



Judicial Council of California

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REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Item No.: 26-054
For business meeting on February 20, 2026

Title

Judicial Branch Technology: Second IT Modernization Funding Allocation, Fiscal Year 2025–26

Report Type

Action Required

Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected

None

Effective Date

February 23, 2026

Recommended by

Judicial Council Technology Committee
Hon. Maria D. Hernandez, Chair
Mr. David Slayton, Vice-Chair

Date of Report

January 30, 2026

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Executive Summary

For fiscal year 2025–26, the Judicial Council Technology Committee recommends allocating IT Modernization Local Court Project funding to an additional two courts for technology projects by utilizing funds returned from a court unable to proceed with its approved initiative. The committee also recommends an allocation of IT Modernization Branchwide funding to continue hosting and maintenance of a branchwide technology solution. All recommended allocations align with the judicial branch’s strategic goals and reflect the IT Modernization program’s continued commitment to advancing court operations through innovative technology.

Recommendation

The Judicial Council Technology Committee recommends that the Judicial Council, effective February 23, 2026:

1. Allocate IT Modernization Local Court Project funding to the Superior Court of Humboldt County in the amount of \$41,273 and to the Superior Court of Nevada County in the amount of \$30,471; and

2. Allocate IT Modernization Branchwide funding to the Superior Court of Los Angeles County in the amount of \$125,000 to continue hosting services for the branchwide Automated Notification Management System (AMNS), which supports nine courts.

The proposed allocations are included in Table 1.

Relevant Previous Council Action

The Budget Act of 2020 and Budget Act of 2021¹ each appropriated \$25 million for modernization of California’s trial courts through the Court Technology Modernization Funding Grant program. On July 24, 2020, the Judicial Council directed the Judicial Council Technology Committee to make recommendations for allocating this funding for local court projects. The Technology Committee established program requirements, a court application request process, and an allocation methodology by which to evaluate the projects, identify branch technology priorities, and recommend funding. The council approved funding recommendations for fiscal year (FY) 2020–21 and FY 2021–22 to allocate funds to trial courts for local projects and partnerships in branchwide initiatives.

The Budget Act of 2022² approved ongoing appropriations for the continued modernization of California’s judicial branch—including the Judicial Council, trial courts, and appellate courts—through technology. To reflect the ongoing appropriation, the program was renamed Information Technology Modernization (IT Mod) Funding, which includes up to \$12.5 million for local court projects and \$8 million for branchwide initiatives administered by the council each year. These initiatives align with the California Courts Connected framework and the strategic and tactical plans by promoting the digital court, advancing information technology (IT) security and infrastructure, and innovating through the IT community.

Since 2022, the Judicial Council has approved direct allocations to courts from both the IT Mod Local Court Project and Branchwide funding in support of local and branchwide technology initiatives. For IT Mod Local Court Project funding, the council approved allocating \$12.5 million each year except 2024, when \$11.5 million was approved due to a statewide budget reduction. Following the restoration of funding later that fiscal year, the remaining balance was redirected to support branchwide efforts. On July 18, 2025, the Judicial Council approved the direct allocation of \$12.5 million in IT Mod Local Court Project funding to courts for FY 2025–26.

For IT Mod Branchwide funding, most funding is administered by the Judicial Council toward statewide technology programs (e.g., court website services and Zoom for Government licenses). However, in 2023 and 2024, the council approved \$818,749 and \$331,751, respectively, in direct allocations to the Superior Court of Los Angeles County for developing and maintaining branchwide technology solutions (i.e., AMNS and the Electronic Court of Appeals Records and

¹ Budget Act of 2020 (Stats. 2020, ch.7); Budget Act of 2021 (Stats. 2021, ch. 69).

² Budget Act of 2022 (Stats. 2022, ch. 43).

Transcripts system). This year, and through this report, the committee is recommending an additional direct allocation to the court in support of the AMNS program.

Analysis/Rationale

IT Mod Local Court Project funding

Since the FY 2025–26 IT Mod allocation of \$12.5 million for local court technology modernization projects, one court has returned its allocation because it was unable to proceed with its project. Given the advance notice, the Technology Committee recommends reallocating these funds to the Superior Courts of Humboldt and Nevada Counties, whose applications were delayed and therefore not included in the initial round of funding.

Application submission and project review

After the FY 2025–26 allocations were approved, the Superior Courts of Humboldt and Nevada Counties notified Judicial Council staff that they were unable to complete and submit their online Local Court Project application due to technical difficulties encountered during the submission process. After verifying submission attempts in the system and requesting completed applications from the two courts, Judicial Council staff coordinated a review by the Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC) Workstream executive sponsor and Judicial Council Information Technology leadership to ensure alignment with program requirements in anticipation of potential funding availability. The qualified projects were approved by the Technology Committee on December 11, 2025.

Funding methodology

For FY 2025–26, the Technology Committee allocated funding for local court projects using a prioritized funding model that (1) fully funded approved cyber/information security projects, (2) ensured at least one high-priority project for the small courts without a cyber/information security project, and (3) distributed the remaining funds on a pro rata basis to courts for approved projects.³ Applying this same model to the returned funds, the Superior Courts of Humboldt and Nevada Counties would have been eligible for a portion of the remaining funds under the pro rata distribution—\$41,273 and \$30,471, respectively. The committee recommends allocating the noted amounts to each respective court. This recommended Local Court Project reallocation is consistent with the FY 2025–26 funding methodology and reflects an equitable application of the established distribution model.

IT Mod Branchwide funding

The IT Mod Branchwide funding is designated for use by the Judicial Council Information Technology office to support and advance programs and projects administered by the council that deliver branchwide benefits. These initiatives align with the California Courts Connected

³ Judicial Council of Cal. Rep., *Judicial Branch Technology: IT Modernization Funding, Fiscal Year 2025–26* (July 18, 2025), jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=14317474&GUID=2005B012-0F02-4A23-8179-FF78BFE73A4B;

for trial courts, the pro rata distribution is based on the Workload Formula percentage used in trial court budget allocations.

framework, *Strategic Plan for Technology*, and *Tactical Plan for Technology*. Each year, Judicial Council Information Technology evaluates priorities and may recommend allocating a portion of this funding directly to one or more courts that partner with the council to develop and deliver innovative branchwide technology solutions.

On September 9, 2025, the Technology Committee approved the FY 2025–26 IT Mod Branchwide budget, which included funding for the AMNS project. This branchwide solution offering, hosted and maintained by the Superior Court of Los Angeles County, currently provides automated text message notifications—such as hearing reminders—to court users in nine participating courts. Automated notifications have demonstrated measurable benefits to the administration of justice, including a reduction in missed hearings. By leveraging shared, enterprise-grade solutions, this solution enables courts to adopt modern services more cost-effectively and with reduced technical burden. On December 11, 2025, the Technology Committee approved a recommendation to allocate \$125,000 of the budgeted IT Modernization Branchwide funding to the Superior Court of Los Angeles County to support this year’s hosting costs for the program.

Summary of recommended allocations

Table 1 summarizes the recommended direct allocations of IT Mod funding for both Local Court Projects and Branchwide initiatives for FY 2025–26, in addition to those approved earlier in the funding cycle.

Table 1. Summary of Additional Direct Allocations From the IT Modernization Funding Program for FY 2025–26

Type of IT Mod Funding	Superior Court	Proposed Allocation
Local Court Project Funding	Humboldt	\$41,273
Local Court Project Funding	Nevada	\$30,471
Branchwide Funding	Los Angeles	\$125,000

Policy implications

For the IT Mod Local Court Project funding, reallocating returned funding to other applicant courts is consistent with the purpose of this program’s modernization initiatives that expand access to justice. Allocating funds directly to individual courts for projects that meet the key program criteria allows them to best serve the needs of their communities while remaining aligned with the *Strategic Plan for Technology* and *Tactical Plan for Technology*.

At the same time, IT Mod Branchwide programs are designed to address common challenges faced by courts across the state. Without these branchwide solutions, individual courts would need to solve similar issues independently, often with varying levels of resources. Branchwide initiatives promote collaboration, leverage economies of scale, and enable successful local innovations to be scaled for broader benefit. The result is solutions that multiple courts can

adopt—providing a more consistent and equitable experience for the public, regardless of county.

Comments

This proposal was not circulated for public comment. However, all project approvals and funding recommendations were considered at meetings that were open to the public, and no public comments were received.

Alternatives considered

Local court project funding redistribution

An alternative approach considered was to reallocate the returned funds to courts that had already received funding, based on an assessment of additional needs. However, this would have required the development of equitable distribution criteria or prioritization frameworks, which would take time to establish and implement. Given the limited time frame to meet budgetary deadlines, this approach would likely have prevented timely redistribution and jeopardized the ability of recipient courts to meet encumbrance deadlines. Another option was to redirect the funds to a branchwide initiative administered by the Judicial Council. However, because the funding was originally designated for local court projects, the committee determined that reallocating it to two eligible courts whose applications were delayed and therefore not included in the initial distribution was the preferred course of action.

Branchwide funding direct allocation

No alternatives were considered for the recommended direct allocation of branchwide funding. The proposed approach is consistent with prior year’s support of the AMNS service and ensures continuity of a program approved as part of the IT Mod budget for FY 2025–26. Without this allocation, the Superior Court of Los Angeles County would either need to absorb the full cost of maintaining a branchwide technology solution that benefits multiple courts or face challenges in administering the program beyond its own court. Allocating funds to partnering courts involved in branchwide initiatives is essential to optimizing resources, supporting collaboration, and ensuring effective statewide deployment.

Fiscal and Operational Impacts

All allocations are from the IT Mod Funding program. By law, these funds must be expended or encumbered by the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2026). Implementation of projects is contingent on a court’s readiness, compliance with branchwide policies and standards, and ability to deploy in the specified time frame.

Attachments and Links

None