

## Judiciary

### FY2025 - Summary of Significant Budget Issues (\$ thousands)

**Narrative report for significant items in the Governor's FY25 operating budget.**

Item	Appropriation / Allocation	Description	Amount / Fund Source	Comment
1	Alaska Court System / Appellate Courts	Appellate Court Travel	\$38.2 Gen Fund (UGF)	This increment would pay for additional costs related to travel to Anchorage for judges and staff based outside of Anchorage. Travel occurs for oral arguments, case conferences, training, and annual orientation of law clerks. The FY24 Appellate Court travel budget is \$95.5, while FY23 Actuals for travel were \$140.8. This increment would make the FY25 travel budget \$133.7, which is more in line with recent actuals. Cost drivers for the increase are stated as the addition of one new out-of-Anchorage judge, improved staffing and rising airfare costs.
2	Alaska Court System / Trial Courts	Facilities Operating and Maintenance Cost Increases	\$448.0 Gen Fund (UGF)	The Court System's FY24 facilities budget totals approximately \$10 million and included an increase of \$750.8 broken down as such: \$143.5 for leases; \$166.8 for utilities, \$88.0 for janitorial/ snowplowing/ window washing, \$167.4 for software maintenance/ subscriptions and \$187.1 for Division of Facilities Services (DFS) service level agreements. The FY25 budget includes increases of \$98.0 for inflation adjustments to leases, \$100.0 for additional utilities/ service contracts/ maintenance and an estimated \$250.0 for a DFS Service Level Agreement increase.  Discussion of the increase for software maintenance and subscriptions is provided in <b>Item 3</b> .
3	Alaska Court System / Trial Courts	Software Maintenance and Subscriptions	\$957.1 Gen Fund (UGF)	The Court System has thirty-five positions for information technology services including programmers, database administrators, network specialists and help desk technicians. The FY25 budget for these positions is \$5,645.5. In addition, approximately \$3.9 million is budgeted in FY24 for software licensing/ subscriptions/ hosting and software maintenance. With this increment that total increases to nearly \$5 million. A large portion (\$575.0) of the \$957.1 increment is attributable to the court system's VMware virtual servers.
4	Alaska Court System / Trial Courts	Court Visitor Program to Recent Actuals/ Projections	\$127.4 Gen Fund (UGF)	Court Visitors are investigators in guardianship and conservatorship cases who provide information to the judicial officer about the protected person's status regarding medical treatment, housing, education, and finances.  In 2022, HB 155 (Ch. 21, SLA 2022) transferred responsibility of the Court Visitor Program from the

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4	Alaska Court System / Trial Courts	Court Visitor Program to Recent Actuals/ Projections	\$127.4 Gen Fund (UGF)	(continued) Office of Public Advocacy to the Alaska Court System. With the transfer came a new position (to oversee the training, supervision, and scheduling of Court Visitors) and \$854.4 to pay the contracted Court Visitors.  In FY23, actual expenditures for Court Visitors totaled \$954.9. This increment would fill the difference between the recent actuals and projections leading into FY25.
5	Alaska Court System / Trial Courts	Increased Pay for Contract Mediators, Court Visitors, and Interpreters for Recruitment and Retention	\$346.5 Gen Fund (UGF)	In FY24, the Court System obtained funding to raise the hourly rate for court-appointed attorneys from \$75 to \$130. To attract and retain other high demand court professionals, an hourly rate increase is added as follows: - \$60.4 to increase mediator pay from \$75/hr to \$100/hr - \$238.5 to increase Court Visitor pay from \$40-\$55/hr to \$50-\$70/hr  In addition, demand for interpreter services has increased and an increment of \$47.6 is proposed. FY23 costs were \$123.4 and actuals through November of FY24 are \$79.2, which projects to over \$300.0 by year end.
6	Alaska Court System / Trial Courts	Increased Pay for Contract Court Security Screeners for Recruitment and Retention	\$252.6 Gen Fund (UGF)	The Court System has a total of 23 full-time security positions statewide providing security screening at the various court houses. The FY24 budget for this service is \$1,380.2 based on \$20/hr. The Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) is currently paying their security screeners \$22/hr which are provided by the same contractor. Two of the court systems guards have subsequently moved to work for the MOA. To remain competitive and retain these positions, an increase to \$22/hr requires an additional \$252.6.
7	Alaska Court System / Trial Courts	New Positions for Monitoring Guardianship Appointments - Education and Supportive Help for Guardians	\$417.0 Gen Fund (UGF) <b>3 PFT Positions</b>	The total of open guardianship and conservatorship cases has been steadily growing and is expected to continue to grow as baby boomers age. Family members or friends are appointed as guardians in 71% of cases.  In 2021, a federal grant initiated a pilot project to improve the handling of guardianship cases by

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**Narrative report for significant items in the Governor's FY25 operating budget.**

Item	Appropriation / Allocation	Description	Amount / Fund Source	Comment
7	Alaska Court System / Trial Courts	New Positions for Monitoring Guardianship Appointments - Education and Supportive Help for Guardians	\$417.0 Gen Fund (UGF) <b>3 PFT Positions</b>	(continued) providing positions to monitor compliance and provide self-help support for guardians (most of which are these non-professional friends and family). This budget request would add three additional positions to expand the pilot statewide, combining monitoring and educational support into one position per location.
8	Therapeutic Courts / Therapeutic Courts	Treatment Counseling Services/ Supervision and Urinalysis Testing Cost Increases	\$265.6 GF/MH (UGF)	The FY24 budget for Therapeutic Courts treatment services is \$1,218.3. The Court System projects that the demand for these services and the costs to provide them will increase in FY25 by \$243.7 (20% increase) and additional funding has been included as a result. Likewise for urinalysis (UA) testing, the FY24 budget includes \$168.8 for UA supervision and testing supplies. Both of these costs are expected to increase in FY25, with an additional \$21.9 (13%) included in the budget request.
9	Therapeutic Courts / Therapeutic Courts	Juneau Mental Health Court - Budget Omission Requested by both the MH Trust and Judiciary	\$126.1 GF/MH (UGF)	This item is <b>included to highlight the omission of \$126.1 GF/MH from the Governor's budget</b> that was included in the Mental Health Trust recommended budget and the budget request of the Judiciary. The funding would pay for 50 percent of the costs of the project coordinator and probation officer located in Juneau. The Judicial Officer and administration for the program is already included in the Therapeutic Courts budget.

# 2024 Legislature - Operating Budget Transaction Compare - FY25 Governor Structure Between AdjBase and GovAmd

Numbers and Language  
Differences  
Agencies: Judiciary

Agency: Judiciary

	Column	Trans Type	Total Expenditure	Personal Services	Travel	Services	Commodities	Capital Outlay	Grants	Misc	PFT	PPT	TMP
<b>Alaska Court System</b>													
<b>Appellate Courts</b>													
Appellate Court Travel	GovAmd	Inc	38.2	0.0	38.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
<p>The appellate court is comprised of five supreme court justices and four court of appeal judges. Of this group, two of the judges are based in Fairbanks and one is based in Juneau. Funding is requested to pay the increased costs for the out-of-Anchorage appellate court judges to travel to Anchorage for oral arguments, case conferences, and for the costs for judicial training and for the appellate court law clerks, who are appointed to one-year positions and travel to Anchorage for their annual orientation.</p> <p>In FY2010, the court system's budget was increased by \$11.5 to support the costs for Justice travel from Fairbanks and in FY2011, the budget was increased by \$9.4 to support Justice travel from Juneau. In FY2016, the appellate court's travel budget was reduced by \$25.0 to support the court system's multi-year budget reduction efforts. In recent years, savings from other areas of the budget covered travel costs over base funding amounts, but funding is now needed to support the appellate court travel budget due to improved staffing levels, the appointment of an additional out-of-Anchorage appellate court judge, and escalating travel costs.</p>													
1004 Gen Fund (UGF)			38.2										
<b>* Allocation Difference *</b>			38.2	0.0	38.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
<b>Trial Courts</b>													
Facilities Operating and Maintenance Cost Increases	GovAmd	Inc	448.0	0.0	0.0	448.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
<p>The court system occupies facilities across the state and requires funding for increased expenses for facility leases, utilities, and the increased cost for service contracts for janitorial, snow plowing, and facility maintenance. The breakdown in costs is \$98.0 for Consumer Price Index increases for leases; \$100.0 for utilities, service contracts, and facility maintenance; \$250.0 estimated for a Service Level Agreement with the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to maintain courts in Anchorage, Kenai, Fairbanks, and Palmer.</p>													
1004 Gen Fund (UGF)			448.0										
Software Maintenance and Subscriptions	GovAmd	Inc	957.1	0.0	0.0	957.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
<p>The court system occupies facilities across the state and requires funding for increased expenses for facility leases, utilities, and the increased cost for service contracts for janitorial, snow plowing, and facility maintenance. The breakdown in costs is \$98.0 for Consumer Price Index increases for leases; \$100.0 for utilities, service contracts, and facility maintenance; \$250.0 estimated for a Service Level Agreement with the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to maintain courts in Anchorage, Kenai, Fairbanks, and Palmer. Additionally, \$957.1 is needed for software maintenance and ongoing software subscription costs.</p>													
1004 Gen Fund (UGF)			957.1										
Court Visitor Program to Recent Actuals/Projections	GovAmd	Inc	127.4	0.0	19.7	107.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
<p>During FY2023, the Legislature passed House Bill 155, which resulted in the court system assuming responsibility for managing the Court Visitor Program previously managed by the Office of Public Advocacy (OPA). For this program, the court system received funding for a position to manage the Court Visitor Program and \$854.4 to pay the direct costs for the court visitors services, medical evaluations, and training. The amount transferred from OPA to the court system was based on the average of the costs paid by OPA over a three-year period. The FY2023 actual costs incurred by the court system for the court visitors and related expenses totaled \$954.9. The number of open guardianship cases is on an upward trajectory as these cases often remain open for many years or even decades depending on the medical condition experienced by the protected person who is the subject of the guardianship case. The statutes require appointment of a court visitor when someone petitions the court because</p>													



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<b>Alaska Court System (continued)</b>													
<b>Trial Courts (continued)</b>													
Court Visitor Program to Recent Actuals/ Projections (continued)													
they believe an individual is without capacity to make decisions about their life and medical care. As more guardianship cases remain open, court visitors must do the required investigations for the court. The court system is seeking an increase of \$127.4 for the difference between the initial funding received and the FY2025 projected costs for the Court Visitor Program.													
1004 Gen Fund (UGF)			127.4										
Increased Pay for Contract Mediators, Court Visitors, and Interpreters for Recruitment and Retention	GovAmd	Inc	346.5	0.0	0.0	346.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
In FY2024, the court system received funding to increase the hourly rate paid to court appointed attorneys from \$75/hour to \$130/hour. In addition to attorneys, the court also contracts with other professionals to assist in managing trial court case workloads.													
Mediators are used in child custody, Child-in-Need-of-Aid, and guardianship cases to help parties resolve disputes by agreement. Court Visitors are court appointed investigators in guardianship and conservatorship cases who provide essential information to the judicial officer about the protected person's status regarding medical treatment, housing, education, and finances. The amounts currently paid for mediators and court visitors have not been adjusted for several years and the amounts paid for these professional services must be increased to remain competitive. Currently, experienced mediators are paid \$75/hour and court visitors are paid in the range of \$40/hour - \$55/hour depending on experience. The court system is seeking \$60.4 to pay mediators \$100/hour and \$238.5 to pay court visitors in the range of \$50/hour - \$70/hour depending on experience.													
The court system contracts with both American Sign Language and spoken language interpreters. The court system endeavors to use qualified and certified remote video interpreting services, which are more cost-effective than in-person interpreters. Longer proceedings require two interpreters to prevent interpreter fatigue. Inn-person interpreters can be required for trials and lengthy hearings, often requiring travel from outside Alaska or within Alaska depending on the language needed. The court system is requesting \$47.6 for increased interpreter services.													
1004 Gen Fund (UGF)			346.5										
Increased Pay for Contract Court Security Screeners for Recruitment and Retention	GovAmd	Inc	252.6	0.0	0.0	252.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
For FY2024, the court system received funding to ensure court security screeners were paid a minimum of \$20/hour. Despite the effort to offer screeners a competitive wage, the court system continues to have difficulty retaining screeners as other governmental entities are offering more than \$20/hour for similar services. The court system is seeking funding to be able to offer a \$22/hour pay rate to the court security screeners.													
1004 Gen Fund (UGF)			252.6										
New Positions for Monitoring Guardianship Appointments - Education and Supportive Help for Guardians	GovAmd	Inc	417.0	357.0	30.0	10.5	19.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	3	0	0
The court system is requesting \$417.0 to fund three positions to assist guardians and monitor compliance with the statutorily required reports.. The total volume of open guardianship and conservatorship cases has continued to grow and has been on a steady upward trajectory for many years. All indications are this trend will continue with aging baby boomers and the fact that a large proportion of those over age 85 experience significant decline in													

# 2024 Legislature - Operating Budget

## Transaction Compare - FY25 Governor Structure

### Between AdjBase and GovAmd

Numbers and Language  
Differences  
Agencies: Judiciary

Agency: Judiciary

	Column	Trans Type	Total Expenditure	Personal Services	Travel	Services	Commodities	Capital Outlay	Grants	Misc	PFT	PPT	TMP
<b>Alaska Court System (continued)</b>													
<b>Trial Courts (continued)</b>													
New Positions for Monitoring Guardianship													
Appointments - Education and Supportive Help													
for Guardians (continued)													
cognitive functions, often losing the capacity to care for themselves and their finances. These vulnerable Alaskans are often at risk without court intervention, which comes in the form of appointing a guardian. Family members or friends are appointed to be guardians in approximately 71% of the cases, with the remaining appointments either going to the public guardians at the Office of Public Advocacy (OPA) or to private, professional guardians. Coupled with the challenge of ensuring a protected person is cared for, family guardians often struggle to meet the ordered reporting requirements.													
In 2021, the Federal Administration for Community Living awarded the court system a grant, which allowed the creation of a three-year pilot project to improve the handling of guardianship cases. Two positions were hired to monitor compliance and sufficiency of required reports and bring red flag issues to the judicial officer in Anchorage, Bethel, Kenai, and Homer, and to provide self-help support to family guardians by answering questions through a statewide telephone helpline about the guardianship process and reporting requirements.													
This request is to fund three monitor positions that combine the monitoring function and the educative and supportive self-help function into one position; three monitors make it possible to scale the pilot to be statewide and cover all court locations. There are issues with recently licensed new professional guardians who are inexperienced and concerns about their fitness to serve as guardians. There is already a shortage of private professional guardians. The court system believes these monitoring positions provide the accountability and support to ensure family guardians are successful in fulfilling the protective services role for which they are appointed.													
1004 Gen Fund (UGF)			417.0										
<b>* Allocation Difference *</b>			2,548.6	357.0	49.7	2,122.4	19.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	3	0	0
<b>Administration and Support</b>													
Federal Indirect Grant Proceeds	GovAmd	Inc	150.0	140.0	0.0	3.5	6.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	2	-1	0
The court system's administrative office is authorized to charge an indirect (overhead) rate for administrative work related to the management of federal grants. For this effort, the court system is seeking additional appropriation authority to accept grant funding to pay the costs of an accounting technician and additional hours for a part-time clerical position to process increased work generated from the acceptance and management of federal grant funds.													
1133 CSSD Admin (Fed)			150.0										
<b>* Allocation Difference *</b>			150.0	140.0	0.0	3.5	6.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	2	-1	0
<b>** Appropriation Difference **</b>			2,736.8	497.0	87.9	2,125.9	26.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5	-1	0
<b>Therapeutic Courts</b>													
<b>Therapeutic Courts</b>													
MH Trust: Centralized Competency Calendar	GovAmd	IncT	18.9	18.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
Paralegal - Statewide (FY25-FY27)													
This project will fund a paralegal to assist with the management, data collection, and tracking of a statewide Centralized Competency Calendar. The number of Trust beneficiaries charged with a crime where an evaluation													

# **2024 Legislature - Operating Budget** **Transaction Compare - FY25 Governor Structure** **Between AdjBase and GovAmd**

<b>Numbers and Language</b> <b>Differences</b> <b>Agencies: Judiciary</b>
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**Agency: Judiciary**

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<b>Therapeutic Courts (continued)</b>													
<b>Therapeutic Courts (continued)</b>													
MH Trust: Centralized Competency Calendar													
Paralegal - Statewide (FY25-FY27) (continued)													
for legal competency has been ordered has risen from two to four cases/week to six-12 cases/week. For Trust beneficiaries, this can result in spending increased amounts of time incarcerated while waiting for this legal question to be answered, than if they had just pled guilty and been sentenced from the outset. This can also lead to cases being dismissed before they can be prosecuted. This specialized court calendar in Anchorage tracks all Third Judicial District criminal cases where the court has ordered a legal competency evaluation and when appropriate, competency restoration.													
The management of the Centralized Competency Calendar and the collection, tracking, and reporting of these cases and trends are critical to understanding the reasons for the delays in evaluation and restoration orders, as well as making recommendations for solutions. The calendar will ensure the court system processes these cases efficiently and in a manner that ensures public protection and keeps Alaskans safe.													
1037 GF/MH (UGF)			18.9										
MH Trust: Centralized Competency Calendar	GovAmd	IncT	33.9	33.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
Paralegal - Third Judicial District (FY25)													
This project will fund a paralegal to assist with the management, data collection, and tracking of the Third Judicial District's Centralized Competency Calendar. The number of Trust beneficiaries charged with a crime where an evaluation for legal competency has been ordered has risen from two to four cases/week to six-12 cases/week. For Trust beneficiaries, this can result in spending increased amounts of time incarcerated while waiting for this legal question to be answered, than if they had just pled guilty and been sentenced from the outset. This can also lead to cases being dismissed before they can be prosecuted. This specialized court calendar in Anchorage tracks all Third Judicial District criminal cases where the court has ordered a legal competency evaluation and when appropriate, competency restoration.													
The management of the Centralized Competency Calendar and the collection, tracking, and reporting of these cases and trends are critical to understanding the reasons for the delays in evaluation and restoration orders, as well as making recommendations for solutions. The calendar will ensure the court system processes these cases efficiently and in a manner that ensures public protection and keeps Alaskans safe.													
1037 GF/MH (UGF)			33.9										
Treatment Counseling Services/ Supervision and Urinalysis Testing Cost Increases	GovAmd	Inc	265.6	0.0	0.0	255.6	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
The therapeutic courts are requesting additional funding to pay for increased costs for treatment and urinalysis (UA) testing. This request is based on an expected 20 percent increase for treatment providers providing clients with counseling services and for UA testing supplies and a 10percent increase for UA contracts.													
1037 GF/MH (UGF)			265.6										
Receipt Authority for Projects Involving Data Collection, Program Evaluations, and Case Management Improvements	GovAmd	Inc	500.0	0.0	0.0	500.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
The therapeutic courts project director has received increased federal and interagency grant funding for projects involving data collection, program evaluations, and case management improvements. For FY2024, these courts are authorized to accept \$450.0 in federal grant funding and are requesting \$375.0 in increased federal grant authority and \$125.0 in interagency receipt authority.													
1002 Fed Rcpts (Fed)			375.0										

**2024 Legislature - Operating Budget**  
**Transaction Compare - FY25 Governor Structure**  
**Between AdjBase and GovAmd**

<b>Numbers and Language</b> <b>Differences</b> <b>Agencies: Judiciary</b>
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**Agency: Judiciary**

	Column	Trans Type	Total Expenditure	Personal Services	Travel	Services	Commodities	Capital Outlay	Grants	Misc	PFT	PPT	TMP
<b>Therapeutic Courts (continued)</b>													
<b>Therapeutic Courts (continued)</b>													
Receipt Authority for Projects Involving Data Collection, Program Evaluations, and Case Management Improvements (continued)													
1007 I/A Rcpts (Other) 125.0													
<b>* Allocation Difference *</b>			818.4	52.8	0.0	755.6	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
<b>** Appropriation Difference **</b>			818.4	52.8	0.0	755.6	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
<b>Commission on Judicial Conduct</b>													
<b>Commission on Judicial Conduct</b>													
Increased Costs for Leases and Related Lease Obligations	GovAmd	Inc	7.0	0.0	0.0	7.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
While the Commission was able to reduce its office lease obligations for FY22 and FY23, its obligations for FY24 and FY25 have increased as have related lease obligations, along with the archival storage fees. This \$7,000 increment will cover those anticipated annual obligations for FY25.													
1004 Gen Fund (UGF)			7.0										
Increased Costs for Travel	GovAmd	Inc	7.5	0.0	7.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
Travel costs for in-person quarterly Commission meetings have increased over the years, especially since coming after the pandemic travel limitations. The Commission has nine members representing various areas of the state. The Commission's current budget will only fully fund two of the planned four in-person meetings in FY25. This \$7,500 increment will cover the anticipated travel costs to allow for quarterly in-person meetings.													
1004 Gen Fund (UGF)			7.5										
<b>* Allocation Difference *</b>			14.5	0.0	7.5	7.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
<b>** Appropriation Difference **</b>			14.5	0.0	7.5	7.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
<b>*** Agency Difference ***</b>			3,569.7	549.8	95.4	2,888.5	36.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5	-1	0
<b>**** All Agencies Difference ****</b>			3,569.7	549.8	95.4	2,888.5	36.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5	-1	0

## Column Definitions

**AdjBase (FY25 Adjusted Base)** - FY24 Management Plan less One-Time Items (OTIs), plus FY25 Position Adjustments (PosAdjs), Transfers In/Out of allocations (TrIns and TrOuts), Line Item Transfers (LITs), Temporary Increments (IncTs) initiated in prior years, adjustments to formula programs in language, and additions for statewide items such as Salary Adjustments (SalAdjs). The Adjusted Base is the base to which the Governor's and the legislature's Increments (Incs), Decrements (Decs), and Fund Changes (FndChg) are added.

**GovAmd (Governors Amended Budget)** - Governor's operating budget request plus all amendments received by the statutory deadline of February 14, 2024.