

Circuit Court

DEPARTMENT MISSION

Except as otherwise provided by law, the Circuit Court shall have original jurisdiction in all civil and criminal matters within this state and such appellate jurisdiction in the circuit as the legislature may prescribe by law. The Circuit Court may issue all writs necessary in aid of its jurisdiction. The administration of justice serves the interests of the public. The state circuit courts for the county of Eau Claire serves the residents of Eau Claire County.

DEPARTMENT BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- It is anticipated that there will be a decrease in all areas of our expenditures except for wages and benefits. A new supervising judicial assistant position was added, as well as another judicial assistant position which accounts for the increase from the budget request for 2023 and 2024.
- Interpreter fees have increased which means an increase in expenditures; however, we don't anticipate the type of jury trial we had in 2023 which required three specialized interpreters. We will continue to use state certified interpreters in all languages vetted by Court Operations which will provide the maximum reimbursement allowable.
- Interpreters, medical, transcript and attorney fees are all non-discretionary line items in our budget and are very difficult to anticipate what actual costs will be.
- For those areas where we do have discretion, we are looking at a decrease of approximately \$52,721 in the 2024 budget request.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND PRIORITY ISSUES

- Continue to follow statutes and our Mission Statement.
- Continue to provide all mandated services and reporting.
- Continue to preside over four treatment courts.
- Continue to be an active member of various committees.

TRENDS AND ISSUES ON THE HORIZON

- Interpreters will continue to appear via Zoom. The exception are trials where statutes require interpreters appear in person or as ordered by the Court. The rate of pay for interpreters has increased.
- Throughout the state of Wisconsin, DEAN appointments continue to rise. When the State Public Defender's Office attorneys have a full caseload, they appoint private attorneys to represent indigent clients at their mandated rate of pay. If they can't find someone, then it falls to the court to appoint an attorney at the state mandated rate of pay.
- Guardian ad litem (GAL) for paternity/family cases – although ordered to pre-pay GAL fees, many parties do not and the GAL does not begin working on a case until their fee is paid. In the best interest of the parties and the court, we will pay the GAL fee if the parties cannot, and then seek reimbursement from the parties.

OPERATIONAL CHANGES IN 2023

- None

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POSITION CHANGES IN 2024

- Request made in 2023 to make the supervising judicial assistant position an exempt position instead of a non-exempt position. The request was made due to expected overtime – the position not only has all the responsibilities of a judicial assistant, but is responsible for all supervisory duties including personnel (I.e., evaluations, timesheets, hiring process, etc.), training, and ensuring the duties of all judicial assistants are completed properly and efficiently; contact with CCAP as it relates to the Circuit Court and staff; as well as accountability to all six judges and the court commissioner regarding performance of each of their judicial assistants. It is anticipated that this may have to go to McGrath and we would expect the position may be increased from pay grade I to pay grade K based upon the supervisory requirements of the position. It is an estimated increase of approximately \$864 for salary, social security, and retirement. There is no increase in benefits as the position is already filled.

OPERATIONAL CHANGES – WITH FISCAL IMPACT

- None

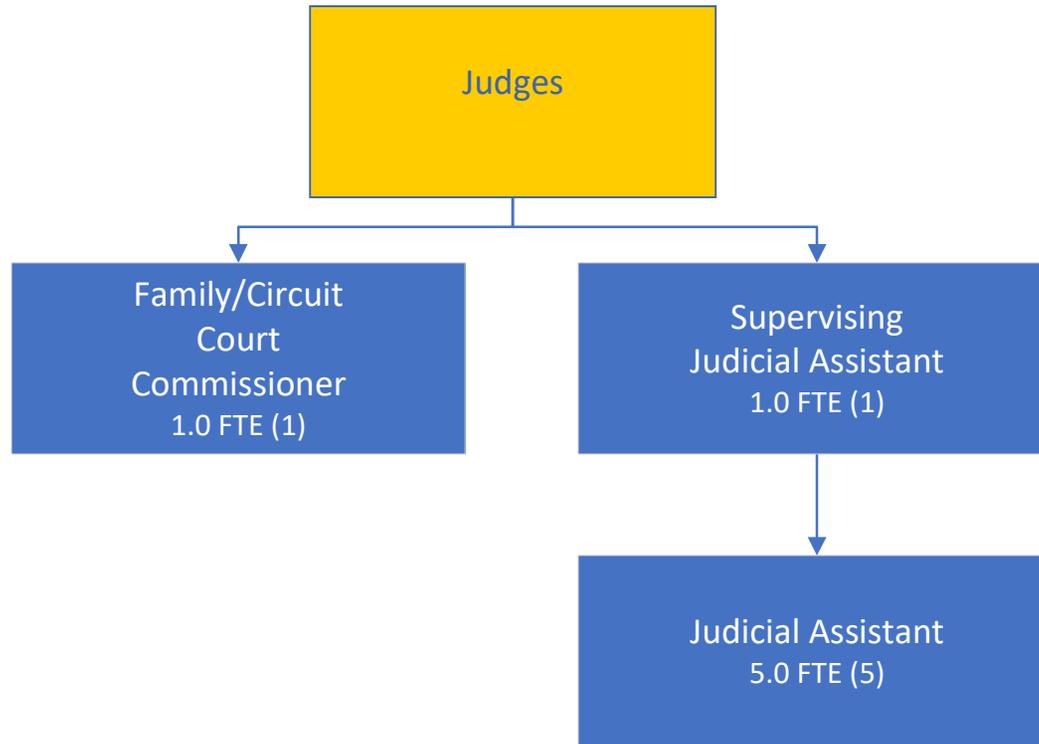
OPERATIONAL CHANGES – WITHOUT FISCAL IMPACT

- None

KEY ASSUMPTIONS AND POTENTIAL RISKS

- The need for interpreters has increased tremendously in the past year. It is our expectation that the need is not going to decrease in 2024. We are required by three entities to provide interpreters: Wisconsin Statutes, ADA requirements, and Federal law. The Director of Court Operations requires that we use state certified interpreters in all languages that are so certified – this also provides for higher reimbursement from the State which accounts for close to one-half of the total cost. By statute, counties are responsible for the amount that is not reimbursed.
- As noted above, DEAN appointments continue to rise. The states budget, if approved, provides that there will be an increase in pay for a total of \$100 for State Public Defender (SPD) appointments to match the court-appointed attorney amount of pay. Although we have only tracked information since January 2023, we have noted an increase in court-appointments once the judge determines too much time has passed for an individual to wait for an attorney to accept the SPD appointment. It is difficult to determine what an increase/decrease will be for 2024, but the expectation is to keep the same amount anticipated for end of year 2023.

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Courts and Court Supportive Services is responsible for helping ensure efficient and effective operations of all the courts including court appointment attorneys, guardian at litem for youth and vulnerable adults, interpreter and transcription services, processing of medical claims, and jury management.

OUTPUTS	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>YTD* 2023</u>
Number of cases opened	17,603	18,915	17,385	7,319
Court Commissioner only	11,326	11,584	10,693	4,643
Number of felony cases filed	1,519	1,429	1,384	564
Number of jury trials held	34	23	27	10
Number of jury trial days	82	50	52	23
Number of Court trials held	147	185	146	48
Number of court trials held by Court Commissioner	41	37	25	6
Total number of hearings held by remote means	15,162	18,329	5,516	2,879
Number of languages required during year	11	12	14	8

Court Commissioner hears the following case types:

FORFEITURES: Traffic; Forfeitures; Juvenile Ordinance

CIVIL: Civil; Small Claims; divorce; Paternity

PROBATE: Probable Cause Hearings; Guardianships; Commitments

JUVENILE: Other Juvenile (*Detention Hearings*)

CRIMINAL: Initial Appearances on Fridays prior to July 1, 2022

These numbers do not appear in the number of cases opened by the commissioner

COURT TRIALS include: Traffic; Small Claims; Paternity; Family; Guardianship

**YTD indicates Jan-May Results*

OUTCOMES	Benchmark	2020	2021	2022	YTD* 2023
100% of individuals with language barriers are provided a state certified interpreter throughout the court process.	70%	91%	86%	60%	73%%

**YTD indicates Jan-Jun Results*

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Overview of Revenues and Expenditures

Revenues	2022	2023	2023	2024	2024	%
	Actual	Adjusted Budget	Estimate	Request	Recommended	Change
01-Tax Levy/General Revenue Allocation	\$198,944	\$232,203	\$232,203	\$381,732	\$281,732	21%
04-Intergovernment Grants and Aid	\$598,433	\$414,598	\$423,400	\$423,400	\$423,400	2%
06-Public Charges for Services	\$493,913	\$402,370	\$404,940	\$403,964	\$503,964	25%
Total Revenues:	\$1,291,290	\$1,049,171	\$1,060,543	\$1,209,096	\$1,209,096	15%

Expenditures	2022	2023	2023	2024	2024	%
	Actual	Adjusted Budget	Estimate	Request	Recommended	Change
01-Regular Wages	\$327,969	\$366,910	\$321,405	\$423,722	\$423,722	15%
02-OT Wages	\$256	-	-	-	-	
03-Payroll Benefits	\$222,774	\$164,241	\$176,891	\$221,669	\$221,669	35%
04-Contracted Services	\$667,387	\$456,000	\$516,715	\$512,955	\$512,955	12%
05-Supplies & Expenses	\$46,541	\$55,650	\$51,750	\$50,750	\$50,750	-9%
09-Equipment	-	\$6,370	-	-	-	-100%
Total Expenditures:	\$1,264,927	\$1,049,171	\$1,066,761	\$1,209,096	\$1,209,096	15%

Net Surplus/(Deficit)- Circuit Court	\$26,363	\$0	(\$6,218)	\$0	\$0	
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Budget Analysis

	2023 Adjusted Budget	2024 Position Changes	Cost to Continue Operations in 2024	2024 Requested Budget
01-Tax Levy/General Revenue Allocation	\$232,203	\$864	\$148,665	\$381,732
04-Intergovernment Grants and Aid	\$414,598	-	\$8,802	\$423,400
06-Public Charges for Services	\$402,370	-	\$1,594	\$403,964
Total Revenues	\$1,049,171	\$864	\$159,061	\$1,209,096

01-Regular Wages	\$366,910	\$754	\$56,058	\$423,722
02-OT Wages	-	-	-	-
03-Payroll Benefits	\$164,241	\$110	\$57,318	\$221,669
04-Contracted Services	\$456,000	-	\$56,955	\$512,955
05-Supplies & Expenses	\$55,650	-	(\$4,900)	\$50,750
09-Equipment	\$6,370	-	(\$6,370)	-
Total Expenditures	\$1,049,171	\$864	\$159,061	\$1,209,096

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Revenue Assumptions

	2022	2023	2023	2024	2024		
Revenue Source	Actual	Budget	Estimate	Request	Recom- mended	Assumptions	Confidence Level %
County Tax Levy	198,944	232,203	232,203	381,732	281,732	County funding request	100%
State Grant-Courts	598,433	414,598	423,400	423,400	423,400	Estimate	100%
Atty Fees	455,061	349,770	350,000	350,864	450,864	Attorney fee payment	100%
Co Share Occupat Dr License	-	100	100	100	100	County share occ license	100%
Family Case Fees	8,250	10,000	8,340	10,000	10,000	New family case filings	100%
Interpreter Reimbursements	17,630	25,500	33,500	30,000	30,000	State Court Grant	100%
Ignition Interlock Surcharge	12,972	17,000	13,000	13,000	13,000	Interlock fees	100%
TOTAL	\$1,291,290	\$1,049,171	\$1,060,543	\$1,209,096	\$1,209,096		

Circuit Court Grant Funding

	2022	2023	2023	2024	2024	
Revenue Source	Actual	Budget	Estimate	Request	Recom- mended	Grant Details
State Grant-Courts	598,433	414,598	423,400	423,400	423,400	State Court Grant
TOTAL	\$598,433	\$414,598	\$423,400	\$423,400	\$423,400	

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Contracted Services Summary

	2022	2023	2023	2024	2024
Expenditure Type	Actual	Budget	Estimate	Request	Recom- mended
Professional Services	655,413	440,518	497,860	496,900	496,900
Utility Services	5,514	10,482	10,055	10,055	10,055
Repairs And Maintenance	2,233	-	1,400	-	-
Other Contracted Services	4,227	5,000	7,400	6,000	6,000
Total	\$667,387	\$456,000	\$516,715	\$512,955	\$512,955

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Contracted Services Detail

	2022	2023	2023	2024	2024		
Expenditure	Actual	Budget	Estimate	Request	Recom- mended	Description	Expenditure Type
Cir Court/ Medical	172,769	130,018	133,000	131,000	131,000	Court ordered medical bills	Professional Services
Cir Court/ Interpreters	26,606	20,000	35,790	28,000	28,000	Interpreters for non-English speaking	Professional Services
Cir Court/ Court Commissioner	10,583	10,000	10,000	12,000	12,000	Supplemental court commissioners	Professional Services
Cir Court/ Telephone	5,093	10,132	9,653	9,653	9,653	Office Telephone	Utility Services
Cir Court / Cellular Phone	421	350	402	402	402	Cellular Phone	Utility Services
Cir Court/ Service On Machines	2,233	-	1,400	-	-	Wiring	Repairs And Maintenance
Cir Court/ Transcription	4,227	5,000	7,400	6,000	6,000	Transcripts to prison warden	Other Contracted Services
Court Atty Fees/ Criminal	137,760	96,000	101,500	100,400	100,400	Court ordered attorney	Professional Services
Court Atty Fees/ Misc Civil	-	500	200	500	500	Attorney to be reimbursed	Professional Services
Court Atty Fees/ Chips- Parent	21,750	13,000	23,350	23,000	23,000	Attorney to be reimbursed	Professional Services
Gal/ Divorce/Paternity	106,346	45,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	Attorney to be reimbursed	Professional Services
Gal/ Civil Restraining Order	2,567	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	Attorney to be reimbursed	Professional Services
Gal/ Chips-Child	85,483	50,000	36,400	40,000	40,000	Attorney	Professional Services
Gal/ Guardianships	34,438	25,000	21,000	21,000	21,000	Attorney to be reimbursed	Professional Services
Gal/ Watts Review	57,111	50,000	35,620	40,000	40,000	Attorney to be reimbursed	Professional Services
TOTAL	\$667,387	\$456,000	\$516,715	\$512,955	\$512,955		