Judicial Council of California

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REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Item No.: 26-094

For business meeting on July 17, 2026

Allocations and Reimbursements to Trial Courts: Funding for Court Reporters in Family Law and Civil Law Case Types for Fiscal Year 2026–27

Judicial Council Report Details

Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected
None

Recommended by
Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee
Hon. Jonathan B. Conklin, Chair
Ms. Rebecca Fleming, Vice-Chair

Report Type
Action Required

Effective Date
July 17, 2026

Date of Report
June 22, 2026

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Executive Summary

Senate Bill 170 (Stats. 2021, ch. 240), which amended the Budget Act of 2021, provided $30 million in ongoing General Fund support for trial courts to increase the number of court reporters in family law and civil cases. The budget language in the Budget Act of 2022 and subsequent years expanded the allowable uses for this funding. However, these changes do not affect how the funds are distributed to courts under the council-approved allocation methodology. The Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee recommends approving the allocation of the ongoing $30 million to all trial courts, as specified, for fiscal year 2026–27.

Recommendation

The Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee recommends that the Judicial Council, effective July 17, 2026:

1. Approve $30 million for court reporters on a proportional basis using the council-approved methodology with assessed judicial need data based on the 2022 Judicial Needs Assessment as outlined in Attachment A; and

2. Approve and direct council staff to conduct a midyear survey in fiscal year 2026–27 and authorize a corresponding reallocation process to ensure maximum use of available funds to support court reporters in family law and civil case types.

These recommendations were presented to the Judicial Branch Budget Committee on April 23, 2026, and approved for consideration by the Judicial Council.

Relevant Previous Council Action

The Judicial Council approved the allocation methodology for the first year of this funding in fiscal year (FY) 2021–22 at its meeting on January 21, 2022, and directed council staff to update the allocation methodology used for this ongoing funding, accounting for the most recent data available each year thereafter. The council subsequently approved the allocations for FY 2023–24 at its meeting on July 21, 2023, based on the same allocation methodology but with updated data. The council approved the FY 2024–25 allocations for $20 million at its meeting on July 12, 2024, and directed staff to survey the courts for a one-time redistribution of unspent funds in FY 2024–25 to ensure the full appropriation is maximized.

The council subsequently approved an additional allocation of $10 million for FY 2024–25 at its meeting on September 20, 2024, for a total of $30 million in ongoing funding for court reporters, completing the distribution of court reporter funding for FY 2024–25 to the trial courts. At its meeting on February 21, 2025, the council approved a midyear reallocation of $820,000 of projected unspent court reporter funding for FY 2024–25, which was available for the one-time redistribution and allocated in proportion to the total amount of funding requested by courts. The council approved the ongoing $30 million for FY 2025–26 court reporter allocations at its meeting on July 18, 2025.

Analysis/Rationale

In FY 2021–22, the Funding Methodology Subcommittee of the Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee (TCBAC) established the Ad Hoc Court Reporter Funding Subcommittee, consisting of members from the TCBAC, to develop an allocation methodology recommendation for the first year of funding. The Judicial Council approved this recommendation at its January 21, 2022, business meeting,[1] and directed Judicial Council staff to update the allocation methodology on an ongoing basis using the most recent data available.

The council-approved allocation methodology was developed based on the 2020 Judicial Needs Assessment, which was the most current study at the time. Judicial workload is measured by a

[1] Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Allocations and Reimbursements to Trial Courts: SB 170 Funding for Court Reporters in Family Law and Civil Law Case Types* (Dec. 15, 2021).

court's assessed judicial need (AJN) and was identified as the best metric for the allocation methodology because of the parallel workload drivers between judgeships and court reporters. In addition, the AJN data includes separate noncriminal and criminal judicial workload metrics by court. Using the noncriminal judicial need, consistent with the requirements in the budget language, the proposed methodology for allocating the funds to the trial courts is as follows:

1. Identify the proportion of judicial workload, as measured by the AJN, for noncriminal need by court.
2. Apply a funding floor of $51,000 to all courts. This would result in 16 courts receiving a combined total of $816,000, which is higher than what they would receive under a purely proportional allocation. This amount ($51,000) is approximately equivalent to 0.25 of one full-time court reporter, based on the average salary and benefits from the Schedule 7A for FY 2025–26.
3. After applying the funding floor amount to 16 courts, allocate the remaining $29.2 million proportionally to all other courts based on their noncriminal judicial need.
4. Allocate the funding in one lump sum upon council approval.

The allocations for FY 2026–27 are based on the AJN data from the current 2022 Judicial Needs Assessment.[2] Additionally, Schedule 7A data for FY 2025–26, the most current dataset available, is used to calculate the funding floor amounts. The Schedule 7A is an annual, standardized report that includes authorized positions, budgeted salaries and benefits for each position, and full-time equivalent counts for each classification. This report is used to develop each court's annual operating budget.

The Judicial Needs Assessment is anticipated to be updated in FY 2026–27, and the updated data will be incorporated into the allocations for the following fiscal year.

Annual reconciliation process

Because this funding is intended solely to cover the costs associated with increasing the number of court reporters, any unspent funds are required to revert to the General Fund each fiscal year. Judicial Council staff have developed a reconciliation process to pull back any remaining funds not used by the end of the year.

Policy implications

No policy implications are associated with this report.

Comments

Public comments were not solicited for this proposal because the recommendation is within the Judicial Council's purview to approve without circulation. The proposal was reviewed at public advisory body meetings, but no comments were submitted prior to the meetings.

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[2] Judicial Council of Cal., Workload Assessment Advisory Com. Rep. (now Data Analytics Advisory Committee), *The Need for New Judgeships in the Superior Courts: 2022 Update of the Judicial Needs Assessment* (Nov. 2022).

Alternatives considered

The recommended allocations are based on the methodology approved by the council in January 2022. The committee did not consider modifying the previously approved allocation methodology other than updating the data used.

Fiscal and Operational Impacts

The recommended allocation methodology would provide courts with funding to increase the number of court reporters, as intended by the budget language.

Attachments and Links

1. Attachment A: Court Reporter Allocations for FY 2026–27

Attachment A

Court Reporter Allocations for FY 2026–27

Court	Noncriminal AJN[1]	AJN Proportion for Nonfloor[2] Courts	Allocation of Nonfloor Funding	Final Allocation
Alameda	36.8	3.49%	$ 1,018,631	$ 1,018,631
Alpine	0.1		$ -	$ 51,000
Amador	1.1		$ -	$ 51,000
Butte	6.1	0.57%	$ 167,710	$ 167,710
Calaveras	1.3		$ -	$ 51,000
Colusa	0.5		$ -	$ 51,000
Contra Costa	23.2	2.20%	$ 642,361	$ 642,361
Del Norte	1.2		$ -	$ 51,000
El Dorado	4.2	0.40%	$ 116,847	$ 116,847
Fresno	28.4	2.70%	$ 786,539	$ 786,539
Glenn	0.8		$ -	$ 51,000
Humboldt	4.5	0.43%	$ 124,505	$ 124,505
Imperial	4.4	0.42%	$ 122,240	$ 122,240
Inyo	0.5		$ -	$ 51,000
Kern	24.9	2.36%	$ 687,603	$ 687,603
Kings	4.5	0.42%	$ 123,078	$ 123,078
Lake	2.4	0.22%	$ 65,595	$ 65,595
Lassen	0.8		$ -	$ 51,000
Los Angeles	341.3	32.34%	$ 9,438,063	$ 9,438,063
Madera	6.0	0.56%	$ 164,736	$ 164,736
Marin	5.1	0.48%	$ 140,920	$ 140,920
Mariposa	0.4		$ -	$ 51,000
Mendocino	2.7	0.25%	$ 73,731	$ 73,731
Merced	7.3	0.69%	$ 201,079	$ 201,079
Modoc	0.4		$ -	$ 51,000
Mono	0.3		$ -	$ 51,000
Monterey	9.4	0.89%	$ 259,822	$ 259,822
Napa	3.6	0.34%	$ 99,717	$ 99,717
Nevada	2.6	0.24%	$ 71,433	$ 71,433
Orange	77.0	7.30%	$ 2,130,053	$ 2,130,053
Placer	9.3	0.89%	$ 258,362	$ 258,362
Plumas	0.6		$ -	$ 51,000
Riverside	62.8	5.95%	$ 1,735,560	$ 1,735,560
Sacramento	43.7	4.14%	$ 1,208,398	$ 1,208,398
San Benito	1.4		$ -	$ 51,000
San Bernardino	69.2	6.56%	$ 1,914,316	$ 1,914,316
San Diego	77.9	7.38%	$ 2,152,935	$ 2,152,935
San Francisco	25.1	2.38%	$ 694,629	$ 694,629
San Joaquin	19.9	1.89%	$ 550,940	$ 550,940
San Luis Obispo	6.0	0.57%	$ 165,158	$ 165,158
San Mateo	13.5	1.28%	$ 372,113	$ 372,113
Santa Barbara	9.2	0.87%	$ 254,921	$ 254,921

Court Reporter Allocations for FY 2026–27

Court	Noncriminal AJN[1]	AJN Proportion for Nonfloor[2] Courts	Allocation of Nonfloor Funding	Final Allocation
Santa Clara	30.9	2.93%	$ 855,606	$ 855,606
Santa Cruz	5.2	0.49%	$ 144,302	$ 144,302
Shasta	6.2	0.59%	$ 171,407	$ 171,407
Sierra	0.1		$ -	$ 51,000
Siskiyou	1.5		$ -	$ 51,000
Solano	11.0	1.04%	$ 303,066	$ 303,066
Sonoma	10.8	1.03%	$ 299,223	$ 299,223
Stanislaus	14.1	1.33%	$ 389,077	$ 389,077
Sutter	3.0	0.28%	$ 82,404	$ 82,404
Tehama	2.3	0.22%	$ 63,954	$ 63,954
Trinity	0.7		$ -	$ 51,000
Tulare	13.3	1.26%	$ 367,135	$ 367,135
Tuolumne	1.9	0.18%	$ 53,495	$ 53,495
Ventura	18.0	1.70%	$ 497,094	$ 497,094
Yolo	5.3	0.50%	$ 146,624	$ 146,624
Yuba	2.5	0.24%	$ 68,618	$ 68,618
Total	**1,067.2**	**100.00%**		**$ 30,000,000**

[1] Assessed judicial need (AJN) based on the updated 2022 Judicial Needs Assessment data.

[2] Funding Floor of $51,000 based on FY 2025–26 Schedule 7A data, cost inclusive of salaries and benefits.

Noncriminal case types: Civil, Family, Juvenile, Probate, Mental Health

Criminal case types: Felony, Misdemeanor, Infraction