



Judicial Council of California

455 Golden Gate Avenue · San Francisco, California 94102-3688

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REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Item No.: 26-040

For business meeting on July 17, 2026

Judicial Branch Budget: Fiscal Year 2027–28 Budget Change Proposals for Supreme Court, Courts of Appeal, Superior Courts, Habeas Corpus Resource Center, Judicial Branch Facilities Program, and Judicial Council

Judicial Council Report Details

Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected

None

Effective Date

July 17, 2026

Recommended by

Judicial Branch Budget Committee
Hon. Ann C. Moorman, Chair

Date of Report

June 17, 2026

Report Type

Action Required

Contact

Zlatko Theodorovic, 916-263-1394
zlatko.theodorovic@jud.ca.gov

Executive Summary

To promote responsible and sustainable investment in the judicial branch’s core programs and services—in anticipation of the new administration taking office in January 2027 and in recognition of the state’s projected multiyear deficit—the Judicial Branch Budget Committee recommends submitting 24 budget change proposals, including one proposal deferred for submission in the spring, to the Department of Finance for consideration in the fiscal year 2027–28 Governor’s Budget.

Recommendation

The Judicial Branch Budget Committee recommends that the Judicial Council, effective July 17, 2026, approve the following fiscal year 2027–28 budget change proposals (not in priority order) for submission to the Department of Finance. Proposals 1 through 23 will be submitted in September 2026 to the Department of Finance. Proposal 24 may be submitted in spring 2027

after further assessment of financial need due to an additional \$20 million for court interpreters included in the fiscal year 2026–27 May Revision.

1. Inflationary Adjustment for Trial Courts (Consumer Price Index)—\$82.3 million General Fund;
2. Trial Courts Technology Ongoing Support—\$42.5 million General Fund;
3. Improving Branchwide Cybersecurity—\$19.1 million General Fund;
4. Appellate Court Technology Modernization and Ongoing Cost Adjustment—\$4.5 million General Fund;
5. Addressing the Impact of the Disproportionate Increase in Competency Evaluations—\$10.4 million General Fund;
6. Judicial Branch Data Analytics Modernization—\$9.8 million General Fund;
7. Habeas Corpus Resource Center Case Team Staffing—\$7.3 million General Fund;
8. Appellate Court Unarmed Security Guard – Expanded Coverage—\$707,000 General Fund;
9. Proposition 66 in Courts of Appeal—\$9.9 million General Fund;
10. Racial Justice Act Retroactivity (Assembly Bill 256) for the Appellate Courts and Trial Courts—\$22.6 million General Fund;
11. Appellate Court Facilities Staff—\$1.3 million General Fund;
12. Supreme Court and Courts of Appeal Court-Appointed Counsel Programs—\$15.7 million General Fund;
13. Trial Court Facility Modifications—\$49.3 million General Fund and State Court Facility Construction Fund;
14. Judicial Branch Facilities Maintenance and Utilities—\$30.4 million General Fund and Reimbursement Authority;
15. Trial Court Physical Security Assessment and Evaluation—\$2.7 million General Fund;
16. Judicial Branch Deferred Maintenance—\$163.2 million General Fund;
17. Courts of Appeal Facility Modification—\$1.1 million General Fund;
18. Workload Assessment for Court-Appointed Dependency Counsel—\$807,000 General Fund;
19. Funding for 26 New Judgeships—\$350–\$425 million General Fund;

20. Capital Outlay Project Reassessment and Program Support—\$14 million General Fund;
21. Capital Outlay Funding: Fiscal Year 2027–28 Through Fiscal Year 2031–32—\$1.5 billion General Fund and Public Buildings Constructions Fund;
22. Los Angeles Spring Street Courthouse – Chatsworth Buildout—\$34.8 million General Fund;
23. Statewide: Budget Packages and Advance Planning—\$500,00 General Fund; and
24. Language Access in the California Courts—cost to be determined and deferred to spring.

Relevant Previous Council Action

Under California Rules of Court, rule 10.101(b)(3), the Judicial Council is required to develop the budget of the judicial branch based on the branch’s established priorities and the needs of the courts. As part of the state’s annual budget development process, the council submits budget change proposals (BCPs) on behalf of the Supreme Court, Courts of Appeal, superior courts, Habeas Corpus Resource Center (HCRC), Judicial Branch Facilities Program, and Judicial Council to the Department of Finance for consideration. The recommendations in this report are consistent with the council’s past practice under this authority.

In July 2016, the Judicial Council established the Judicial Branch Budget Committee (Budget Committee) to assist the council in exercising its duties under rule 10.101 with respect to the judicial branch budget. The council charged the committee with reviewing and recommending BCPs for the judicial branch and ensuring that these proposals are submitted to the council in a timely manner consistent with the state’s budget development process.

Analysis/Rationale

This recommendation is consistent with the charge of the Budget Committee to assist the Judicial Council in exercising its duties under rule 10.101 with respect to the judicial branch budget.

Following are descriptions of each budget request listed above for FY 2027–28:

- 1. Inflationary Adjustment for Trial Courts (Consumer Price Index):** \$82.3 million ongoing General Fund in FY 2027–28 to address general inflationary cost increases for trial courts based on the Consumer Price Index published by the Department of Finance. This funding will help the trial courts address increased operational costs and mitigate reductions to core programs and services provided to court users and the public.
- 2. Trial Courts Technology Ongoing Support:** \$42.5 million ongoing General Fund in FY 2027–28 to offset the increased costs of technological enhancements at trial courts. The funding aims to maintain essential systems, including case management, electronic filing, public access portals, and cloud services, all of which are becoming more costly due to inflation, subscription-based pricing, and modernization needs. This proposal will also

address courts' risk system failures and security vulnerabilities, and access to justice for the public.

- 3. Improving Branchwide Cybersecurity:** \$16.4 million ongoing General Fund in FY 2027–28 and \$13.9 million in one-time funding across five years starting in FY 2027–28 to strengthen cybersecurity in the Supreme Court, Courts of Appeal, trial courts, and Judicial Council by expanding existing security programs, launching three new branchwide initiatives, providing local assistance funding to trial courts, and temporary staffing resources to support implementation of cybersecurity programs. This funding will protect sensitive court systems from increasingly sophisticated cyber threats and ensure consistent, modern security capabilities across all courts.
- 4. Appellate Court Technology Modernization and Ongoing Cost Adjustment:** \$4.2 million in ongoing General Fund in FY 2027–28 and \$300,000 annually in one-time funds from FY 2027–28 through FY 2031–32, for the modernization of the Appellate Courts Case Management System to ensure it remains reliable, secure, and capable of meeting the operational needs of the Courts of Appeal. Rising technology, equipment, and support costs, combined with aging infrastructure and limited existing resources, have created a backlog of unmet system needs and increased operational risks. This proposal will maintain system functionality, improve performance, and support equitable access to justice for court users statewide.
- 5. Addressing the Impact of the Disproportionate Increase in Competency Evaluations:** \$10.4 million General Fund in FY 2027–28 with ongoing incremental increases through FY 2031–32 to address the increased number and rising costs of required Penal Code section 1368 competency to stand trial evaluations. This funding will also support the development of resources to assist courts in identifying and maintaining qualified competency evaluators.
- 6. Judicial Branch Data Analytics Modernization:** \$9.8 million ongoing General Fund in FY 2027–28 and ongoing with annual incremental increases through FY 2030–31 to modernize branch data collection and analytics, replace aging technical infrastructure, strengthen accountability and transparency through improved analytics, and enhance service to the public.
- 7. Habeas Corpus Resource Center Case Team Staffing:** \$7.3 million ongoing General Fund in FY 2027–28 increasing to \$17.1 million ongoing by FY 2030–31 for the HCRC. In California, persons convicted and sentenced to death have a statutory right to counsel to investigate and present to the court a petition for writ of habeas corpus. The funds will be used to increase staff to address delays and reduce the backlog of unrepresented capital defendants in habeas corpus cases in the trial courts. As of December 1, 2025, 346 people are waiting for such counsel.
- 8. Appellate Court Unarmed Security Guard – Expanded Coverage:** \$707,000 General Fund in FY 2027–28 and FY 2028–29, increasing to \$900,000 ongoing General Fund in

FY 2029–30, to provide additional unarmed security guards for the evenings and weekends for the five state-owned courthouses for the Courts of Appeal.

- 9. Proposition 66 in Courts of Appeal:** \$9.6 million General Fund in FY 2027–28 and \$9.4 million ongoing General Fund in FY 2028–29 to address the workload associated with the implementation of Proposition 66, the Death Penalty Reform and Savings Act of 2016.
- 10. Racial Justice Act Retroactivity for the Appellate Courts and Trial Courts:** \$22.6 million General Fund in FY 2027–28 increasing to \$28.1 million ongoing in FY 2028–29 to support statewide appellate and trial court operations for adjudicating cases under the Racial Justice Act. Funding is for the Supreme Court, Courts of Appeal, Supreme and Appellate Court-Appointed Counsel Programs, and trial courts.
- 11. Appellate Court Facilities Staff:** \$1.3 million General Fund in FY 2027–28 increasing to \$1.6 million ongoing General Fund in FY 2028–29 to oversee building maintenance for four state-owned Courts of Appeal facilities.
- 12. Supreme Court and Courts of Appeal Court-Appointed Counsel Programs:** \$15.7 million ongoing General Fund to increase compensation for appointed counsel’s hourly appointment rate and increase annual contract funding for the Supreme Court Capital Project Office and the Appellate Project Offices. The proposal includes \$2 million for the Supreme Court Capital Court-Appointed Counsel (SCCCAC) Program to support a \$30-per-hour rate increase for appointed counsel, \$6.2 million for the Courts of Appeal Court-Appointed Counsel (COACAC) Program to support a \$15-per-hour rate increase for appointed counsel; \$765,000 for SCCCAC; and \$6.7 million for COACAC to support a 30 percent ongoing increase in annual contract funding for the Appellate Project Offices.
- 13. Trial Court Facility Modifications:** \$49.3 million General Fund through FY 2029–30 and \$47 million ongoing General Fund beginning in FY 2030–31 for essential facility repairs and improvement in trial and appellate court facilities. The funding will address critical building repairs and ensure safe, secure courthouses for the public, court staff, and judicial officers. This proposal also includes funding for the installation of water leak detection equipment and software at 160 courthouses across three fiscal years and funding to support the Computer-Aided Facilities Management system.
- 14. Judicial Branch Facilities Maintenance and Utilities:** \$24.7 million General Fund in FY 2027–28, \$23.5 million ongoing General Fund in FY 2028–29, and \$5.7 million ongoing reimbursement authority in FY 2027–28 to maintain trial and appellate court facilities at industry-standard levels and address increases in utility costs.
- 15. Trial Courts Physical Security Assessment and Evaluation:** \$2.7 million General Fund in FY 2027–28, including \$2 million one-time General Fund to assess and identify physical security deficiencies in trial court facilities statewide and \$700,000 ongoing General Fund thereafter. This funding will support security evaluations of 200 courthouses and address

risks such as inadequate barriers, outdated security features, and insufficient protection measures.

- 16. Judicial Branch Deferred Maintenance:** \$163.2 million in FY 2027–28 (\$127.1 million General Fund and \$36.1 million reimbursement authority from the State Court Facilities Construction Fund) and \$22.3 million ongoing in FY 2028–29 (\$18.7 General Fund and \$3.6 million reimbursement authority from the State Court Facilities Construction Fund). These resources will address deferred maintenance backlogs for trial courts and Courts of Appeal and support energy efficiency–optimized lifecycle replacement deferred maintenance backlog work in five courthouses, review of Facilities Services Building Management System (BMS) guidelines, and an assessment of 15 facilities as a pilot program to establish an ongoing annual BMS program.
- 17. Courts of Appeal Facility Modification:** \$1.1 million ongoing General Fund to address urgent and emergency facility modifications at Court of Appeal facilities. These resources will help to ensure that critical building systems and infrastructure can be repaired promptly to maintain safe, reliable operations and uninterrupted public access to justice.
- 18. Workload Assessment for Court-Appointed Dependency Counsel:** \$807,000 one-time General Fund in FY 2027–28 and \$217,000 one-time General Fund in FY 2028–29 to produce a comprehensive workload assessment on court-appointed juvenile dependency counsel practice in California.
- 19. Funding for 26 New Judgeships:** \$12 million increasing to \$52 million ongoing General Fund for 26 new trial court judgeships authorized in Senate Bill 75 (Stats. 2023, ch. 482), which will be phased in over three years (6 judgeships in FY 2027–28 and 10 judgeships in each year in FY 2028–29 and FY 2029–30). This proposal also requests \$350 to \$425 million one-time General Fund over three years for facilities costs to accommodate the new judgeships. This funding will ensure Californians have timely access to justice, particularly in courts with the greatest judicial need, by reducing case processing times and enhancing the quality of justice and improving service for court users.
- 20. Capital Outlay Project Reassessment and Program Support:** \$14 million General Fund in FY 2027–28 and \$4.9 million ongoing General Fund beginning in FY 2028–29 to provide court facilities planning services and oversight for facility modifications and capital projects. This proposal will develop facility condition assessments to determine capital reserves needed for infrastructure repairs and replacements over a ten-year period.
- 21. Capital Outlay Funding: FY 2027–28 through FY 2031–32:** \$1.5 billion (\$27 million General Fund and \$1.4 billion one-time Public Buildings Construction Fund) for eight capital outlay projects— four new and four continuing—as part of a broader \$4.2 billion five-year investment for 21 capital projects. This request is estimated based on projects in the Judicial Council’s latest plan for capital outlay.

22. Los Angeles Spring Street Courthouse – Chatsworth Buildout: \$34.8 million one-time General Fund in FY 2027–28 for the construction phase of the buildout of six courtrooms, support space, and upgraded holding facilities at the Chatsworth Courthouse for relocating six courtrooms and associated operations from the Spring Street Courthouse in Los Angeles County.

23. Statewide: Budget Packages and Advanced Planning: \$500,000 ongoing General Fund for statewide planning and studies. The proposed funding will allow the completion of planning studies and budget packages for capital outlay projects. The planning studies will inform and validate scope, schedule, and budget for projects by developing budget packages, assessing the number of courtrooms needed, and supporting preliminary site searches.

24. Language Access in the California Courts: Cost to be determined and deferred to spring. This proposal will address rising court interpreter costs, support the ongoing efforts of the *Strategic Plan for Language Access in the California Courts*, and ensure trial courts have adequate funding for the provision of interpreter services.

The Budget Committee did not assign priority rankings to the recommended BCPs because it had already narrowed the list of the highest-priority request given in the state’s fiscal condition. This approach provides greater flexibility to the Chief Justice and the Administrative Director in their budget advocacy efforts to support the core programs and services of the judicial branch.

Policy implications

An essential part of the BCP process involves the identification and assessment of funding needs within the judicial branch. Consistent with that process, the following advisory bodies and branch entities submitted proposals to the Budget Committee for consideration: Supreme Court, Administrative Presiding Justices Advisory Committee, Court Facilities Advisory Committee, Court Security Advisory Committee, Data Analytics Advisory Committee, Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee, Habeas Corpus Resource Center, Technology Committee, Litigation Management Committee, Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee, and Trial Court Facility Modification Advisory Committee.

During the FY 2027–28 BCP review process, additional funding needs within the judicial branch were identified but not recommended for submission given the state’s projected budget deficit. As these proposals have merit and warrant further consideration, the Budget Committee deferred them to a future budget cycle.

Comments

This proposal was not circulated for public comment. However, these BCPs were considered at meetings that were open to the public, and no public comments were received.

Alternatives considered

The Budget Committee was presented with 33 budget change concepts representing funding requests from various judicial branch advisory committees and other submitting entities. The

Budget Committee had the discretion to recommend any number of these requests—in any priority order—for development into BCPs based on the priorities of the judicial branch.

The list of 24 BCPs—including one proposal deferred to the spring—reflects the committee’s actions following a comprehensive review of all submissions, supporting materials, FY 2026–27 budget details, and the projected budget deficit. This recommended package represents the highest-priority proposals for the judicial branch to submit to the new administration, while also acknowledging the constraints created by the state’s fiscal condition.

Fiscal and Operational Impacts

The fiscal and operational impacts of approving the BCPs for submission to the Department of Finance for consideration in the FY 2027–28 Governor’s Budget are minimal. To the extent any of the proposals are approved in the final enacted FY 2027–28 budget, this may result in additional resources and corresponding workload to the branch.

Attachments and Links

None.