

Iowa Judicial Branch FY 22 Budget Request: Investing in Your Communities

Investing in Rural Counties: \$1,017,701

Staffing in clerk of court offices in 32 counties is below the recommended level of 2.5 staff. A minimum of 2.5 clerk positions are recommended in each clerk's office to ensure safety, fiscal responsibility, full-time coverage, and full-service. To support the vitality of rural courthouses, the 17 additional clerk staff will be distributed to counties that have fewer than 2.5 clerk staff.

Investing in Human Capital – Personnel: \$4,273,340

Iowans in all 99 counties benefit from the services provided by the 1,700 judicial officers and employees. These judicial officers and employees are members of your communities. The education, experience and abilities of these individuals are the best assets of the judicial branch. Judicial officers and employees resolve disputes and provide justice to Iowans who need assistance in the over 700,000 cases filed every year.

- 3% salary increase for judicial officers. \$1,423,604
- Increased salaries for current Judicial Specialist positions based on market research to keep salaries competitive so the judicial branch can attract and maintain quality personnel. \$1,057,549
- Contract and non-contact salary increases, steps, and health insurance costs are still in negotiations.
- To improve access to justice for all Iowans, a Navigator position would be responsible for an online inventory of community resources to connect litigants with the services they need. \$83,055
- Add 3 IT positions to support the statewide VOIP phone systems and online interactive forms and online dispute resolution and future project including electronic warrants and electronic reminders. \$229,902
- Add 4 district associate judges and 10 staff (e.g. court reporters, judicial specialists, law clerks) to address increasing workload and provide more timely resolution of Iowans' disputes. \$1,479,230

According to calculations using the workload formulas developed by the National Center for State Courts, Iowans need 30 additional judges to process the current judicial branch workload. Twenty of the needed judicial officers are at the district associate court level. The request for four district associate judges is part of a five-year plan to address this deficit. With additional support staff judicial officers will be able to provide more timely resolution of Iowans' disputes.

Maintaining Current Service Levels \$3,797,749

In order to balance the budget for the current fiscal year, any positions that were vacant on June 30, 2020, were frozen for all of FY21 and any position (includes judicial officers, but excludes court reporters and law clerks) that became vacant since July 1, 2020, has been subject to a 90-day hold. Reductions were also made in travel, office supplies and furniture allocations.

FY 2021 appropriation \$ 181,023,737 FY 2022 budget request \$190,112,527 (5% increase)

Source: State Court Administration November 30, 2020