

## Judiciary - Supreme Court

	FY 2024 ACTUAL	FY 2025 ESTIMATE	FY 2026 APPROVED
<b>OPERATING BUDGET</b>			
<i>Full Time Equivalent Positions</i>	203.0	205.0	208.0
Personal Services	8,838,300	8,610,300	8,686,000
Employee Related Expenditures	3,882,800	4,072,500	4,645,700
Professional and Outside Services	120,200	671,800	671,800
Travel - In State	228,500	204,200	204,200
Travel - Out of State	53,500	38,600	38,600
Other Operating Expenditures	4,261,000	4,546,500	5,064,800
Equipment	9,300	0	0
<b>OPERATING SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>17,393,600</b>	<b>18,143,900</b>	<b>19,311,100 <sup>1/</sup></b>
<b>SPECIAL LINE ITEMS</b>			
Child and Family Representation Pilot Program	0	0	600,000 <sup>2/</sup>
State Aid	4,330,000	5,955,500	5,962,100
County Reimbursements	187,900	187,900	187,900 <sup>3/</sup>
Automation	17,637,900	24,927,800	25,114,100 <sup>4/5/</sup>
Arizona Trial and Digital Evidence Fund Deposit	1,620,000	1,620,000	1,620,000
Digital Evidence Software	280,000	280,000	0
State Foster Care Review Board	3,419,200	3,570,200	3,680,500
Court Appointed Special Advocate and Vulnerable Persons	5,030,800	6,594,400	6,840,800
Model Court	658,800	660,800	660,800
Domestic Relations	685,900	701,000	726,700
Judicial Nominations and Performance Review	590,500	620,600	641,900
Commission on Judicial Conduct	602,100	620,800	802,800
Juvenile Monetary Sanctions Funding Backfill	250,000	250,000	250,000
Courthouse Security	686,900	751,700	752,100
<b>AGENCY TOTAL</b>	<b>53,373,600</b>	<b>64,884,600</b>	<b>67,150,800 <sup>6/</sup></b>
<b>FUND SOURCES</b>			
General Fund	28,795,000	29,864,200	31,325,600
<u>Other Appropriated Funds</u>			
Confidential Intermediary and Fiduciary Fund	479,200	690,600	702,400
Court Appointed Special Advocate and Vulnerable Persons Fund	5,208,400	6,793,700	7,048,600
Criminal Justice Enhancement Fund	3,999,500	4,765,200	4,779,700
Defensive Driving School Fund	2,575,400	4,521,000	4,498,500
Judicial Collection Enhancement Fund	10,621,300	15,303,000	15,849,400
State Aid to the Courts Fund	1,694,800	2,946,900	2,946,600
SUBTOTAL - Other Appropriated Funds	24,578,600	35,020,400	35,825,200
<b>SUBTOTAL - Appropriated Funds</b>	<b>53,373,600</b>	<b>64,884,600</b>	<b>67,150,800</b>
Other Non-Appropriated Funds	26,217,100	31,811,800	31,811,800
<b>TOTAL - ALL SOURCES</b>	<b>79,590,700</b>	<b>96,696,400</b>	<b>98,962,600</b>

**AGENCY DESCRIPTION** — The Supreme Court consists of 7 Supreme Court Justices, judicial support staff and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). The Supreme Court, as the state's highest court, has the responsibility to review appeals and to provide rules of procedure for all the courts in Arizona. Under the direction of the Chief Justice, the AOC provides administrative supervision over the Arizona court system.

### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1/</sup> Included in the operating lump sum appropriation for the supreme court is \$1,000 for the purchase of mementos and items for visiting officials. (General Appropriations Act footnote)

- 2/ This appropriation is a continuing appropriation and is exempt from the provisions of section 35-190, Arizona Revised Statutes, relating to lapsing of appropriations. (General Appropriations Act footnote)
- 3/ Of the \$187,900 appropriated for county reimbursements, state grand jury is limited to \$97,900 and capital postconviction relief is limited to \$90,000. (General Appropriations Act footnote)
- 4/ On or before September 1, 2025, the supreme court shall report to the joint legislative budget committee and the governor's office of strategic planning and budgeting on current and future automation projects coordinated by the administrative office of the courts. The report shall include a list of court automation projects that receive or are anticipated to receive state monies in the current or next two fiscal years as well as a description of each project, the number of FTE positions, the entities involved and the goals and anticipated results for each automation project. The report shall be submitted in one summary document. The report shall indicate each project's total multiyear cost by fund source and budget line item, including any prior year, current year and future year expenditures. (General Appropriations Act footnote)
- 5/ Automation expenses of the judiciary shall be funded only from the automation line item. Monies in the operating lump sum appropriation or other line items intended for automation purposes shall be transferred to the automation line item before expenditure. (General Appropriations Act footnote)
- 6/ General Appropriations Act funds are appropriated as an Operating Lump Sum with Special Line Items by Agency.

### **Operating Budget**

The budget includes \$19,311,100 and 109.7 FTE Positions in FY 2026 for the operating budget. These amounts consist of:

	<b>FY 2026</b>
General Fund	\$14,498,000
Confidential Intermediary and Fiduciary Fund	702,400
Criminal Justice Enhancement Fund (CJEF)	12,200
Defensive Driving School Fund	902,500
Judicial Collection Enhancement Fund (JCEF)	3,196,000

Adjustments are as follows:

#### **Judicial Salary Increase**

The budget includes an increase of \$126,100 from the General Fund in FY 2026 for the second year of a 2-year phase-in of a pay increase for Supreme Court justices. The FY 2025 General Appropriations Act increased the Supreme Court Chief Justice salary from \$212,000 to \$222,000 on January 1, 2025 and to \$232,000 on January 1, 2026. Additionally, the FY 2025 General Appropriation Act increased the Supreme Court Associate Justice salary from \$205,000 to \$215,000 on January 1, 2025 and to \$225,000 on January 1, 2026.

The FY 2025 budget's 3-year spending plan includes an additional \$63,000 in FY 2027 for full implementation.

#### **Increased Filing Fee Revenues**

The budget includes an increase of \$500,000 from JCEF in FY 2026 for information technology projects. Because the court recently increased filing fees to keep up with inflation, additional resources are available.

### **Statewide Adjustments**

The budget includes an increase of \$541,100 in FY 2026 for statewide adjustments. This amount consists of:

General Fund	518,400
Confidential Intermediary and Fiduciary Fund	11,800
CJEF	4,900
Defensive Driving School Fund	(7,300)
JCEF	13,300

*(Please see the Agency Detail and Allocations section.)*

### **Child and Family Representation Pilot Program**

The budget includes \$600,000 and 1 FTE Positions from the General Fund in FY 2026 for the Child and Family Representation Program. Adjustments are as follows:

#### **3-Year Pilot Program**

The budget includes a one-time increase of \$600,000 and 1 FTE Position from the General Fund in FY 2026 for the 3-year Child and Family Representation Pilot Program.

The FY 2026 Criminal Justice Budget Reconciliation Bill (BRB) (Laws 2025, Chapter 237) establishes the 3-year program in the AOC to improve legal representation by attorneys appointed to represent juveniles, parents and guardians during juvenile court proceedings. The FY 2026 appropriation is non-lapsing.

### **State Aid**

The budget includes \$5,962,100 and 3.3 FTE Positions in FY 2026 for State Aid. These amounts consist of:

CJEF	3,015,500
State Aid to the Courts Fund	2,946,600

Adjustments are as follows:

#### **Statewide Adjustments**

The budget includes an increase of \$6,600 in FY 2026 for statewide adjustments. This amount consists of:

CJEF	6,900
State Aid to the Courts Fund	(300)

The State Aid line item provides state aid to counties for the payment of judges pro tempore salaries, and for projects designed to improve the processing of criminal cases in the Superior Court and Justice Courts.

#### **County Reimbursements**

The budget includes \$187,900 from the General Fund in FY 2026 for County Reimbursements. This amount is unchanged from FY 2025.

The County Reimbursements line item provides reimbursement to counties for grand jury expenses and for state-funded representation of indigent defendants in first-time capital postconviction relief proceedings. Statute limits reimbursements to counties for grand jury expenses and state-funded representation of indigent defendants in first-time capital postconviction relief proceedings to the amount appropriated for those purposes.

A General Appropriations Act footnote limits the appropriation for the State Grand Jury to \$97,900 and for Capital Postconviction Relief to \$90,000.

#### **Automation**

The budget includes \$25,114,100 and 15 FTE Positions in FY 2026 for Automation. These amounts consist of:

General Fund	7,657,000
Court Appointed Special Advocate and Vulnerable Persons Fund (CASAVP)	207,800
CJEF	1,752,000
Defensive Driving School Fund	3,596,000
JCEF	11,901,300

Adjustments are as follows:

#### **Statewide Adjustments**

The budget includes an increase of \$186,300 in FY 2026 for statewide adjustments. This amount consists of:

General Fund	157,600
Court Appointed Special Advocate and Vulnerable Persons Fund (CASAVP)	8,500

CJEF	2,700
Defensive Driving School Fund	(15,200)
JCEF	32,700

The Automation line item provides funding for court automation projects throughout the state. Automation costs are to be solely funded from the Automation line item. As required by a General Appropriations Act footnote, any additional monies expended from other line items for automation projects are to be transferred to the Automation line item prior to expenditure.

#### **Arizona Trial and Digital Evidence Fund Deposit**

The budget includes \$1,620,000 from the General Fund in FY 2026 for the Arizona Trial and Digital Evidence Fund Deposit line item. This amount is unchanged from FY 2025.

Monies in this line item are used for replacement and supplemental earnings for petit jurors in the Superior Court eligible after 1 day of jury service.

#### **Digital Evidence Software**

The budget includes no funding in FY 2026 for the Digital Evidence Software line item. Adjustments are as follows:

#### **Remove One-Time Digital Evidence Software Funding**

The budget includes a decrease of \$(280,000) from the General Fund in FY 2026 to eliminate one-time funding for digital evidence software. The FY 2024 budget's 3-year spending plan originally included one-time funding for this project in FY 2024 and FY 2025.

Monies in this line item fund digital evidence software portal costs for all case types.

#### **State Foster Care Review Board**

The budget includes \$3,680,500 and 40 FTE Positions from the General Fund in FY 2026 for the State Foster Care Review Board. Adjustments are as follows:

#### **Statewide Adjustments**

The budget includes an increase of \$110,300 from the General Fund in FY 2026 for statewide adjustments.

The State Foster Care Review Board line item coordinates local volunteer review boards for foster care children in out-of-home placement.

### ***Court Appointed Special Advocate and Vulnerable Persons***

The budget includes \$6,840,800 and 23.5 FTE Positions from the CASAVP Fund in FY 2026 for Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and Vulnerable Persons. Adjustments are as follows:

#### **Remove One-time Vulnerable Persons Program Funding**

The budget includes a decrease of \$(171,100) from the CASAVP Fund in FY 2026 to remove one-time funding associated with the Vulnerable Persons Program.

#### **Additional Fiduciary Investigator**

The budget includes an increase of \$349,900 and 1 FTE Position from the CASAVP Fund in FY 2026 for an investigator to resolve complaints against fiduciaries.

#### **Statewide Adjustments**

The budget includes an increase of \$67,600 from the CASAVP Fund in FY 2026 for statewide adjustments.

The FY 2025 General Appropriations Act changed the line item name to Court Appointed Special Advocate and Vulnerable Persons to reflect the expanded purpose of the appropriation.

This line item administers and monitors a community-based volunteer advocacy program for abused and neglected children in the Juvenile Court System and to review conservatorship filings for vulnerable persons.

### ***Model Court***

The budget includes \$660,800 and 1 FTE Position from the General Fund in FY 2026 for Model Court. These amounts are unchanged from FY 2025.

Monies in this line item fund a Dependency Alternative Program (DAP) coordinator in the AOC and the remaining monies are passed through to counties to improve processing of dependency cases. DAP is a voluntary program for eligible families that provides access to legal and child welfare services to quickly determine the best option for a child's custody and prevent a dependency case.

### ***Domestic Relations***

The budget includes \$726,700 and 4.9 FTE Positions from the General Fund in FY 2026 for Domestic Relations. Adjustments are as follows:

#### **Statewide Adjustments**

The budget includes an increase of \$25,700 from the General Fund in FY 2026 for statewide adjustments.

The Domestic Relations line item provides coordination and technical support for groups formed to develop and review policies and programs related to domestic relations and child support.

### ***Judicial Nominations and Performance Review***

The budget includes \$641,900 and 4.6 FTE Positions from the General Fund in FY 2026 for Judicial Nominations and Performance Review. Adjustments are as follows:

#### **Statewide Adjustments**

The budget includes an increase of \$21,300 from the General Fund in FY 2026 for statewide adjustments.

This line item funds administrative costs to oversee the nominations for the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, and the Superior Court in Maricopa, Pima, Pinal, Coconino and Yavapai Counties, as well as evaluating the performance of all merit retention justices and judges. The results of the performance evaluations are provided to the voters before each retention election.

### ***Commission on Judicial Conduct***

The budget includes \$802,800 and 5 FTE Positions from the General Fund in FY 2026 for the Commission on Judicial Conduct. Adjustments are as follows:

#### **Additional Judicial Misconduct Investigator**

The budget includes an increase of \$145,000 and 1 FTE Position from the General Fund in FY 2026 for an attorney to investigate and resolve complaints against judges. There is currently a backlog of judicial misconduct complaints, and this position will help clear the backlog.

#### **Statewide Adjustments**

The budget includes an increase of \$37,000 from the General Fund in FY 2026 for statewide adjustments.

The Commission on Judicial Conduct investigates and resolves all complaints of judicial misconduct.

### ***Juvenile Monetary Sanctions Funding Backfill***

The budget includes \$250,000 from the General Fund in FY 2026 for the Juvenile Monetary Sanctions Funding Backfill line item. Adjustments are as follows:

### Continued Backfill Funding

The budget continues a one-time increase of \$250,000 from the General Fund in FY 2026 for juvenile monetary sanctions backfill funding. The FY 2024 3-year spending plan originally included one-time funding for this project in FY 2024 and continues this one-time appropriation in FY 2025 and FY 2026.

A General Appropriations Act footnote specified that the Supreme Court may only spend monies from this line item if the legislation eliminating certain court fees for juvenile is signed into law. Laws 2023, Chapter 162 was signed into law in May 2023.

Monies in this line item provide backfill funding to replenish revenues lost from the repeal of juvenile monetary sanctions. Laws 2023, Chapter 162 repeals certain court-ordered fees for juveniles, exempts juveniles from court surcharges and assessments, and prohibits courts from charging a juvenile or the juvenile's parent or guardian for the costs of court-ordered treatment, counseling, and other services.

### Courthouse Security

The budget includes \$752,100 from JCEF in FY 2026 for Courthouse Security. Adjustments are as follows:

#### Statewide Adjustments

The budget includes an increase of \$400 from JCEF in FY 2026 for statewide adjustments.

The Courthouse Security line item includes funding for training, assistance, and grants to courts to meet the minimum standards of courthouse security as adopted by the Supreme Court.

### Other Issues

### Statutory Changes

The Criminal Justice BRB makes the following statutory changes:

- As session law, establishes the Child and Family Representation Program as a pilot program for 3 years (through FY 2028) to improve the legal representation of children, parents and guardians in juvenile court proceedings. Among other provisions, the bill requires the program to report to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Governor's Office of Strategic Planning and Budgeting

by June 30 of each year on the measures taken to assess and document the effectiveness of counsel. (*See line item for further details.*)

### Court Surcharges and Assessments

A.R.S. § 41-1273 requires the JLBC Staff to submit a report to the Committee on or before December 1, 2019 and once every 7 years thereafter detailing all statutory surcharges and assessments imposed on criminal and civil fines, penalties, forfeitures, traffic violations and local ordinances. Statute requires that the report include the current amount of each surcharge and assessment authorized by statute, the amounts collected, and the purposes for which these monies were used.

According to the most recent JLBC Staff report published in August 2019, statute imposed surcharges totaling 78.0% and assessments totaling \$44.00 per fine. Additional specific statutory surcharges and assessments are not included in the report, for example, statute imposes a \$250 assessment on DUI charges.

The August 2019 report included FY 2018 collection data from the courts totaling \$75.8 million. The largest surcharge collected the Criminal Justice Enhancement Fund (CJEF) Surcharge which accounted for \$33.7 million in FY 2018, making up 44.4% of the total. CJEF collections fund a variety of programs in state and local law enforcement. The largest assessment imposed by the courts is the Probation Assessment. The Probation Assessment is \$20 on each fine or penalty and accounted for \$9.7 million in collections in FY 2018, or 12.8% of total collections. Revenue from the Probation Assessment is deposited into the Judicial Collections Enhancement Fund (JECF) to support county probation departments.