

Agency Name:	Judicial Department		
Agency Code:	B040	Section:	57



Fiscal Year FY 2026-2027

Agency Budget Plan

FORM A - BUDGET PLAN SUMMARY

**OPERATING
REQUESTS
(FORM B1)**

For FY 2026-2027, my agency is (mark “X”):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Requesting General Fund Appropriations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting Federal/Other Authorization.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any changes.

**NON-RECURRING
REQUESTS
(FORM B2)**

For FY 2026-2027, my agency is (mark “X”):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Requesting Non-Recurring Appropriations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting Non-Recurring Federal/Other Authorization.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any changes.

**CAPITAL
REQUESTS
(FORM C)**

For FY 2026-2027, my agency is (mark “X”):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting funding for Capital Projects.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any changes.

**PROVISOS
(FORM D)**

For FY 2026-2027, my agency is (mark “X”):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Requesting a new proviso and/or substantive changes to existing provisos.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Only requesting technical proviso changes (such as date references).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any proviso changes.

Please identify your agency's preferred contacts for this year's budget process.

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
PRIMARY CONTACT:	Paul Magargle	(803) 734-0642	pmgargle@sccourts.org
SECONDARY CONTACT:	Carla Spires	(803) 734-0932	cspires@sccourts.org

I have reviewed and approved the enclosed FY 2026-2027 Agency Budget Plan, which is complete and accurate to the extent of my knowledge.

	<u>Agency Director</u>	<u>Board or Commission Chair</u>
SIGN/DATE:		
TYPE/PRINT NAME:		

This form must be signed by the agency head – not a delegate.

Agency Name:	<u>Judicial Department</u>	
Agency Code:	B040	
Section:	57	

BUDGET REQUESTS			FUNDING					FTES				
Priority	Request Type	Request Title	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total
1	B1 - Recurring	Family Court Judges	675,000	0	0	0	675,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	B1 - Recurring	Circuit Court Judges and Staff	3,000,000	0	0	0	3,000,000	16.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	16.00
3	B2 - Non-Recurring	Case Management System Modernization	20,000,000	0	0	0	20,000,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4	B2 - Non-Recurring	Rural County Courthouse Stabilization Fund	19,750,000	0	0	0	19,750,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
5	B1 - Recurring	Court Staff Interpreters and Bar Exam Interim Positions	0	0	0	0	0	5.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	6.00
TOTALS			43,425,000	0	0	0	43,425,000	21.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	22.00

Agency Name:	Judicial Department
Agency Code:	8040

FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	1
<i>Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.</i>	
TITLE	Family Court Judges
<i>Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.</i>	
AMOUNT	General: \$675,000 Federal: \$0 Other: \$0 Total: \$675,000
<i>What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.</i>	
NEW POSITIONS	0.00
<i>Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.</i>	
FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	Mark “X” for all that apply: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines <input type="checkbox"/> Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program <input type="checkbox"/> Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas <input type="checkbox"/> Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program <input type="checkbox"/> Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IT Technology/Security related <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HR/Personnel Related <input type="checkbox"/> Consulted DTO during development <input type="checkbox"/> Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #
STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark “X” for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective: <input type="checkbox"/> Education, Training, and Human Development <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy and Safe Families <input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security <input type="checkbox"/> Public Infrastructure and Economic Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government and Citizens
ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	NA
<i>What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency’s accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?</i>	

What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

The Chief Justice believes both the circuit and family courts play an equal and vital role in the administration of justice in South Carolina. By statute, however, family court judges are paid less than circuit court judges. Specifically, family court judges are paid 92.5% of the salary of an associate Supreme Court Justice's salary, while circuit court judges are paid 95% of an associate Supreme Court Justice's salary. This disparity in salary, although not tremendous, is based on the archaic notion that family court is somehow an inferior court, or that issues involving families and children are somehow less important than civil or criminal matters. Both family and circuit court orders are of critical importance to our justice system. From both family and circuit courts, appeals are made to the court of appeals and, therefore, both courts are equal tribunals.

Further, as society has become more complex, so too have the issues involving families and youth, increasing the size and complexity of the family court docket. Over time, the family court's jurisdiction over incarcerated and troubled youth has expanded, its role in abuse and neglect proceedings has increased, as too have the number of complex divorce proceedings.

Cases involving families and children have a direct and profound impact on South Carolina beyond what happens in the courtroom. The State of South Carolina must be able recruit talented attorneys who have experience in family law who do not view a family court judgeship as a stepping stone to a circuit court judgeship, but as an equally important position. It is past time to equalize the salary of family and circuit court judges.

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

Agency Name:	Judicial Department	
Agency Code:	BO40	Section: 57

FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	2
<i>Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.</i>	
TITLE	Circuit Court Judges and Staff
<i>Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.</i>	
AMOUNT	General: \$3,000,000 Federal: \$0 Other: \$0 Total: \$3,000,000
<i>What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.</i>	
NEW POSITIONS	16.00
<i>Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.</i>	
FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	Mark “X” for all that apply: <input type="checkbox"/> Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines <input type="checkbox"/> Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program <input type="checkbox"/> Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas <input type="checkbox"/> Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program <input type="checkbox"/> Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program <input type="checkbox"/> IT Technology/Security related <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HR/Personnel Related <input type="checkbox"/> Consulted DTO during development <input type="checkbox"/> Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #
STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark “X” for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective: <input type="checkbox"/> Education, Training, and Human Development <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy and Safe Families <input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security <input type="checkbox"/> Public Infrastructure and Economic Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government and Citizens
ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	NA
<i>What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency’s accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?</i>	

What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?

"Infrastructure" is very much a focus of the Judicial Branch's ability to provide a court system to all South Carolinians. South Carolina's population was approximately 4 million in 2000. Recent estimates show the state population in excess of 5.5 million. Future projections anticipate even greater growth. Five counties-Horry, Berkeley, Jasper, Lancaster, and Spartanburg-are expected to see their populations increase by 49% or more over the next 15 to 20 years. Other counties are, of course, also growing. The number of judges has not kept up with the increase in population and number of cases filed. In 2000, South Carolina had 1.15 circuit judges per 100,000 citizens; today, we have 0.97 circuit judges per 100,000. In 2000, South Carolina had 1.29 family court judges per 100,000 citizens; today, we have 1.11 family court judges per 100,000.

As South Carolina continues to grow, the Branch will continue to assess and seek more judgeships as needed. In the context of this growth SCJB asks for four additional circuit court judges.

The Fifteen Judicial Circuit is comprised of Horry and Georgetown counties. From 2023-2024, the Myrtle Beach metro area was ranked third in the US in terms of population growth. Although Georgetown is steadily growing, Horry is the fastest growing county in South Carolina. The Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office shows that from 2020 to 2030, Horry is expected to have the highest population growth of all South Carolina counties. By 2030, it will be the second most populous county (Greenville being the first). For the last five years, Horry has had the most common pleas filings and the third most general sessions filings in the state. Because of this rapid growth, the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit needs another judicial seat to adjudicate civil and criminal cases. The Fifteenth Circuit is in need of an additional resident circuit judge.

The Sixth Judicial Circuit is comprised of Fairfield, Chester, and Lancaster counties. Every circuit in South Carolina has at least two resident circuit judges-except the Sixth Circuit, which has only one resident circuit judge. Every circuit needs at least two resident circuit judges. Multiple judges are needed for assisting with search warrants, handling routine orders that must be regularly reviewed, signed and filed. Having only one resident judge in a circuit is ill-advised. Moreover, the Sixth Circuit is growing, largely fueled by its proximity to Charlotte and growth in Lancaster. The Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office shows that the Charlotte metro area (which includes Lancaster, Chester, and York) was ranked ninth in the US in terms of growth from 2020-21. Further, from 2020 to 2030, Lancaster is predicted to be the ninth largest county in the state in terms of population growth. Currently, the Sixth Judicial Circuit only has one judicial seat. Because of the growth in this region, as well as the need for at least two resident circuit judges in every circuit, a second resident circuit judge is needed in the Sixth Circuit.

The SCJB seeks another judgeship for the Fifth Judicial Circuit, with the specific seat to be allocated to Kershaw County. Since 2000, both Richland and Kershaw counties have seen a marked increase in population. Since 2000, Richland has seen its population increase by over 100,000. During that same period, Kershaw has seen its population increase from approximately 52,000 to almost 75,000 (an increase of about 33%). Kershaw is ranked as the sixth fastest growing county in the State. The resources committed to the Fifth Judicial Circuit by the legal system have been primarily assigned to Richland County. All the Fifth Circuit judges reside in Richland County-none reside in Kershaw County. The lack of a resident judge in Kershaw County has negatively impacted the justice system in Kershaw County, especially as it relates to the criminal court backlog. Meanwhile, as Kershaw has grown, resource allocation has not kept pace. In particular, as noted, the general sessions docket has grown and with it, the backlog. Because of the troubling criminal court backlog in Kershaw County, the Chief Justice required the chief administrative judge for general sessions of the Fifth Circuit

(who would be typically assigned to Richland County) to focus on the criminal case backlog in Kershaw County. With a judge regularly addressing the Kershaw backlog, substantial progress has been made. In fact, in 2024, Kershaw disposed of more general sessions cases than were filed. However, more resources are needed, including having a judge allocated to Kershaw to prioritize the needs of its citizens. In years past, Kershaw disposed of significantly fewer general sessions cases than were filed resulting in a backlog that will take time, resources, and commitment to overcome. Stunningly, over 20% of general session cases in Kershaw have been pending for three to five years. A judge specifically dedicated to Kershaw is needed to oversee the management of the docket, reduce the backlog, and to ensure the timely disposition of cases. The SCJB is requesting an additional resident circuit judge in the Fifth Circuit, specifically assigned to Kershaw County.

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

Lastly, the SCJB requests another judgeship for the Tenth Judicial Circuit. The Tenth Judicial Circuit includes Anderson and Oconee Counties. For many years, the Tenth Judicial Circuit had three residential judges with one being at-large. Once the at-large judge retired, the seat went to another part of the state. Given the longstanding need for three judges in the circuit, coupled with recent population growth and the increase in case filings in Anderson (along the 1-85 corridor), adding a resident judge and returning to three circuit judges in the 10th circuit is requested.

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

Agency Name:	Judicial Department
Agency Code:	8040

57

FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	5
<i>Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.</i>	
TITLE	Court Staff Interpreters and Bar Exam Interim Positions
<i>Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.</i>	
AMOUNT	General: \$0 Federal: \$0 Other: \$0 Total: \$0
<i>What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.</i>	
NEW POSITIONS	6.00
<i>Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.</i>	
FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	Mark “X” for all that apply: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines <input type="checkbox"/> Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program <input type="checkbox"/> Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas <input type="checkbox"/> Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program <input type="checkbox"/> Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program <input type="checkbox"/> IT Technology/Security related <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HR/Personnel Related <input type="checkbox"/> Consulted DTO during development <input type="checkbox"/> Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #
STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark “X” for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective: <input type="checkbox"/> Education, Training, and Human Development <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy and Safe Families <input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security <input type="checkbox"/> Public Infrastructure and Economic Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government and Citizens
ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	NA
<i>What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency’s accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?</i>	

What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

The Judicial Branch is requesting that five (5) interim State FTE positions for staff court interpreters and one (1) interim other funded FTE for a Bar Admissions Coordinator be made permanent.

In FY2025, the Branch requested five (5) FTE positions and general appropriations to support the interpreter program. General appropriations were awarded but not the coinciding FTEs.

The Judicial Branch is requesting a permanent other funded FTE be created for a Bar Admissions Coordinator. This position will be funded with earmarked revenue received from Bar Admissions. No additional appropriation or authorization is requested.

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

Agency Name:	Judicial Department	
Agency Code:	B040	Section: 57

FORM B2 – NON-RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	3																										
<i>Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.</i>																											
TITLE	Case Management System Modernization																										
<i>Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.</i>																											
AMOUNT	\$20,000,000																										
<i>What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.</i>																											
FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	<p>Mark “X” for all that apply:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 15%; text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="width: 85%; padding: 2px;">Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="padding: 2px;">Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="padding: 2px;">Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="padding: 2px;">Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="padding: 2px;">Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="padding: 2px;">Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="padding: 2px;">Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td><td style="padding: 2px;">IT Technology/Security related</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="padding: 2px;">Consulted DTO during development</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="padding: 2px;">HR/Personnel Related</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td><td style="padding: 2px;">Request for Non-Recurring Appropriations</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="padding: 2px;">Request for Federal/Other Authorization to spend existing funding</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="padding: 2px;">Related to a Recurring request – If so, Priority #</td></tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	IT Technology/Security related	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consulted DTO during development	<input type="checkbox"/>	HR/Personnel Related	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Request for Non-Recurring Appropriations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Federal/Other Authorization to spend existing funding	<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to a Recurring request – If so, Priority #
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STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	<p>Mark “X” for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 15%; text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="width: 85%; padding: 2px;">Education, Training, and Human Development</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="padding: 2px;">Healthy and Safe Families</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="padding: 2px;">Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td style="padding: 2px;">Public Infrastructure and Economic Development</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td><td style="padding: 2px;">Government and Citizens</td></tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education, Training, and Human Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	Healthy and Safe Families	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Government and Citizens																
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Government and Citizens																										
ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	NA																										
<i>What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency’s accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?</i>																											
RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS	Vendors and Contractors																										
<i>What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon</i>																											

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

As the population of South Carolina expands, the trial courts must increasingly rely on automation to process and resolve cases in a timely fashion. A part of that automation is procuring and developing modern, efficient and effective case management systems.

The current trial court case management system used by the Circuit Courts, the Magistrate courts, and many of the Municipal Courts, which was built by the Judicial Branch in the early 2000's, must be replaced with a modern, web-based system. The Branch has developed a three-phase structured plan for the modernization of the current case management system. Phase one is the development of a strategic plan and roadmap for the modernization effort, phase two is the hiring of a dedicated third-party project manager to manage the various contractors, cost, and scope of the project, and phase three is the hiring of highly specialized vendors to implement the modernization plan. This three-phased approach will ensure that the Branch has a clearly defined project scope, maintains a rigorous schedule and budget oversight, and that the final outcomes fully meet the needs of the South Carolina Judicial System. (The SCJB would welcome the opportunity to share a detailed presentation of the three-plan to the Governor and/or any Legislator.)

The Branch has hired the firm Berry, Dunn, McNeil & Parker, LLC (BerryDunn) – a national consulting firm with deep court-system expertise - to lead the strategic-planning effort. In collaboration with BerryDunn, we have confirmed that our estimated overall need of \$100 million, used to determine last year's budget request of \$45 million to modernize the trial court case management system, was accurate.

Last year, while \$45 million non-recurring was requested, \$25 million was awarded. The Branch now seeks the remaining \$20 million needed to fulfill our request from last year, as we move forward on our case management system modernization project.

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

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FORM B2 – NON-RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	4																										
<i>Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.</i>																											
TITLE	Rural County Courthouse Stabilization Fund																										
<i>Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.</i>																											
AMOUNT	\$19,750,000																										
<i>What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2026-2027? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.</i>																											
FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	<p>Mark “X” for all that apply:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 15px; text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 15px; text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 15px; text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 15px; text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 15px; text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 15px; text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 15px; text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 15px; text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>IT Technology/Security related</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 15px; text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Consulted DTO during development</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 15px; text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>HR/Personnel Related</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 15px; text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td><td>Request for Non-Recurring Appropriations</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 15px; text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Request for Federal/Other Authorization to spend existing funding</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 15px; text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Related to a Recurring request – If so, Priority #</td></tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program	<input type="checkbox"/>	IT Technology/Security related	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consulted DTO during development	<input type="checkbox"/>	HR/Personnel Related	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Request for Non-Recurring Appropriations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Federal/Other Authorization to spend existing funding	<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to a Recurring request – If so, Priority #
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STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	<p>Mark “X” for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 15px; text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Education, Training, and Human Development</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 15px; text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Healthy and Safe Families</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 15px; text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td><td>Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 15px; text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Public Infrastructure and Economic Development</td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 15px; text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Government and Citizens</td></tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education, Training, and Human Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	Healthy and Safe Families	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	Government and Citizens																
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ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	NA																										
<i>What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency’s accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?</i>																											
RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS	<p>The Rural County Courthouse Stabilization Fund is a grant program designed to assist rural counties whose courthouses need substantial repairs to ensure that the citizenry has access to an operational, usable, and secure courthouse. Each applicant must be a county with a population under 35,000, according to 2020 Census data.</p>																										
<i>What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon</i>																											

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

The mission of the SCJB is to provide a fair and efficient forum for the just resolution of civil, family, and criminal matters. The South Carolina Constitution, as well as state law, ensures public access to courts. To fulfill this mandate, each county in South Carolina has its own public courthouse where judges preside over civil, criminal, and family court cases. A safe, functional courthouse to conduct judicial proceedings is a core function of state government, and each South Carolinian has a fundamental right to access the court system, regardless of whether the county he or she resides in is rural or urban.

The Rural County Courthouse Stabilization Fund would provide financial assistance to rural counties for the renovation of county courthouses that are not operational or are at imminent risk of not becoming operational or secure for the public. The intended recipients of the funds are counties where dire circumstances exist that limit the ability of the public to locally and safely access the court system. The goal of the program is to ensure that citizens who live in rural counties have the same fundamental access to the legal system as those who live in larger, more populated counties. Since his tenure began, the Chief Justice has become aware of at least one county that does not have an operational courthouse and several others where safety concerns exist due to lack of the county's financial ability to install security features. The Rural County Courthouse Stabilization Fund would help ensure that citizens can access their fundamental rights and judges can do their work safely.

SCJB will utilize an application and scoring process to evaluate applicants, with a minimum score needed in order to receive funds. The application and scoring process will consider a number of factors, with heavy weight given to substantial need and demonstrated plans to utilize the funds if awarded. Awards will be given until the Fund is depleted.

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

Agency Name:	Judicial Department		
Agency Code:	B040	Section:	57

FORM D – PROVISO REVISION REQUEST

NUMBER	57.21
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Cite the proviso according to the renumbered list (or mark “NEW”).

TITLE	JUD: Judicial Branch Office Space Renovations
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Provide the title from the renumbered list or suggest a short title for any new request.

BUDGET PROGRAM	NA
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Identify the associated budget program(s) by name and budget section.

RELATED BUDGET REQUEST	
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Is this request associated with a budget request you have submitted for FY 2026-2027? If so, cite it here.

REQUESTED ACTION	Delete
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Choose from: Add, Delete, Amend, or Codify.

OTHER AGENCIES AFFECTED	NA
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Which other agencies would be affected by the recommended action? How?

SUMMARY & EXPLANATION	<p>This proviso redirects funds for the renovation of the Calhoun Building and Supreme Court Building. The funds have been redirected; therefore, the proviso is no longer needed.</p>
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Summarize the existing proviso. If requesting a new proviso, describe the current state of affairs without it. Explain the need for your requested action. For deletion requests due to recent codification, please identify SC Code section where language now appears.

NA

FISCAL IMPACT

Provide estimates of any fiscal impacts associated with this proviso, whether for state, federal, or other funds. Explain the method of calculation.

~~57.21. (JUD: Calhoun and Supreme Court Building Office Space Renovations) Funds appropriated in Act 239 of 2022 Section 118.19(48) to the Judicial Department for the Court of Appeals New Courtroom and Office Space shall be redirected to be used to renovate office space located in the Calhoun Building and Supreme Court Building.~~

PROPOSED PROVISO TEXT

Paste existing text above, then bold and underline insertions and strikethrough deletions. For new proviso requests, enter requested text above.

Agency Name:	Judicial Department
Agency Code:	B040

FORM D – PROVISO REVISION REQUEST

NUMBER	57.NEW <i>Cite the proviso according to the renumbered list (or mark “NEW”).</i>
TITLE	JUD: Family Court Judges <i>Provide the title from the renumbered list or suggest a short title for any new request.</i>
BUDGET PROGRAM	IV. FAMILY COURT <i>Identify the associated budget program(s) by name and budget section.</i>
RELATED BUDGET REQUEST	Priority 1 <i>Is this request associated with a budget request you have submitted for FY 2026-2027? If so, cite it here.</i>
REQUESTED ACTION	Add <i>Choose from: Add, Delete, Amend, or Codify.</i>
OTHER AGENCIES AFFECTED	South Carolina Public Employee Benefit Authority (PEBA) <i>Which other agencies would be affected by the recommended action? How?</i>
SUMMARY & EXPLANATION	The Chief Justice believes both the circuit and family courts play an equal and vital role in the administration of justice in South Carolina. As directed in S.C. Code Ann. § 14-1-200, family court judges are paid less than circuit court judges. Specifically, family court judges are paid 92.5% of the salary of an associate Supreme Court Justice's salary, while circuit court judges are paid 95% of an associate Supreme Court Justice's salary. This disparity in salary, although not tremendous, is based on the archaic notion that family court is somehow an inferior court, or that issues involving families and children are somehow less important than civil or criminal matters. Both family and circuit court orders are of critical importance to our justice system. From both family and circuit courts, appeals are made to the court of appeals and, therefore, both courts are equal tribunals. Further, as society has become more complex, so too have the issues involving families and youth, increasing the size and complexity of the family court docket. Over time, the family court's jurisdiction over incarcerated and troubled youth has expanded, its role in abuse and neglect proceedings has increased, as to have the number of complex divorce proceedings. Cases involving families and children have a direct and profound impact on South Carolina beyond what happens in the courtroom. The State of South Carolina must be able recruit talented attorneys who have experience in family law who do not view a family court judgeship as a steppingstone to a circuit court judgeship, but as an equally important position. It is past time to equalize the salary of family and circuit court judges. The South Carolina Judicial Branch requests provision to S.C. Code Ann. § 14-1-200 equalizing the salary for both family and circuit court judges to be set as ninety-five percent of the salary fixed for Associate Justices of the Supreme Court.

Summarize the existing proviso. If requesting a new proviso, describe the current state of affairs without it. Explain the need for your requested action. For deletion requests due to recent codification, please identify SC Code section where language now appears.

\$675,000

FISCAL IMPACT

Provide estimates of any fiscal impacts associated with this proviso, whether for state, federal, or other funds. Explain the method of calculation.

57. New (Jud: Family Court Judges): Notwithstanding provisions of S.C. Code Ann. § 14-1-200, the South Carolina Judicial Department is authorized to pay family court judges ninety-five percent of the salary fixed for Associate Justices of the Supreme Court.

PROPOSED PROVISO TEXT

Paste existing text above, then bold and underline insertions and strikethrough deletions. For new proviso requests, enter requested text above.

Agency Name:	Judicial Department
Agency Code:	B040

Section: 57

FORM E – AGENCY COST SAVINGS AND GENERAL FUND REDUCTION CONTINGENCY PLAN

TITLE	Branch Cost Savings and General Fund Reduction Contingency Plan
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AMOUNT	\$0
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What is the General Fund 3% reduction amount? This amount should correspond to the reduction spreadsheet prepared by EBO.

ASSOCIATED FTE REDUCTIONS	NA
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How many FTEs would be reduced in association with this General Fund reduction?

PROGRAM / ACTIVITY IMPACT	NA
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What programs or activities are supported by the General Funds identified?

SUMMARY	NA
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Please provide a detailed summary of service delivery impact caused by a reduction in General Fund Appropriations and provide the method of calculation for anticipated reductions. Agencies should prioritize reduction in expenditures that have the least significant impact on service delivery.

AGENCY COST SAVINGS PLANS

NA

What measures does the agency plan to implement to reduce its costs and operating expenses by more than \$50,000? Provide a summary of the measures taken and the estimated amount of savings. How does the agency plan to repurpose the savings?

Agency Name:	Judicial Department		
Agency Code:	B040	Section:	57

FORM F – REDUCING COST AND BURDEN TO BUSINESSES AND CITIZENS

TITLE	Reducing Cost and Burden to Businesses and Citizens
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

EXPECTED SAVINGS TO BUSINESSES AND CITIZENS	By the adoption of Article V of the South Carolina Constitution, the people of South Carolina have established the South Carolina Judicial Branch as one of the three co-equal branches of the State Government. As is such, the South Carolina Judicial Branch is not subject to Executive Orders of the Governor.
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What is the expected savings to South Carolina's businesses and citizens that is generated by this proposal? The savings could be related to time or money.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	<p>Mark "X" for all that apply:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 90%; padding: 2px;">Repeal or revision of regulations.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 10%; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 90%; padding: 2px;">Reduction of agency fees or fines to businesses or citizens.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 10%; padding: 2px;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 90%; padding: 2px;">Greater efficiency in agency services or reduction in compliance burden.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 10%; padding: 2px;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 90%; padding: 2px;">Other</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Repeal or revision of regulations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reduction of agency fees or fines to businesses or citizens.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Greater efficiency in agency services or reduction in compliance burden.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Greater efficiency in agency services or reduction in compliance burden.								
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other								

METHOD OF CALCULATION	NA
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Describe the method of calculation for determining the expected cost or time savings to businesses or citizens.

REDUCTION OF FEES OR FINES	NA
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Which fees or fines does the agency intend to reduce? What was the fine or fee revenue for the previous fiscal year? What was the associated program expenditure for the previous fiscal year? What is the enabling authority for the issuance of the fee or fine?

REDUCTION OF REGULATION	NA
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Which regulations does the agency intend to amend or delete? What is the enabling authority for the regulation?

SUMMARY	NA
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Provide an explanation of the proposal and its positive results on businesses or citizens. How will the request affect agency operations?