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

Fiscal Year FY 2027-2028

Agency Budget Plan

FORM A - BUDGET PLAN SUMMARY

	For FY 2027-2028, my agency is (mark "X"):	
OPERATING REQUESTS *(FORM B1)*	X	Requesting General Fund Appropriations.
	X	Requesting Federal/Other Authorization.
		Not requesting any changes.

	For FY 2027-2028, my agency is (mark "X"):	
NON-RECURRING REQUESTS *(FORM B2)*	X	Requesting Non-Recurring Appropriations.
		Requesting Non-Recurring Federal/Other Authorization.
		Not requesting any changes.

	For FY 2027-2028, my agency is (mark "X"):	
CAPITAL REQUESTS *(FORM C)*		Requesting funding for Capital Projects.
	X	Not requesting any changes.

	For FY 2027-2028, my agency is (mark "X"):	
PROVISOS *(FORM D)*	X	Requesting a new proviso and/or substantive changes to existing provisos.
		Only requesting technical proviso changes (such as date references).
		Not requesting any proviso changes.

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

	Name	*Phone*	*Email*
PRIMARY CONTACT:	Paul Magargle	(803) 734-0642	pmagargle@sccourts.org
SECONDARY CONTACT:	Carla Spires	(803) 734-0932	cspires@sccourts.org

I have reviewed and approved the enclosed FY 2027-2028 Agency Budget Plan, which is complete and accurate to the extent of my knowledge.

	Agency Director	*Board or Commission Chair*
SIGN/DATE:	John K Kittredge 10/5/26	
TYPE/PRINT NAME:	Chief Justice John W. Kittredge	

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

Agency Name:	Judicial Department
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	B2 - Non-Recurring	Case Management System Modernization	10,000,000	0	0	0	10,000,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	B1 - Recurring	Family Court Law Clerks	850,000	0	0	0	850,000	8.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	8.00
3	B1 - Recurring	Judicial Branch Administrative Support	900,000	0	0	0	900,000	6.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.00
4	B1 - Recurring	IT and Information Security Related Positions	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	12.00	0.00	12.00
TOTALS			11,750,000	0	0	0	11,750,000	14.00	0.00	12.00	0.00	26.00

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

FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY

2

Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE

Family Court Law Clerks

Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT

General: $850,000

Federal: $0

Other: $0

Total: $850,000

What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2027-2028? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS

8.00

Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST

Mark "X" for all that apply:	
	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
X	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	IT Technology/Security related
X	HR/Personnel Related
	AI Related
	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	Education, Training, and Human Development
	Healthy and Safe Families
	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
X	Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS

NA

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?

RECIPIENTS OF

South Carolina Judicial Branch (SCJB) Employees

FUNDS	

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 requests recurring appropriations to fund eight (8) FTEs to provide a Family Court Law Clerk in every Circuit. Law clerks are typically recent law school graduates who are hired for set terms of one or two years. In FY2025, the Judicial Branch received eight law clerk positions. The Chief Justice through the Family Court Advisory Committee, assigned the eight law clerk positions to specific Judicial Circuits. The law clerks have been a tremendously valuable shared resource among the judges. We are now seeking eight additional law clerks so that each circuit has this resource. Established by the South Carolina General Assembly in 1976, Family Court has exclusive jurisdiction over all matters involving domestic or family relationships. Family Court is the forum for matters relating to all aspects of domestic life, including adoption, paternity, custody, parental rights, child neglect, spousal and child support, divorce, juvenile adjudications, and orders of protection from domestic abuse. Family Court also has jurisdiction over minors under the age of seventeen alleged to have violated any state law or municipal ordinance. Family Court Judges handle complex, personal legal matters in the lives of individuals and families. The law in these areas is constantly evolving. Family Court Judges often encounter cases of first impression, which present legal issues that have not been considered or decided by a higher court. These cases, and the parties involved, deserve the time and attention that their legal matters require. But this is a challenge for Family Court Judges, given the volume of cases before them. Family Court case filings statewide are consistently high. In CY24 58,272 cases were filed and in FY25 58,897 cases were filed. Unlike civil cases, most family court cases have many points in time where a judge is required to hold a hearing and issue a temporary order. In DSS and DJJ matters, hearings occur based on statutory timeframes. Law Clerks will also promote consistency and provide much needed support to the Family Court bench. Some duties of Family Court Law Clerks will include: • Assisting the Judge in completing Form Orders during proceedings, a duty with which many Clerks of Court previously assisted; • Conducting legal research and analysis; thereby improving the quality of judicial decisions; • Drafting legal memoranda; • Communicating, as needed and appropriate, with attorneys, parties, County Clerks of Court and their employees; • Preparing and maintaining confidential data and reports; • Attending hearings, trials and other courtroom proceedings; • Traveling to court proceedings statewide. Family Court Law Clerks can also assist with the unique responsibilities of working with Pro Se litigants, or parties who choose to represent themselves in court instead of hiring an attorney. Pro Se litigants require additional court resources and can create case management inefficiencies

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 B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY

3

Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE

Judicial Branch Administrative Support

Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT

General: $900,000

Federal: $0

Other: $0

Total: $900,000

What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2027-2028? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS

6.00

Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST

Mark "X" for all that apply:	
	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
X	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	IT Technology/Security related
X	HR/Personnel Related
	AI Related
	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	Education, Training, and Human Development
	Healthy and Safe Families
	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
X	Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS

NA

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?

RECIPIENTS OF

South Carolina Judicial Branch (SCJB) Employees

FUNDS	

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 requests recurring appropriations to fund six (6) FTE positions necessary in providing adequate support for the statewide judicial system. The staff requested will provide the support needed to ensure continuity of essential operations as SCJB begins Phases II and III of its CMS implementation plan while also moving court reporting to the digital age. These new positions will coordinate complex purchases, maintain a high level of data quality and security, ensure the quality and availability of court materials, and increase the overall accountability and responsiveness expected by the Judicial Branch. One (1) Data Team Manager One (1) Procurement Manager One (1) Senior Accessibility Specialist One (1) Transcription Supervisor One (1) Transcription Coordinator One (1) Director of Communications and Deputy Counsel to the Chief Establishing these positions will strengthen the Judicial Branch's ability to ensure critical functions receive the level of expertise and support required to better serve the citizens of South Carolina.

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 B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY

4

Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE

IT and Information Security Related Positions

Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT

General: $0

Federal: $0

Other: $0

Total: $0

What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2027-2028? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS

12.00

Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST

Mark "X" for all that apply:	
	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
X	IT Technology/Security related
X	HR/Personnel Related
	AI Related
	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	Education, Training, and Human Development
	Healthy and Safe Families
	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
X	Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS

NA

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?

RECIPIENTS OF

South Carolina Judicial Branch (SCJB) Employees

FUNDS	

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's technology systems continue to grow and increase in complexity, which requires more staff to maintain. The Judicial Branch is requesting that twelve (12) interim other funded FTEs related to IT and Information Security be made permanent. The positions are as follows: • One (1) Security Analyst III • One (1) Security Resilience Coordinator • One (1) Project Manager • One (1) Senior Help Desk Specialist • One (1) Help Desk Specialist III • One (1) Data Scientist • Three (3) Quality Assurance Testers • One (1) Senior Business Analyst • Two (2) Junior Audio Visual Technicians The positions will be funded with earmarked revenue received from fines and fees. 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

1

Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE

Case Management System Modernization

Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT

$10,000,000

What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2027-2028? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST

Mark "X" for all that apply:	
	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
X	IT Technology/Security related
	AI Related
	HR/Personnel Related
X	Request for Non-Recurring Appropriations
	Request for Federal/Other Authorization to spend existing funding
	Related to a Recurring request – If so, Priority #

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	Education, Training, and Human Development
	Healthy and Safe Families
	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
X	Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS

N/A

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?

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS

Vendors and Contractors

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	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 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 a minimum of $100 million, used to determine FY26's budget request of $45 million to modernize the trial court case management system, was accurate. Out of the $45 million non-recurring was requested for FY26, $35 million has been awarded. The Branch now seeks the remaining $10 million needed to fulfill our current request from last year, as we move forward on our case management system modernization project. Please note the reference to "a minimum of $100 million." The proper utilization of technology for the Judicial Branch (or any organization or entity) is an ongoing process. With technology, there is no absolute finish line. Our detailed and thoughtful approach to an updated trial court case management system reflects that the Judicial Branch is wisely leveraging current and ever-evolving technology to provide a highly effective and functioning case management system. The process is marked by sound fiscal stewardship and transparency.

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
	Cite the proviso according to the renumbered list (or mark "NEW").
TITLE	JUD: Reactive Judge Program
	Provide the title from the renumbered list or suggest a short title for any new request.
BUDGET PROGRAM	V. Reactivated Judges
	Identify the associated budget program(s) by name and budget section.
RELATED BUDGET REQUEST	NA
	Is this request associated with a budget request you have submitted for FY 2027-2028? If so, cite it here.
REQUESTED ACTION	Amend
	Choose from: Add, Delete, Amend, or Codify.
OTHER AGENCIES AFFECTED	NA
	Which other agencies would be affected by the recommended action? How?
SUMMARY & EXPLANATION	In FY26, the South Carolina Judicial Branch (SCJB) requested a fundamental change in the structure of compensating active retired judges. State law mandates a retired judge to work three consecutive months, only to receive the differential between retirement pay and the salary of an active judge. In most cases, that difference is ten percent, which results in minimal compensation. In addition to the pay allowed by State law, the SCJB proposed that a retired judge be paid at a rate of $400 per day (or $2,000 per week) and requested $1,000,000 in recurring funds to account for this change. Thank you for supporting this request. The implementation of this change has resulted in the increased participation of retired judges in the Reactivated Judges program. As the program has grown, other issues have been identified. One issue is that judges are required to purchase their own supplies for holding terms of court. The Chief Justice requests the ability to adjust the daily rate paid to judges to cover these expenses and any other items that may arise. If adequate funding is available, the Chief Justice also would like the ability to adjust the daily rate to increase the number of judges willing to participate in this program. The proposed change to the proviso text will afford the Chief Justice the ability to better manage this program.

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.

FISCAL IMPACT

$0 – The Judicial Branch will use existing recurring general fund appropriations

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

PROPOSED PROVISO TEXT

~~(JUD: Administrative Expense for Retired Judges) Upon approval of the Chief Justice, a retired judge or justice appointed by the Chief Justice to perform judicial duties shall receive $400 per day.~~

(JUD: Administrative Expense for Retired Judges) Upon approval of the Chief Justice, a retired judge or justice appointed by the Chief Justice to perform judicial duties shall receive a daily amount established by the Chief Justice.

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