses one of our case management systems or goes to our PA Judiciary website, they could be connecting through either data center.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Annual Appropriation Act.

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL

Common Pleas

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	146,913	154,680	175,591	165,126
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	19,641	25,623	22,661	22,661
Total	166,554	180,303	198,252	187,787

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	^2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			^^2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	146,913	154,680	175,591	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	19,472	25,461	22,498	0
Total	166,385	180,141	198,089	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec #
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	
State Funds	462	437	462	424	468	426	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	462	437	462	424	468	426	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	169	162	163	0
Total	169	162	163	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

[^]Fiscal Year 2025-26 – Personnel and Operating: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$25,172 in Act 49 of 2009 revenues and/or supplemental funds.

^{^^}Fiscal Year 2026-27 – Personnel and Operating: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$22,212 in anticipated Act 49 of 2009 revenues.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Act 30 of 2007 provides for annual increases in judges' salaries, including per diem compensation paid to senior judges, effective each January 1 to reflect the latest 12-month change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, and Maryland area. This budget request includes a 3.5% increase in judges' salaries effective January 1, 2027. The resulting salaries are as follows. Salaries of certain president judges and administrative judges are slightly higher:

	<u>July - December, 2026</u>	<u>January - June, 2027</u>
Common Pleas Judge	\$234,916	\$243,139

Non-recurring:

-Decrease in Act 49/supplemental funds available in FY 2026-27 to supplement state funds -	(\$2,960,000)
-Increase in state funds needed due to decrease in available Act 49/supplemental funds -	\$2,960,000

Personnel:

-Increase in salaries and benefits for judges and annuitant health insurance benefits -	\$17,948,000
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Operating:

-Increase in operating expenses - \$1,000

8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial <u>2026-27</u>
Employee Factor	72.21%	74.06%	76.58%

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

No purchases are made from this appropriation.

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

The Courts of Common Pleas are courts of general trial jurisdiction, having original jurisdiction over all cases not exclusively assigned to another court. Legislative acts over the last 20 plus years have increased the complement from 408 to 470 with the passage of Act 58 of 2023, which added 11 new judgeships. The current complement is 468, which includes the 3 new judgeships added effective December 14, 2023 and 6 new judgeships effective January 5, 2026. Act 58 also adds 2 new judgeships effective January 3, 2028.

In courts with seven or fewer judges, those who have the longest continuous record of service become president judges. When courts have eight or more judges, judges select from their ranks a president judge who serves in that capacity for a single five-year term. Such president judges may not serve consecutive five-year terms.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Art. V, Sec. 5, PA Constitution
42 Pa.C.S.A. Sec. 901, et seq.

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL
Common Pleas Senior Judges

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	4,480	4,480	4,480	4,480
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	4,480	4,480	4,480	4,480

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	4,341	4,369	4,369	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	4,341	4,369	4,369	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec #
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	139	111	111	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	139	111	111	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u>	<u>Gov Rec #</u>
			<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u>	<u>Gov Rec #</u>
			<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

The Judiciary requests the same level of funding be provided as in Fiscal Year 2025-26.

Act 30 of 2007 provides for annual increases in judges' salaries, including per diem compensation paid to senior judges, effective each January 1 to reflect the latest 12-month change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, and Maryland area. This budget request includes an assumed 3.5% increase in per diems effective January 1, 2027. The resulting per diem compensation rates used in this budget are as follows:

<u>July - December, 2026</u>	<u>January - June, 2027</u>
\$731	\$757

8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u>
			<u>2026-27</u>
Employee Factor	NA	NA	NA

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

No purchases are made from this appropriation.

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

The senior judge program provides an alternative resource when there is a shortage of active Common Pleas judges. Shortages may occur due to judicial vacancies, recusals, and increases in caseload within the various jurisdictions. These senior jurists are available for service throughout the Commonwealth.

In accordance with Pennsylvania Rule of Judicial Administration 701 as amended on November 20, 2007, eligibility for senior judge service ends the last day of the calendar year in which the senior judge attains age 78. Senior judge service ends the last day of the calendar year in which age 80 is attained for those senior judges then in service who were exempted by the imposition of age limits by Pa RJA 701. Eligibility for senior judge service was further restricted by a December 17, 2009, amendment to Rule 701, effective January 4, 2010, by adding a minimum age requirement of 65, or a combination of years of judicial service plus age that totals at least 80. As of January 5, 2026, there were 92 authorized Common Pleas senior judges.

The Judicial Needs Assessment tool (a performance-based metric developed by the CP Weighted Caseload Study) must be considered by President Judges requesting senior judge use, and AOPC when approving them.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 65 P.S. Sec. 366.2a(h)
Art. V, Sec. 16(c), PA Constitution

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL
Magisterial District Judge

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
State Funds	100,274	105,378	120,871	119,179
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	9,280	12,644	8,394	8,394
Total	109,554	118,022	129,265	127,573

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
State Funds	99,857	104,971	120,340	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	9,280	12,644	8,394	0
Total	109,137	117,615	128,734	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec #
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	2024-25
State Funds	502	492	501	484	501	485	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	502	492	501	484	501	485	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
State Funds	289	284	284	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	289	284	284	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	128	123	247	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	128	123	247	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

[^]Fiscal Year 2025-26 – Personnel: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$12,090 in Act 49 of 2009 revenues and/or supplemental funds.

^{^^}Fiscal Year 2026-27 – Personnel: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$7,843 in anticipated Act 49 of 2009 revenues.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Act 30 of 2007 provides for annual increases in judges' salaries, including per diem compensation paid to senior judges, effective each January 1 to reflect the latest 12-month change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey and Maryland area. This budget request includes a 3.5% increase in the judicial salaries and per diems effective January 1, 2027. Assumptions regarding judges' salaries and senior judge per diem compensation are as follows:

	July - December, 2026	January - June, 2027
Magisterial District Judge (MDJ)	\$117,466	\$121,578
Senior MDJ per diem	\$322	\$333

Per diem compensation rates paid to assigned senior magisterial district judges are based on the annual salary of an active magisterial district judge.

Non-recurring:

-Decrease in Act 49/supplemental funds available in FY 2026-27 to supplement state funds -	(\$4,247,000)
-Increase in state funds needed due to decrease in available Act 49/supplemental funds -	\$4,247,000

Personnel:

-Increase in salaries and benefits for MDJ's and annuitant health insurance benefits -	\$11,087,000
-Increase in senior judge per diems and social security due to increased rates -	\$35,000

Grants and Subsidies:

-Increase in statutory registration fee payment to SCJAP (from \$200 to \$400 per MDJ) -	\$124,000
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8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial 2026-27</u>
Employee Factor	97.37%	104.82%	112.93%

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

2025-26: None

2026-27: None

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

Forming the first level of the Unified Judicial System are Pennsylvania's limited jurisdiction courts, magisterial district judges preside over these courts in all counties except Philadelphia.

With jurisdiction over summary cases, landlord-tenant matters, and other civil actions where the amount claimed does not exceed \$12,000, magisterial district judges may also accept guilty pleas to some misdemeanors under certain circumstances, issue warrants, and hold preliminary arraignments and preliminary hearings in criminal cases. Although magisterial district judges need not be lawyers, those who are not lawyers must complete an educational course and pass a qualifying examination before taking office. Every magisterial district judge and authorized senior magisterial district judge must participate in one week of continuing education each year. These education programs are administered by the Minor Judiciary Education Board and are funded from the Magisterial District Judge Education appropriation.

This appropriation funds the salaries, benefits (including for qualified annuitants), travel costs, and liability insurance costs for all magisterial district judges. A senior magisterial district judge program, a statutory per diem program for magisterial district judges traveling outside their districts, printing costs for the Magisterial District Judge Journal, and a statutory grant payment for the annual registration fee per judge to the Special Court Judges of Pennsylvania Association (SCJAP) are also funded from this appropriation. This budget request includes an increase in the amount of the grant payment from \$200 to \$400 per judge to provide adequate resources to cover travel and associated costs of SCJAP meetings and conferences. The current \$200 amount was set by statute in 1998. The MDJ Education appropriation received an increase in state funding in FY 2025-26 that can be applied toward the grant payment via fiscal code transfer.

The Supreme Court is charged with realigning magisterial districts following the decennial census. Following the 2020 census, the decennial reestablishment process began in fall of 2021 and each judicial district, except for Philadelphia, assessed whether they had the right number of magisterial districts and where the boundaries should be for those districts. As a result, a net total of 10 districts were eliminated, eight in 2024, one in 2025, and one in 2028.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Art. V, Sec. 7, PA Constitution
42 Pa.C.S.A. Sec. 1501, et seq.
42 Pa.C.S.A. Sec. 3532

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL
Magisterial District Judge Education

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	878	1,161	1,025	1,025
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	15	15	15	15
Total	893	1,176	1,040	1,040

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	455	449	504	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	5	5	5	0
Total	460	454	509	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec #
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	2026-27
State Funds	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2	2	2	2	2	2	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	423	712	521	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	10	10	10	0
Total	433	722	531	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u>	<u>Gov Rec #</u>
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u>	<u>Gov Rec #</u>
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Personnel:

-Increase in salaries and benefits for staff and annuitant health insurance benefits - \$55,000

Operating:

-Decrease in operating expenses - (\$191,000)

8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u>
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
Employee Factor	141.83%	152.06%	167.52%

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

2025-26: None

2026-27: None

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

Article V, Section 12, of the Pennsylvania Constitution requires magisterial district judges to be members of the bar of the Supreme Court *or* to have completed a course of training and instruction in the duties of their office and to have passed an examination prior to assuming office. Courses and examinations shall be as provided by law.

Pursuant to statute, 42 Pa.C.S. Chapter 31, these courses are overseen by the Minor Judiciary Education Board and administered by the AOPC Judicial Education Department. The seven-member Minor Judiciary Education Board is responsible for superintending the instruction and certification of individuals intending to become magisterial district judges and Philadelphia Municipal Court arraignment court magistrates who are not members of the bar. Certifying classes for magisterial district judges are four weeks in duration and one week for Municipal Court arraignment court magistrates. The board establishes the curriculum, appoints and evaluates instructors, approves course content, reviews certification tests, and issues certificates to successful program participants. The AOPC Judicial Education Department administers the course and certification exam.

Continuing education for the Commonwealth's magisterial district judges and Municipal Court arraignment court magistrates is mandated by the Judicial Code (42 Pa.C.S. Section 3118). In addition, the Minor Judiciary Education Board implements Rules 601 to 604 of the Rules of Judicial Administration promulgated by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. The rules require annual continuing education for magisterial district judges, senior magisterial district judges, and Municipal Court arraignment court magistrates. Accordingly, the Judicial Education Department administers week-long continuing education classes for these officials under the auspices of the Minor Judiciary Education Board. The Board also establishes a one week supplemental practicum training for newly-elected and appointed magisterial district judges to be completed within their first year of taking office.

This appropriation provides for programs of certification courses for aspirants to the above referenced offices, and continuing education for the authorized complement of magisterial district judges and Philadelphia Municipal Court arraignment court magistrates. Additionally, continuing education is provided for the current 77 senior magisterial district judges.

Providing training to active and senior magisterial district judges – indeed to all judges and senior judges – is a tangible expression of the Supreme Court's commitment to professional education for both the bench and the bar.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 42 Pa.C.S.A. Sec. 3112, et seq.
42 Pa.C.S.A. Sec. 3118, et seq.
42 Pa.C.S.A. Sec. 2131, et seq.

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL
Philadelphia Municipal Court

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	10,074	10,074	11,755	11,027
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	1,293	2,136	1,828	1,828
Total	11,367	12,210	13,583	12,855

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	^2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			^^2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	10,074	10,074	11,755	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	1,244	2,088	1,781	0
Total	11,318	12,162	13,536	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget	Gov Rec #	
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	2026-27
State Funds:							
Judges	27	25	27	23	27	24	0
Arraignment Ct. Mag.	6	5	6	6	6	6	0
Hearing Officers	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	37	34	37	33	37	34	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	49	48	47	0
Total	49	48	47	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

^Fiscal Year 2025-26 – Personnel: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$2,104 in Act 49 of 2009 revenues and/or supplemental funds.

^^Fiscal Year 2026-27 – Personnel: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$1,797 in anticipated Act 49 of 2009 revenues.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Act 30 of 2007 provides for annual increases in judges' salaries, including per diem compensation paid to senior judges, effective each January 1 to reflect the latest 12-month change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey and Maryland area. This budget request includes a 3.5% increase in the judicial salaries and per diems effective January 1, 2027. Assumptions regarding judges' salaries and senior judge per diem compensation are as follows:

	July - December, 2026	January - June, 2027
President Judge	\$233,026	\$241,182
Judge (26)	\$229,480	\$237,512
Senior Judge Per Diem	\$731	\$757

Non-recurring:

- Decrease in Act 49/supplemental funds available in FY 2026-27 to supplement state funds - (\$308,000)
- Increase in state funds needed due to decrease in available Act 49/supplemental funds - \$308,000

Personnel:

-Increase in salaries and benefits for active judges and retired judge annuitant health insurance benefits -	\$1,189,000
-Increase in per diems and social security for senior judges due to increased rates -	\$5,000
-Increase in salary and benefits for arraignment court magistrates, hearing officers, and annuitant health insurance benefits -	\$180,000

Operating:

-Decrease in operating expenses -	(\$1,000)
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8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial <u>2026-27</u>
Employee Factor			
Judges	72.77%	74.86%	75.47%
Staff	76.80%	82.60%	90.34%

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

No purchases are made from this appropriation.

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

This appropriation funds the personnel and functions of Philadelphia Municipal Court. Accordingly, it funds the salaries and benefits of the 27 Municipal Court judges, six arraignment court magistrates, four hearing officers (authorized by Act 17 of 2013), and a senior judge program. Salaries of arraignment court magistrates are tied by law (42 Pa.C.S.A. § 1123(5)) to the salary of an associate judge of the Philadelphia Traffic Court (had the office not been abolished), as set by section 2.1(f) of the Public Official Compensation Law, 65 P.S. § 366.2a(f), and adjusted annually based on the annual COLA.

The Philadelphia Municipal Court is Pennsylvania's only special court that is a court of record. Its 27 judges, who must be lawyers, have jurisdiction over all criminal offenses which are punishable by a term of imprisonment not exceeding five years. The Municipal Court has the power to enter judgments without limitation in matters arising under the Landlord and Tenant Act of 1951 and has jurisdiction in civil actions where the amount claimed does not exceed \$12,000. The president judge of Municipal Court is elected for a five-year term by the other active Municipal Court judges.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Art. V, Sec. 6, PA Constitution
42 Pa.C.S.A. Sec. 1121, et seq.
Act 17 of 2013

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2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL
County Court Reimbursement Grant

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	23,136	23,136	23,136	23,136
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	23,136	23,136	23,136	23,136

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget	Gov Rec	
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	23,136	23,136	23,136	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	23,136	23,136	23,136	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Grants and Subsidies:

The budget request is based on the December 31, 2025, authorized complement of Common Pleas judges calculated at the effective reimbursement rate of \$45,105 funded in the current fiscal year (a proportional reduction of 35.56%). Although the statutory rate remains \$70,000 with the requirement that no county shall receive less than 77.5 percent of the actual reimbursement for court costs provided to it from funds appropriated for Fiscal Year 1980-81 (results in a flat \$10,075,327 grant payment to Philadelphia for its 93 judges), Act 37 of 2007 requires the proportional reduction in each county's grant if insufficient funding is provided to reimburse at the statutory rate. The Judiciary requests the same level of funding as provided in Fiscal Year 2025-26. ** Funding this grant at the full statutory rate would require an appropriation of \$35.906 million, an amount \$12.77 million above the amount requested. **

The amount requested was computed as follows:

369	Judges @ \$45,105	\$16,643,854
93	Philadelphia Judges	6,492,146
462	Total complement	\$23,136,000

Proposed grant payments follow.

8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

No salaries are funded from this appropriation.

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

No purchases are made from this appropriation.

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

This budget requests funds to make grant payments to counties to reimburse costs associated with the administration and operation of the Courts of Common Pleas. The grant amount is determined by language contained in statute, and in the annual Appropriation Act that specifies that the grant is reimbursement for the costs incurred in the prior calendar year. Act 37 of 2007 provides that in the event the total county reimbursement qualifying for payment exceeds the amount appropriated, every county's grant is to be proportionally reduced so as not to exceed the amount appropriated. In judicial districts comprising more than one county, county allocations are based on each county's percentage of the district's total population. Such population figures are based on the data from the most-current decennial census available, presently 2020.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 72 P.S. Section 1791-E
42 Pa.C.S.A. Sec. 914, et seq.
Annual Appropriation Act.

FY 2026-27 ESTIMATE
COMMON PLEAS COUNTY COURT REIMBURSEMENT
(Calendar 2025)

County	Comp	Reimbursement	County	Comp	Reimbursement
Adams	4	\$180,421	Jefferson	1	\$45,105
Allegheny	43	\$1,939,527	Juniata/	2	\$30,672
Armstrong	2	\$90,211	Perry		\$59,539
Beaver	7	\$315,737	Lackawanna	9	\$405,948
Bedford	2	\$90,211	Lancaster	15	\$676,579
Berks	13	\$586,369	Lawrence	4	\$180,421
Blair	5	\$225,526	Lebanon	4	\$180,421
Bradford	2	\$90,211	Lehigh	10	\$451,053
Bucks	15	\$676,579	Luzerne	10	\$451,053
Butler	6	\$270,632	Lycoming	5	\$225,526
Cambria	5	\$225,526	McKean	2	\$90,211
Cameron	1	\$5,864	Mercer	4	\$180,421
Elk		\$39,242	Mifflin	2	\$90,211
Carbon	3	\$135,316	Monroe	7	\$315,737
Centre	4	\$180,421	Montgomery	24	\$1,082,527
Chester	15	\$676,579	Northampton	9	\$405,948
Clarion	1	\$45,105	Northumberland	3	\$135,316
Clearfield	2	\$90,211	Philadelphia*	93	6,492,146
Clinton	2	\$90,211	Pike	2	\$90,211
Columbia/	3	\$105,546	Potter	1	\$45,105
Montour		\$29,769	Schuylkill	6	\$270,632
Crawford	3	\$135,316	Snyder/	2	\$43,301
Cumberland	7	\$315,737	Union		\$46,909
Dauphin	10	\$451,053	Somerset	3	\$135,316
Delaware	21	\$947,211	Sullivan/	1	\$8,119
Erie	9	\$405,948	Wyoming		\$36,986
Fayette	5	\$225,526	Susquehanna	1	\$45,105
Forest/	2	\$13,533	Tioga	1	\$45,105
Warren		\$76,679	Venango	2	\$90,211
Franklin/	5	\$205,229	Washington	7	\$315,737
Fulton		\$20,297	Wayne	2	\$90,211
Greene	2	\$90,211	Westmoreland	11	\$496,158
Huntingdon	2	\$90,211	York	15	\$676,579
Indiana	3	\$135,316			
369 @ \$45,105 each		\$16,643,854	COMPLEMENT		462
93 - \$6,492,146 total		6,492,146	COUNTY REIMBURSEMENT		\$23,136,000
TOTAL REQUIREMENT¹		\$23,136,000			

¹ Total requirement calculated at \$45,105 per authorized Common Pleas judge and not the \$70,000 statutory rate due to insufficient funding.

* Denotes exception to \$70,000 rule.

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL
Senior Judge Support Reimbursement Grant

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	1,375	1,375	1,375	1,375
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	1,375	1,375	1,375	1,375

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	1,007	1,375	1,375	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	1,007	1,375	1,375	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	368	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	368	0	0	0

Fiscal Year 2024-25 - Non-expense/Interagency, consists of \$368 transferred to other UJS appropriations in accordance with 72 P.S. Section 1793-E.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Grants and Subsidies:

The budget request will provide partial reimbursement for county expenses based upon statutory reimbursement rates and actual support provided to common pleas senior judges while on assignment. The Judiciary requests funding at the same level provided in Fiscal Year 2025-26.

8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

No salaries are funded from this appropriation.

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

No purchases are made from this appropriation.

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

This request is to help defray county expenses in support of assigned Common Pleas Court senior judges pursuant to Acts 40 and 49 of 2017, and Pennsylvania Rule of Judicial Administration 701. Such expenses are incurred to provide suitable facilities and adequate staff to senior judges formerly of the judicial district who are regularly or periodically assigned in that district and for visiting senior judges. Suitable facilities and staff consist of the use of judicial chambers, including office equipment and supplies, and the services of a law clerk and a secretary necessary to conduct judicial business. Rule 701 seeks the provision of this reasonable minimal administrative support to senior judges while on assignment.

The county payment provided by 42 Pa.C.S. Section 1906.1 and the Administrative Code Section 2801-E consists of two components: staff support and facilities (appropriate workspace, equipment and supplies) actually provided to senior judges of the judicial district who are regularly or periodically assigned in that district and for visiting senior judges. Staff support consists of the services of a secretary and a law clerk. The services of a secretary are reimbursed at the statutory rate of \$12 per hour, while the services of a law clerk are reimbursed at the rate of \$20 per hour. Facilities, including supplies and office equipment appropriate for the function, are reimbursed at the statutory rate of \$60 per day, billable in half-day increments.

As mandated by statute, no county shall receive in any year reimbursement under this grant in an amount that exceeds 20 percent of the amount appropriated. Also, in the event that the total amount counties are eligible to receive as evidenced by claims submitted is greater than the amount appropriated, Act 49, as did Act 37 before it, provides that each county's grant be proportionately reduced to bring the total within the amount appropriated.

Claims must be submitted annually by the counties to the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC). All claims for calendar year 2025 are to be submitted by April 1, 2026, with payment by June 30. Reimbursement paid in any year is for costs incurred in the immediate prior calendar year.

Senior judges are a resource available to the respective courts at the request of the president judge to assist on a temporary basis the prompt and proper disposition of the business of the court. Caseload, recusals, vacancies, and the absence from the bench of a judge in active service may warrant the temporary assignment of a senior judge. Per diem compensation earned by senior jurists and related expenses are funded by a separate state appropriation; the facilities and staff are funded by the counties.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Art. V, Section 10(c), PA Constitution
42 Pa.C.S. Section 1722, et seq.
42 Pa.C.S. Section 1906.1
71 P.S. Section 720.101
Annual Appropriation Act.

FY 2024-25 ACTUAL
RULE 701 - SENIOR JUDGE SUPPORT REIMBURSEMENT
(Calendar 2024)

County	Secretary		Law Clerk		Facilities		Total Reimbursement
	Hours	Amount	Hours	Amount	Days	Amount	
Adams	0	\$0	0	\$0	2.5	\$150	\$150
Allegheny	4,160	49,920	4,578	91,560	417.5	25,050	\$166,530
Armstrong	78	936	27	540	44.0	2,640	4,116
Beaver	502	6,024	76	1,520	43.0	2,580	10,124
Bedford	56	672	0	0	7.5	450	1,122
Berks	2,080	24,960	2,080	41,600	168.5	10,110	76,670
Blair	26	312	130	2,600	220.0	13,200	16,112
Bradford	31	372	0	0	3.0	180	552
Bucks	1,834	22,008	183	3,660	286.0	17,160	42,828
Butler	851	10,212	1,864	37,280	129.5	7,770	55,262
Cambria	1,031	12,372	1,031	20,620	123.5	7,410	40,402
Cameron	0	0	0	0	0.5	30	30
Carbon	24	288	0	0	14.5	870	1,158
Centre	62	744	0	0	8.0	480	1,224
Chester	1,618	19,416	1,618	32,360	233.0	13,980	65,756
Clarion	120	1,440	118	2,360	102.0	6,120	9,920
Clinton	27	324	100	2,000	21.0	1,260	3,584
Columbia	197	2,364	0	0	67.0	4,020	6,384
Crawford	92	1,104	67	1,340	16.0	960	3,404
Cumberland	974	11,688	0	0	10.0	600	12,288
Dauphin	504	6,048	142	2,840	138.0	8,280	17,168
Delaware	1,500	18,000	1,500	30,000	256.0	15,360	63,360
Elk	2	24	10	200	10.0	600	824
Erie	348	4,176	348	6,960	348.0	20,880	32,016
Fayette	286	3,432	740	14,800	92.0	5,520	23,752
Franklin	96	1,152	96	1,920	12.0	720	3,792
Greene	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0
Huntingdon	59	708	234	4,680	48.0	2,880	8,268
Indiana	3	36	6	120	7.5	450	606
Jefferson	98	1,176	98	1,960	14.0	840	3,976
Lackawanna	2,828	33,936	891	17,820	460.5	27,630	79,386
Lancaster	193	2,316	35	700	239.0	14,340	17,356
Lawrence	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0
Lebanon	6	72	0	0	4.0	240	312
Lehigh	519	6,228	5	100	95.5	5,730	12,058
Luzerne	0	0	64	1,280	0.0	0	1,280
Lycoming	0	0	43	860	0.5	30	890
McKean	9	108	3	60	44.0	2,640	2,808
Mercer	23	276	2	40	9.0	540	856
Mifflin	0	0	2	40	8.0	480	520
Montgomery	533	6,396	0	0	71.0	4,260	10,656

FY 2024-25 ACTUAL
RULE 701 - SENIOR JUDGE SUPPORT REIMBURSEMENT
(Calendar 2024)

County	<u>Secretary</u>		<u>Law Clerk</u>		<u>Facilities</u>		Total Reimbursement
	Hours	Amount	Hours	Amount	Days	Amount	
Northampton	72	864	102	2,040	9.0	540	3,444
Northumberland	519	6,228	519	10,380	173.0	10,380	26,988
Philadelphia	1,966	23,592	1,966	39,320	655.5	39,330	102,242
Potter	0	0	0	0	17.0	1,020	1,020
Schuylkill	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0
Snyder	69	828	31	620	20.0	1,200	2,648
Somerset	50	600	179	3,580	96.5	5,790	9,970
Susquehanna	0	0	30	600	0.0	0	600
Tioga	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0
Union	45	540	15	300	15.0	900	1,740
Venango	65	780	16	320	75.0	4,500	5,600
Washington	56	672	56	1,120	8.0	480	2,272
Westmoreland	634	7,608	634	12,680	97.5	5,850	26,138
Wyoming	135	1,620	47	940	46.0	2,760	5,320
York	452	5,424	452	9,040	56.5	3,390	17,854
TOTAL	24,877.0	\$298,524	20,199.0	\$403,980	5,076.5	\$304,590	\$1,007,094

1/ For Calendar year 2024, the qualifying reimbursements totaled \$1,007,094, resulting in a surplus of \$367,906 in the \$1,375,000 appropriation. In accordance with Act 49 of 2017, no adjustment was made to the grant payment to each county since the total reimbursements did not exceed the appropriation. Each county received the amount of their submitted reimbursement request. This chart reflects the requested/payment amounts, number of hours, and number of days claimed as submitted.

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL
Juror Cost Reimbursement Grant

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	1,118	1,118	1,118	1,118
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	1,118	1,118	1,118	1,118

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec #
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	2025-26
State Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	535	1,118	1,118	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	1,118	1,118	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	583	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

Fiscal Year 2024-25 – Non-expense/Interagency, consists of \$583 transferred to other Unified Judicial System appropriations in accordance with 72 P.S. Section 1793-E.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Grants and Subsidies:

The Judiciary requests the same level of funding as provided in Fiscal Year 2025-26.

8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

No salaries are funded from this appropriation.

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

No purchases are made from this appropriation.

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

This appropriation funds grants to counties for partial reimbursement of eligible juror costs incurred. Specifically, the grant reimburses counties for 80 percent of the amounts they expend for compensation (\$25 per day) and travel allowances (\$0.17 per mile) to jurors participating in a trial or grand jury proceeding beyond the first three days of service.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 42 Pa.C.S.A. Sec. 4561(b), et seq.

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL
Court Interpreter County Grant

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	2,629	2,629	2,629	2,629
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	2,629	2,629	2,629	2,629

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec
	<u>Auth</u>	<u>Filled</u>	<u>Auth</u>	<u>Filled</u>	<u>Funded</u>	<u>Filled</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	Gov Rec
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u>	<u>Gov Rec</u>
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	2,629	2,629	2,629	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	2,629	2,629	2,629	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u>	<u>Gov Rec</u>
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Grants and Subsidies:

The Judiciary requests the same level of funding as provided in Fiscal Year 2025-26.

8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

No salaries are funded from this appropriation.

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

No purchases are made from this appropriation.

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

This budget request continues a grant to partially reimburse counties for the costs of providing language access services, including foreign and sign language interpreters, telephone and video remote interpreting for court users who need assistance, and other language access services, including the creation of multilingual signage and translation services, in accordance with federal and state law. Providing qualified court interpreters is an essential element of providing access to justice and the cost of doing so has steadily increased each year since the grant's inception.

In 2017, the Supreme Court adopted the Unified Judicial System's Language Access Plan (LAP). The LAP is a strategic plan for enhancing the ability of limited English proficient and deaf or hard of hearing court users to actively participate in the court proceeding, programs, and services. Examples of LAP deliverables include: a language access judicial bench card, I-Speak cards, and notice of language rights posters that have been created and disseminated to the judicial districts. Additionally, a translation manual has been produced, along with translated court forms; a bilingual employee policy and testing protocol has been implemented; as well as continual trainings, communication, and outreach to various constituencies.

Counties often face significant, unexpected expenses related to language access services. In 2024, counties spent over \$7.9 million in language access-related expenses with the grant only providing each county 33% of its requested reimbursement.

Reimbursements requested by the counties are subject to reduction to ensure that a) no county is reimbursed an amount in excess of 30% of the total grant amount, and b) the total amount requested for reimbursement by all counties does not exceed the appropriated amount. When the total amount judicial districts are eligible to receive, as evidenced by claims submitted, is greater than the appropriated amount, each judicial district's grant is proportionately reduced to bring the total within the amount appropriated.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Annual Appropriation Act.
42 Pa.C.S. § 4417

FY 2024-25
 COURT INTERPRETER COUNTY GRANT
Qualifying Reimbursements and Applied Reductions
 (Calendar 2024)

County	Courtroom Interpreters Amount	Telephone Interpreting Services Amount	Other Language Access Services Amount	Total Qualified Reimbursement Amount	Reduced Reimbursement Amount
Adams	\$54,442.40	\$3,712.38	\$122.44	\$58,277.00	19,189.00
Allegheny	444,523.01	39,982.45	2,273.18	\$486,779.00	160,284.00
Armstrong	3,513.26	24.89	0.00	\$3,538.00	1,165.00
Beaver	30,252.51	2,917.20	550.30	\$33,720.00	11,103.00
Bedford	8,799.91	1,704.82	0.00	\$10,505.00	3,459.00
Berks	541,617.59	32,096.25	2,277.50	\$575,991.00	189,660.00
Blair	19,118.90	358.29	0.00	\$19,477.00	6,413.00
Bradford	3,199.75	598.50	0.00	\$3,798.00	1,251.00
Bucks	505,633.92	11,106.35	2,481.83	\$519,222.00	170,967.00
Butler	22,815.89	110.85	2,810.50	\$25,737.00	8,475.00
Cambria	11,612.20	0.00	0.00	\$11,612.00	3,824.00
Cameron	0.00	0.00	0.00	\$0.00	0.00
Carbon	12,574.31	5,346.86	0.00	\$17,921.00	5,901.00
Centre	67,613.06	4,312.95	0.00	\$71,926.00	23,683.00
Chester	313,097.83	4,337.56	512.75	\$317,948.00	104,692.00
Clarion	5,035.27	1,200.18	31.80	\$6,267.00	2,064.00
Clearfield	6,361.93	0.00	0.00	\$6,362.00	2,095.00
Clinton	7,703.65	843.75	0.00	\$8,547.00	2,814.00
Columbia	5,495.36	3,967.45	0.00	\$9,463.00	3,116.00
Crawford	3,444.45	81.40	0.00	\$3,526.00	1,161.00
Cumberland	223,752.89	7,140.35	2,864.98	\$233,758.00	76,971.00
Dauphin	365,184.07	16,558.58	192.00	\$381,935.00	125,762.00
Delaware	414,746.21	31,250.19	559.00	\$446,555.00	147,040.00
Elk	1,274.82	0.00	0.00	\$1,275.00	420.00
Erie	23,990.26	60.00	1,395.00	\$25,445.00	8,378.00
Fayette	8,885.80	44.14	0.00	\$8,930.00	2,940.00
Franklin	197,931.93	5,273.75	9,721.03	\$212,927.00	70,112.00
Fulton	8,928.55	0.00	0.00	\$8,929.00	2,940.00
Huntingdon	1,121.69	176.25	0.00	\$1,298.00	427.00
Indiana	6,120.62	0.00	0.00	\$6,121.00	2,015.00
Jefferson	2,144.10	481.90	0.00	\$2,626.00	865.00
Juniata	9,519.20	0.00	0.00	\$9,519.00	3,134.00
Lackawanna	225,474.57	1,820.92	2,685.00	\$229,980.00	75,727.00
Lancaster	400,562.51	8,153.36	1,650.00	\$410,366.00	135,123.00
Lawrence	22,690.03	491.18	130.00	\$23,311.00	7,676.00
Lebanon	90,113.20	2,290.10	770.76	\$93,174.00	30,680.00
Lehigh	245,849.40	9,197.45	0.00	\$255,047.00	83,981.00
Luzerne	542,248.00	8,360.00	9,860.00	\$560,468.00	184,548.00
Lycoming	21,291.35	726.40	2,758.16	\$24,776.00	8,158.00
McKean	1,113.37	426.60	0.00	\$1,540.00	507.00
Mercer	5,854.29	2,085.15	666.82	\$8,606.00	2,834.00
Mifflin	2,630.00	0.00	0.00	\$2,630.00	866.00

FY 2024-25
 COURT INTERPRETER COUNTY GRANT
Qualifying Reimbursements and Applied Reductions
 (Calendar 2024)

County	Courtroom Interpreters Amount	Telephone Interpreting Services Amount	Other Language Access Services Amount	Total Qualified Reimbursement Amount	Reduced Reimbursement Amount
Monroe	127,334.78	6,374.85	0.00	\$133,710.00	44,027.00
Montgomery	564,005.02	10,424.32	639.79	\$575,069.00	189,356.00
Northampton	284,173.23	16,808.68	2,080.84	\$303,063.00	99,791.00
Northumberland	31,658.23	108.78	1,499.95	\$33,267.00	10,954.00
Perry	3,855.51	0.00	0.00	\$3,856.00	1,270.00
Philadelphia ^{1/}	1,186,225.64	50,959.45	354,385.00	\$788,700.00	259,699.00
Schuylkill	87,212.70	3,604.20	63.00	\$90,880.00	29,925.00
Snyder	4,356.68	0.00	0.00	\$4,357.00	1,435.00
Somerset	9,398.64	1,213.90	400.00	\$11,013.00	3,626.00
Susquehanna	6,996.44	0.00	0.00	\$6,996.00	2,304.00
Tioga	35,630.09	0.00	0.00	\$35,630.00	11,732.00
Union	5,621.26	0.00	0.00	\$5,621.00	1,851.00
Venango	2,599.56	0.00	0.00	\$2,600.00	856.00
Warren	874.56	0.00	0.00	\$875.00	288.00
Washington	36,671.12	4,201.22	122.08	\$40,994.00	13,498.00
Wayne	6,081.45	71.80	0.00	\$6,153.00	2,026.00
Westmoreland	39,474.99	847.97		\$40,323.00	13,277.00
Wyoming	1,379.10	0.00	0.00	\$1,379.00	454.00
York	750,836.80	2,890.20	0.00	\$753,727.00	248,184.00
TOTAL	\$8,078,708.58	\$304,854.82	\$403,503.71	\$7,984,197.00	2,629,000.00

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL
Judicial Ethics Advisory Board

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	259	259	369	369
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	494	556	517	517
Total	753	815	886	886

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	^2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			^^2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	223	223	329	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	494	556	517	0
Total	717	779	846	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	
State Funds	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	4	4	4	4	4	4	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	36	36	40	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	36	36	40	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

^Fiscal Year 2025-26 – Personnel: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$556 in Act 49 of 2009 revenues and/or supplemental funds.

^^Fiscal Year 2026-27 – Personnel: Other Funds include augmenting revenues of \$517 in Act 49 of 2009 revenues.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Nonrecurring:

-Decrease in Act 49/supplemental funds available in FY 2026-27 to supplement state funds -	(\$39,000)
-Increase in state funds needed due to decrease in available Act 49/supplemental funds -	\$39,000

Personnel:

-Increase in salaries and benefits for filled staff -	\$67,000
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Operating

-Increase in operating expenses -	\$4,000
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8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial 2026-27</u>
Employee Factor	73.13%	76.80%	82.40%

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

2025-26: None

2026-27: None

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

The Supreme Court has designated the Pennsylvania Judicial Ethics Advisory Board (JEAB) as the approved body to render advisory opinions and general guidance concerning proper conduct under the Code of Judicial Conduct and the Rules Governing Standards of Conduct of Magisterial District Judges. Judicial Officers who seek an Advisory Opinion of the JEAB and act in accordance with the opinion(s) rendered, are afforded the “rule of reliance” and consideration as set forth in Rules 103 and 206 of the Rules of the Pennsylvania Judicial Ethics Advisory Board in determining whether discipline should be recommended or imposed.

Since it began issuing Advisory Opinions in July of 2022, the JEAB has received over 965 inquiries and issued 854 official Advisory Opinions, providing prompt, reliable, and consistent advice to Pennsylvania’s approximate 1,200 Judicial Officers.

Because of the frequency and volume of requests received, the Supreme Court not only increased the Board’s volunteer complement from nine to 13 members during 2023, but in 2024 it also authorized the hiring of additional staff, namely an Assistant Legal Counsel and Administrative Support. The increase in both membership and staff has not only reduced the response time in rendering Advisory Opinions, but it also has allowed the Board to more thoroughly research issues and expand upon its duty to issue general guidance.

In keeping with the JEAB’s task of developing and participating in judicial ethics education, including making recommendations to the Continuing Judicial Education Board and the Minor Judiciary Education Board, the Board, through the combined efforts of individual Members and staff, have provided hundreds of hours of judicial ethics education since the Board’s inception – a trend which is anticipated to only increase.

As a means of further outreach, the Board initially printed 2,000 copies of the Code of Judicial Conduct and the Rules Governing Standards of Conduct of Magisterial District Judges for distribution. The response to these publications has been overwhelming, with the initial stock being depleted. In addition to printing additional copies of these publications, the Board intends to create additional publications, such as general guidance on topics such as judicial elections

and retentions, recusal and disqualifications, reference letter writing, etc., as a means of reinforcing judicial ethics and providing a tangible resource for judges.

Following the Supreme Court's adoption of an interim policy addressing the use of artificial intelligence, the Board has published General Guidance concerning Generative Artificial Intelligence. Given the developing nature of artificial intelligence and its increasing presence in court operations and litigation, this represents an emerging area of judicial ethics. Appropriate resources will be required to provide guidance to judicial officers, to monitor developments in other jurisdictions, and to assess technological advancements so that ethical guidance remains current and consistent with evolving standards and practices.

Lastly, as the Board continues to establish itself as a resource for Pennsylvania's Judiciary, the volume and complexity of questions raised by Judicial Officers will only increase. To ensure the ability of the Board to respond to this demand, the dedication of appropriate resources is essential.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Art. V, Sec. 10(c) PA Constitution
42 Pa.C.S.A. Sec. 1722, et seq.
Annual Appropriation Act.

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL
Interbranch Commission (PCFJ)

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec 2026-27
State Funds	358	358	571	509
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	1	46	1	1
Total	359	404	572	510

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	^2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	322	329	531	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	1	46	1	0
Total	323	375	532	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec # 2026-27
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	
State Funds	2	2	2	2	3	2	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2	2	2	2	3	2	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	36	29	40	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	36	29	40	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial 2026-27	Gov Rec # 2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial <u>2026-27</u>	Gov Rec # <u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial <u>2026-27</u>	Gov Rec # <u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

^Fiscal Year 2025-26 – Personnel: Other Funds include augmenting revenue of \$45 in Act 49 of 2009 revenues and/or supplemental funds.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Nonrecurring:

- Decrease in Act 49/supplemental funds available in FY 2026-27 to supplement state funds - (\$45,000)
- Increase in state funds needed due to decrease in Act 49/supplemental funds - \$45,000

Personnel:

- Increase in salaries and benefits for filled staff and annuitant health insurance benefits - \$157,000

Operating:

- Increase in miscellaneous operating expenses - \$11,000

8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial <u>2026-27</u>
Employee Factor	75.34%	82.96%	94.27%

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

2025-26: None

2026-27: None

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

This appropriation solely funds the Pennsylvania Commission for Fairness & Justice (formerly the Interbranch Commission for Gender, Racial, and Ethnic Fairness) (“Commission” or “PCFJ”). Established in January 2005 by the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, the Commission for Fairness & Justice is a collaborative body that advises and makes recommendations to all three branches of Pennsylvania government and all sixty-seven counties. The Commission is funded by a line item in the judicial branch’s budget. Its purpose is to promote fairness and justice in the Commonwealth by identifying and addressing systemic barriers, reducing bias and discrimination in all forms, and working to ensure that justice is accessible, impartial, and grounded in the dignity and humanity of every individual. PCFJ envisions a Commonwealth where fairness and justice are not only foundational values, but daily realities for all people. The Commission fulfills its purpose by:

- Implementing the recommendations of the 2003 Report of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court Committee on Racial and Gender Bias in the Justice System and related follow-up studies;
- Investigating and developing new initiatives to address persistent and emerging forms of bias;
- Promoting public and professional awareness of the impact of race, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, and disability on access to and the fair delivery of justice in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania;
- Identifying, developing, and recommending policies, best practices, and laws that promote fairness and eliminate discrimination and misinformation/disinformation across all branches of government and within all communities of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania;
- Supporting state and local officials, as well as legal professionals, with the training, resources, and tools necessary to ensure equal access to justice within all communities of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and
- Increasing public awareness and confidence by collaborating with community organizations regarding the fairness expected of the three branches of government in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The Commission grounds its work in evidence-based practices informed by data, research, and the lived experiences of all residents of Pennsylvania.

The Commission is composed of 24 volunteer appointees (“Commissioners”), with appointments distributed among the Supreme Court (8), the Governor (8), the President Pro Tempore of the Senate (2), the Speaker of the House (2), the Senate Minority Leader (2), and the House Minority Leader (2). Currently, all 24 vacancies are filled. Commissioners are: Leonard J. Rivera, Esquire (Chair, Chester County); Jessie L. Smith, Esquire (Vice Chair, Dauphin County); Honorable Nicola Henry-Taylor (Secretary, Allegheny County); Rita Alexyn, Esquire (Tioga County); Heather Ann Dietrich Batzel, Esquire (Allegheny County); Darwin Beauvais, Esquire (Philadelphia County); Brooke Carickhoff, Esquire (Philadelphia County); Nena Carter, Esquire (Dauphin County); Philip Friedman,

Esquire (Erie County); Will Gonzalez, Esquire (Philadelphia County); Carlos Graupera (Lancaster County); Anna P. Hemingway, Esquire (Dauphin County); Honorable Patty Kim (Dauphin County); Catherine H. Law, Esquire (York County); Rev. Dr. Darron McKinney (Delaware County); Honorable Katie Muth (Montgomery County); Jon Pushinsky, Esquire (Allegheny County); Honorable Christopher M. Rabb (Philadelphia County); David Sexton, Jr. (Centre County); Jay Silberblatt, Esquire (Allegheny County); Cheryl Sobeski-Reedy, Esquire (Luzerne County); Bernadette Eyler Smith, CCP (Allegheny County); Ashleigh Strange (Lehigh County); and Heidi G. Villari, Esquire (Philadelphia County).

The Commission's work is primarily carried out through seven standing committees that meet virtually bimonthly. Commissioners, who oversee these committees and any ad hoc initiatives, meet virtually quarterly to provide strategic feedback and guidance. In addition, the Commission welcomed several governmental and community organizations¹ to present to the Commission and its committees.

The Commission employs a full-time executive director and staff attorney and seeks to (re)add a full-time administrative assistant. It also operates a law school externship program, offering 1–2 students the opportunity to earn academic credit each year. PCFJ staff have participated in ten (10) external speaking engagements² to raise public and professional awareness of PCFJ and its work, five (5) community engagements³ to increase public confidence in our government, and seven (7) workgroups⁴ to investigate and develop recommendations to promote fairness and justice in Pennsylvania in 2025.

¹ PCFJ was able to welcome the following guest speakers: Honorable Jennifer McCrady; Autumn Redcross, Lolo Serrano, and Caro Pirri of the Abolitionist Law Center; Desireé Chang, M.S. and Cheryl Meck, M.S. of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission; Tobey Oxholm of the Pardon Project; and Frank Miles, Esquire.

² PCFJ staff participated in the following external educational programs: YWCA Allentown Racial Justice Committee; Society of the Arts; Pennsylvania Association of Court Management (PACM); WDIY's The El-Chaar Chronicles; WDIY's Her Story; 2025 DRI Civil Rights and Governmental Tort Liability Seminar – Unconscious Bias; LINC CEO Forum; Public Defenders Association of Pennsylvania Panel on IDAC; Bar Association of Lehigh County's Bench Bar Conference Panel on Juror Mental Health; and Philadelphia Bar Association's Public Interest Law Day Panel on Language Access.

³ PCFJ staff participated in the following community activities: Read Aloud Project by The Rendell Center; PBA Pre-law Meeting at Lehigh University; roundtable discussion on sexual assault with Department of Human Services Secretary Val Arkoosh; the Reflections on Healing art tour, co-hosted for Domestic Violence Awareness Month by the Carnegie Museum of Art and the Governor's Advisory Commission on Women; and Roberto Clemente Charter School Career Fair.

⁴ PCFJ staff served on the following committees and workgroups: PCCD's FFY 2026–2029 Services, Training, Officers, and Prosecutors (STOP) Implementation Planning Committee; PCCD's Indigent Defense Advisory Committee (IDAC); EDPA Federal District Court's Voices for Justice Initiative; LGBTQ Youth In Out-of-Home Placement Workgroup; Language Access workgroup; Implicit Bias workgroup; and U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Juror Education Pilot Project.

Children, Youth & Families Committee: Established in 2025 at the recommendation of several Commissioners, this committee focuses on promoting fairness in systems that support children, youth, and families. Its initial priorities include:

- Juvenile delinquency;
- Childcare for jurors and court-involved families; and
- Dependency matters.

The committee is currently working to increase awareness of the opportunity to expand access to courthouse childcare and is evaluating the potential re-establishment of a state-level Office of Child Advocate. As a first project, it is developing a pamphlet outlining the legislative history of courthouse childcare, highlighting programs in Montgomery and Allegheny Counties, and offering guidance for counties interested in launching similar initiatives.

Criminal Justice Committee: In 2023, Pennsylvania established the Indigent Defense Advisory Committee (IDAC) within the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). IDAC is responsible for:

- Developing standards and training for indigent defense attorneys;
- Collecting and analyzing data at the county and state levels;
- Preparing biennial reports; and
- Approving and distributing grants under the Indigent Defense Grant Program.

PCFJ's Executive Director serves as an *ex officio* member of IDAC and co-chairs its Data Collection, Technology, and Research Subcommittee. IDAC's first Biennial Report was submitted in December 2025 to the Governor, General Assembly leadership, and Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

The committee also collaborated with the Jury Service Committee to develop jury instructions, which were submitted to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's Suggested Standard Civil and Criminal Jury Instructions Committees. Subcommittees of both Suggested Standard Jury Instructions Committees are meeting to discuss and draft revised instructions addressing implicit bias with the benefit of PCFJ's proposed model instructions. Additional activities included:

- Hosting the Abolitionist Law Center to discuss treatment court observations;
- Evaluating current legislation for advocacy opportunities; and
- Receiving a presentation from the Executive Director of the Pardon Project to explore ways to streamline and improve the pardon process.

In addition, the committee is in the process of developing an accompanying educational video addressing the concept of implicit bias; the proposal has been submitted to the Supreme Court and requires funding.

Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (DV/SA) Committee: The committee supported the passage of HB 350 (Uniform Parentage Act), which:

- Ensures equal treatment of children born to same-sex and opposite-sex couples;
- Modernizes surrogacy provisions;
- Precludes perpetrators of sexual assault from establishing parentage over the child resulting from that assault; and
- Recognizes intent-based parentage.

The Commission collaborated with the PA Parentage Coalition on this effort and signed onto an amicus brief in *Glover v. Junior*, a case affirming intent-based parentage in Pennsylvania.

The Executive Director is participating in the FFY 2026–2029 Services, Training, Officers, and Prosecutors (STOP) Implementation Planning Committee, which meets monthly and will distribute \$12 million over three years. Committee members also:

- Reviewed STOP Culturally Specific Initiatives applications for the current funding cycle,
- Analyzed rural barriers to DV reporting and weapons relinquishment in PFA orders,
- Participated in a roundtable and listening session with Department of Human Services' Secretary Val Arkoosh, and
- Partnered with AOPC's STOP team to publicize existing training opportunities.

Equal Opportunity & Diversity Committee: In 2018, the Supreme Court adopted the committee's recommendation to add a voluntary demographic checkbox to the annual attorney registration form, creating a baseline for diversity efforts. The committee continues to publish annual demographic summaries received from the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court, a valuable resource for Pennsylvania's legal community and beyond, which are enhanced by the Commissions review of historical data.

Recent highlights include:

- A presentation by Judge Jennifer McCrady on trauma-informed court design in Allegheny County and
- Commissioning Dr. Joel Fishman to produce a historical report on women legislators in Pennsylvania (1923/24–2023/24) and a historical report on executive branch demographics.

Jury Service Committee: The committee continues to work with stakeholders — including the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Committee of Seventy, and Pennsylvanians for Modern Courts — to improve juror responsiveness. In addition, the Commission and Committee members are participating in a pilot program developed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to assist employers with educating employees about jury service. Recognizing the financial burden of jury service, the committee supports HB 1481, which would raise juror compensation from \$9/\$25 to \$40 per day.

Other initiatives include:

- Developing a mental health pamphlet for jurors now available in the PA Courts app;
- Amplifying the work of the First Judicial District in developing a mental health counseling program and investigating alternative approaches to same;
- Presenting on juror mental health at the Lehigh County Bench Bar Conference; and
- Investigating the statutory limitations of the statewide juror list produced by the AOPC, with plans to continue monitoring the issue in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Association of Court Management (PACM).

Language Access Committee: To improve clarity around accessing and providing feedback on language services, the committee is developing a language access toolkit. After receiving feedback from AOPC, the toolkit will be revised and finalized in 2026.

Additional efforts include:

- Participating in Philadelphia Bar Association's Public Interest Law Day panel entitled *Justice in Translation: Language Access in Courts*;
- Preparing comprehensive feedback on the existing complaint/feedback process;
- Advocating for improved language access in administrative hearings; and
- Comparing current executive agency practices with findings from the survey it previously commissioned in 2007.

LGBTQ+ Rights Committee: In partnership with the DV/SA Committee, this committee supported HBs 610, 638, and 1817, which aim to simplify and standardize the name change process. It also proposed amendments to a draft statewide rule on name change petitions, currently under consideration by the Supreme Court's Procedural Rules Committee.

Staff continue to participate in a work group comprised of the Philadelphia Defender Association's Child Advocacy Unit, Lambda Legal, and others. The group met with DHS officials to share testimonials from LGBTQ+ youth in the foster care system and discuss the status of the group's proposed regulatory amendments securing non-discrimination protections and appropriate placement options.

The committee is also planning a second statewide webinar with the PHRC, Governor's Commission on LGBTQ+ Affairs, and other stakeholders to discuss recent legal developments affecting LGBTQ+ rights. In 2026, this committee will become part of the Equal Opportunity and Diversity Committee.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Art. V, Sec. 10(c) PA Constitution
42 Pa.C.S.A. Sec. 1722, et seq.

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2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL
Judicial Conduct Board

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	2,555	2,555	2,970	2,970
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	12	11	11	11
Total	2,567	2,566	2,981	2,981

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	2,296	2,425	2,870	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	12	11	11	0
Total	2,308	2,436	2,881	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec #
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	2026-27
State Funds	15	14	15	15	15	15	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	15	14	15	15	15	15	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	259	130	100	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	259	130	100	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	<u>Gov Rec #</u>
			<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial	<u>Gov Rec #</u>
			<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Personnel:

-Increase in salaries and benefits for filled staff and annuitant health insurance benefits - \$445,000

Operating:

-Decrease in operating expenses - (\$30,000)

8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	Judicial
			<u>2026-27</u>
Employee Factor	83.08%	74.35%	95.82%

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

2025-26: None

2026-27: None

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

The Judicial Conduct Board of Pennsylvania was created as an independent board within the Judicial Branch by an amendment to the Pennsylvania Constitution adopted on May 18, 1993 and declared in effect by the Governor on August 11, 1993. It is the Judicial Conduct Board's responsibility within the Judicial Branch to investigate allegations of judicial misconduct, disability, or impairment and to prosecute deserving cases in the Court of Judicial Discipline.

The board has jurisdiction over Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justices, Superior and Commonwealth Court Judges, Common Pleas Court Judges, Philadelphia Municipal Court Judges and Magisterial District Judges.

Under the Constitution of Pennsylvania, the board is the constitutionally identified agency of state government with the authority to investigate judges for misconduct or physical or mental disability. Its role is unique. The board's system has served Pennsylvania well since its inception in 1993. Some judges have been publicly disciplined for judicial misconduct, others have been confidentially cautioned, and a number have resigned while under inquiry. It is undoubtedly fair to state that the Pennsylvania judiciary is aware of its ethical obligations and the potential consequences for ethical breaches.

As mandated by the Constitution, the board is comprised of twelve members serving staggered four-year terms, as follows: six citizen electors who are neither attorneys nor judges; three judges, including one appellate court judge, one common pleas court judge, and one magisterial district judge; and three attorneys who are not judges. The Governor appoints six members, and the Supreme Court appoints six members. No more than half of the members may be of the same political party.

Members meet regularly to conduct board business. They receive no compensation for their service. Members may not serve more than four consecutive years; however, a member may be reappointed for an additional term after the lapse of one year from the end of the member's previous term. Except for judicial members, no member of the board, during the member's term, may hold a compensated public office or public appointment.

The Constitution requires that the board appoint a Chief Counsel and other necessary staff. Currently, the board has an authorized complement of 15. Six of the approved positions are for licensed attorneys, including the Chief Counsel. The remaining approved positions are for four investigators and five administrative staff.

The Chief Counsel provides legal advice to the board and, along with the other staff attorneys, serves as trial counsel in proceedings before the Court of Judicial Discipline. The board's legal staff is responsible for overseeing the investigation of cases, advising the board as to courses of action concerning cases, and preparing and prosecuting cases before the Court of Judicial Discipline.

In the event of appeals from orders of the Court of Judicial Discipline, the board counsel represents the board before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court (or the constitutionally provided Special Tribunal if the appeal from the Court of Judicial Discipline involves a member of the Supreme

Board counsel is also tasked with acting as the board's open records officer and open records appeals officer as required by the Commonwealth's Right-to-Know Law. In addition to responding to right-to-know requests, board counsel also represents the board in appeals to Commonwealth Court from right-to-know determinations.

The board is required to administer its own budget, publish and distribute an annual report, exercise supervisory and administrative authority over all board staff, and implement its own rules of procedure. Board headquarters are maintained in the Pennsylvania Judicial Center in Harrisburg.

During calendar year 2025, the board opened 1,044 confidential requests for investigation. A total of 1,074 pending matters were resolved during that same period. Investigative requests are not necessarily resolved in the year in which they are received and may remain active for several years. Of the resolved matters, 43 were dismissed with Letters of Caution, and 13 were dismissed with Letters of Counsel. Formal charges were filed in the Court of Judicial Discipline against two judges. The board also filed two Petitions for Interim Suspension Without Pay in the Court of Judicial Discipline against two judges.

This appropriation provides funding for the board's operating expenses, annuitant benefits, and the salaries and benefits of the board's staff. Funding of the board's budget request is important so that the board may continue to carry out its core governmental function pursuant to its constitutional mandate.

The prompt and effective operation of Pennsylvania's judicial disciplinary system plays a critical role in promoting and maintaining public confidence in the administration of justice. The sufficient allocation of resources to the Judicial Conduct Board helps demonstrate to all Pennsylvanians that their representatives stand committed to the pursuit of justice.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Art. V, Sec. 18(b), PA Constitution
42 Pa.C.S.A. Sec. 2101 et seq.

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL
Court of Judicial Discipline

1. SUMMARY FINANCIAL DATA (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	618	618	618	618
Federal Funds:	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	2	2	2	2
Total	620	620	620	620

2. PERSONNEL

(a) "Costs" (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	441	465	508	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	2	2	2	0
Total	443	467	510	0

(b) "Complement"

	December 31, 2024		December 31, 2025		Budget		Gov Rec #
	Auth	Filled	Auth	Filled	Funded	Filled	2026-27
State Funds	3	2	3	2	3	2	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	3	2	3	2	3	2	0

3. OPERATING (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	177	153	110	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	177	153	110	0

4. FIXED ASSETS (\$000)

	2024-25	2025-26	Judicial	Gov Rec #
			2026-27	2026-27
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

5. GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u>	<u>Gov Rec #</u>
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

6. NON-EXPENSE/INTERAGENCY (\$000)

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u>	<u>Gov Rec #</u>
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
State Funds	0	0	0	0
Federal Funds	0	0	0	0
Other Funds	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

#Detail not provided by Governor's Office of the Budget.

7. ASSUMPTIONS

Personnel:

-Increase in salaries and all benefits for filled staff and annuitant medical benefits - \$43,000

Operating:

-Decrease in miscellaneous operating expenses - (\$43,000)

8. HISTORY OF LAPSES

	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>
State Funds	0	0	0

9. FRINGE BENEFITS

	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>Judicial</u>
	<u>2024-25</u>	<u>2025-26</u>	<u>2026-27</u>
Employee Factor	75.60%	89.97%	96.96%

10. NONRECURRING PURCHASES

2025-26: None

2026-27: None

11. PROGRAM STATEMENT

Budget Request Funding Needs

The Court of Judicial Discipline seeks the same amount as last year, \$618,000. This amount should be adequate to continue the mission of the Court.

The Court is leanly staffed with only two employees, a counsel, and a clerk of court. There are five active cases before the Court with more likely to be filed soon. Several of the cases will result in multi-day hearings. There are also two cases with judges serving probationary sanctions which are being supervised by the Court's counsel.

Last year, the Court decided five cases. The cases before the court have become more complex in recent years as they now tend to involve repeated episodes of poor demeanor or multiple counts of unrelated conduct rather than the single instances of misconduct pursued in the past.

The Court

The Court of Judicial Discipline is a court of record established in 1993 under Article V, §18 of the Pennsylvania Constitution. The court serves as a trial court for complaints filed by the Judicial Conduct Board alleging judicial misconduct by a judicial officer. To perform its task, it is required by the Constitution to appoint staff and prepare and administer its own budget as provided by law and undertake actions needed to ensure its efficient operation.

The Court hears and decides cases involving allegations of judicial misconduct prosecuted by the Judicial Conduct Board. The court enters findings of fact and conclusions of law and, if misconduct is found to have occurred, imposes an appropriate sanction. Formal charges filed with the court are a matter of public record and all hearings conducted by the court are public proceedings. Proceedings are conducted pursuant to the rules adopted by the court and in accordance with the principles of due process and the Rules of Evidence. Official court records and dockets are maintained and preserved by the Clerk of the Court of Judicial Discipline.

The Court is composed of eight members, four of whom are appointed by the Supreme Court and four appointed by the Governor. Pursuant to the Constitution, the Supreme Court appointees include two judges, one magisterial district judge, and one non-lawyer elector. The Governor's appointees include one judge, two non-judge members of the bar, and a non-lawyer elector. The members serve without compensation.

Since the court's inception, 131 formal complaints and 55 petitions for interim relief have been submitted for review. For calendar year 2025, the court handled trials or proceedings in five separate cases. Members of the court supervised pre-trial discovery with the litigants and held pre-trial conferences to ensure the fair and prompt disposition of cases. When the record could not be resolved by way of factual stipulations, trials were promptly scheduled by the court and timely decisions were filed.

Educational Court Functions

In addition to performing the above-noted constitutional functions, the Court of Judicial Discipline has taken an active role by providing educational opportunities for a variety of audiences. The staff of the court has presented programs that educate judicial officers, members of the Pennsylvania Bar, and the public regarding judicial ethics in general, and the Commonwealth's judicial discipline system.

Additionally, court staff have prepared and presented continuing legal education programs, including presentations throughout Pennsylvania, pertaining to the Commonwealth's system of judicial discipline.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Art. V, Sec. 18(b), PA Constitution
42 Pa.C.S.A. Sec. 1601, et seq.

2026-27 JUDICIAL BUDGET PROPOSAL

In response to the Appropriations Committees' request, the following additional information is provided:

FISCAL YEAR 2024-25 OBLIGATIONS ROLLED FORWARD TO FISCAL YEAR 2025-26

<u>APPROPRIATION</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Judicial Education	\$12,099