



JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA

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REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Item No.: 23-054

For business meeting on: January 20, 2023

Title

Judicial Branch Technology: Branchwide IT
Project Allocation Update Fiscal Year 2022–
23

Agenda Item Type

Action Required

Effective Date

January 20, 2023

Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected

None

Date of Report

January 6, 2023

Recommended by

Judicial Council staff
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Executive Summary

The Budget Act of 2022 appropriated funding for judicial branch technology modernization, of which \$8 million was allocated to the Judicial Council for branchwide modernization initiatives. The Judicial Council Information Technology office recommends allocating a portion of its funding directly to a trial court that is partnering with the Judicial Council to develop branchwide projects that align with the judicial branch's technology goals, thereby expanding the use of technology to best meet branchwide needs.

Recommendation

The Judicial Council Information Technology staff recommend that the Judicial Council, effective January 20, 2023, approve the proposed allocation of \$818,749 from the Judicial Council to the Superior Court of Los Angeles County for continuing development of branchwide automated solution services (i.e., software automating Electronic Courts of Appeal Records and Transcripts; and automating messaging and notification services).

Relevant Previous Council Action

The Budget Act of 2020 included a two-year \$25 million appropriation for modernization of California's trial courts through technology, the Court Technology Modernization Funding program. On July 24, 2020, the council directed the Technology Committee to make recommendations for allocating this funding to local court projects. At meetings in January, March, and October 2021, the council approved funding recommendations for fiscal year (FY) 2020–21 and FY 2021–22 to allocate funds to trial courts for local projects, digitization of paper records, and partnerships in branchwide initiatives.

The Budget Act of 2022 provided an ongoing appropriation of funding for the continued modernization of California's judicial branch, including the judicial council, trial and appellate courts through technology. To reflect the ongoing appropriation of funding, the program name was changed to IT Modernization Fund. At the Judicial Council meeting on September 20, 2022, the council approved \$12.5 million in direct allocations to courts for local projects from the IT Modernization Fund for FY 2022–23.

Analysis/Rationale

In FY 2022–23, \$8 million of the IT Modernization Fund is allocated to the Judicial Council to support and continue developing Judicial Council programs with branchwide benefits in alignment with the California Courts Connected framework. These branchwide technology programs further the goals of the *Strategic Plan for Technology 2019–2022* and the *Tactical Plan for Technology 2021–2022* by promoting the digital court, advancing IT security and infrastructure, and innovating through the IT community.

Collaboration is a vital component in the success of branchwide initiatives. The collaboration between the Judicial Council and courts on these branchwide programs brings together resources to create innovative solutions that meet diverse court needs while providing consistent experiences for the public and justice system partners across the state.

Proposed allocation from branchwide program funding

Some branchwide programs rely on partnerships with courts to develop or deliver solutions that are shared across the branch, and for which the partnering court needs funding support to complete development or delivery of the solution. The branchwide initiatives funding of the IT Modernization Fund may be used for this purpose. Each year, Judicial Council staff may propose a portion of this funding be allocated to one or more courts that are directly contributing to the development and delivery of branchwide programs. The annual funding and allocation of Judicial Council branchwide modernization funds are reviewed by Judicial Council Information Technology leadership, evaluating required technology upgrades to maintain modern and secure systems to ensure alignment with Judicial Council and judicial branch technology priorities, as well as the *Strategic Plan for Technology* and *Tactical Plan for Technology*.

For FY 2022–23, staff proposes \$818,749 of the branchwide initiatives funding be allocated to the Superior Court of Los Angeles County in support of two branchwide automated services solutions:

1. *Electronic Courts of Appeal Records and Transcripts (Transcript Assembly Service)*

Last fiscal year (FY 2021–22), the Judicial Council allocated \$500,000 to the Superior Court of Los Angeles County to develop a replacement for the Transcript Assembly Program (TAP), which was terminating its program in August 2022. The result was the development of the next generation of TAP, the Electronic Courts of Appeals Records and Transcripts (eCART) program. This year, staff recommends continued funding to the Superior Court of Los Angeles County by allocating an additional \$500,000 of the branchwide program funding to support the ongoing development and delivery of enhancements to eCART.

eCART is a software program that automates the trial court’s labor-intensive process of compiling a clerk’s transcript and produces an electronic record that can be securely transmitted to the appellate court. The Superior Court of Los Angeles County leads the development effort, and the software has been deployed in 35 courts as of October 2022. The additional allocation this year will provide for improvements to navigation and usability, document management, and access control features for use by judicial officers and court staff.

2. *Automated Messaging and Notification Solutions (AMNS)*

Last fiscal year (FY 2021–22), the Judicial Council allocated \$100,000 to the Superior Court of Los Angeles County to develop and enable a branchwide automated notification and messaging system for use by judicial branch entities. The development resulted in two automated message and notification solutions for the courts to adopt: Hearing Reminder Services, which enables courts to automatically send hearing reminders to case participants and the public based on case-related subscriptions; and CourtNotify, which enables courts to provide general reminders to specific groups of recipients based on business needs.

This funding cycle, staff recommends allocating \$318,749 of the branchwide funding to the Superior Court of Los Angeles County to continue its development, hosting, deployment, and support of these solutions, including the implementation of Hearing Reminder Services and CourtNotify solutions to an estimated 4 and 16 additional courts respectively. The AMNS program enables courts to use these shared, enterprise-grade solutions more cost-effectively and with less technical overhead.

Additional uses of branchwide program funding

Beyond these two automated services programs, this year’s branchwide program funds will support eight additional branchwide efforts led by Judicial Council’s Information Technology office; including the Virtual Customer Service Center, Voice to Text Translation App, standard Website templates and SAP upgrades. These initiatives are in various stages of development, piloting, and expansion by the Judicial Council and currently do not require further allocations to courts.

Policy implications

Branchwide programs provide solutions to common challenges and issues experienced by courts across the branch. Without development of branchwide solutions, courts would individually need to attempt to solve common issues, with access to varying levels of resources. Their efforts would likely result in disparate solutions across the branch and unequal experiences between courts, court users, and justice partners.

Collaborations between courts and the Judicial Council allow for the scaling up of individual court innovations for the benefit of all courts. Results are branchwide solutions that courts can opt into and that provide a uniform experience for the public regardless of which county.

Comments

This proposal was not circulated for public comment.

Alternatives considered

The Judicial Council IT office considered not funding the continued development work for the eCART and AMNS branchwide programs; however, staff determined that ceasing funding would hinder the implementation of the projects across the branch. Allocation of funds to partnering courts in branchwide programs is important in optimizing resources for deployment and collaboration.

Fiscal and Operational Impacts

All allocations are funded from the branchwide IT Modernization Fund appropriation. Funds must be expended or encumbered by the end of the fiscal year. The allocation does not affect any other funding source.

Attachments and Links

None