



ALASKA COURT SYSTEM

Senate Finance Subcommittee Alaska Court System Overview

Doug Wooliver,
Deputy Administrative Director
February 26, 2024





ALASKA COURT SYSTEM

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Alaska Court System is to provide an accessible and impartial forum for the just resolution of all cases that come before it, and to decide such cases in accordance with the law, expeditiously and with integrity.

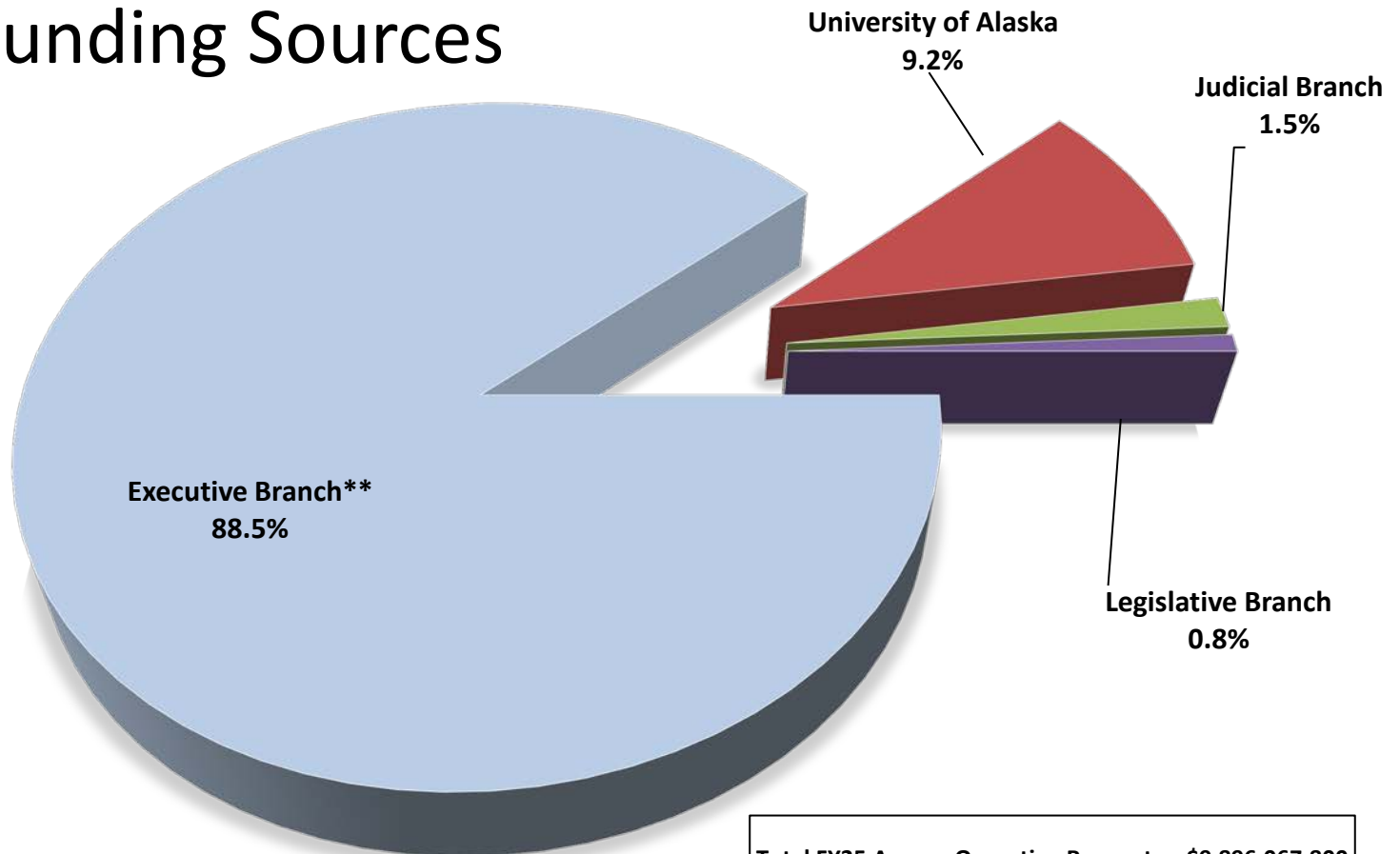
<https://ltgov.alaska.gov/services/alaskas-constitution/>





ALASKA COURT SYSTEM

FY25 State of Alaska Operating Budget Request - All Funding Sources



**Total excludes PFD, Debt Service, and Special Appropriations

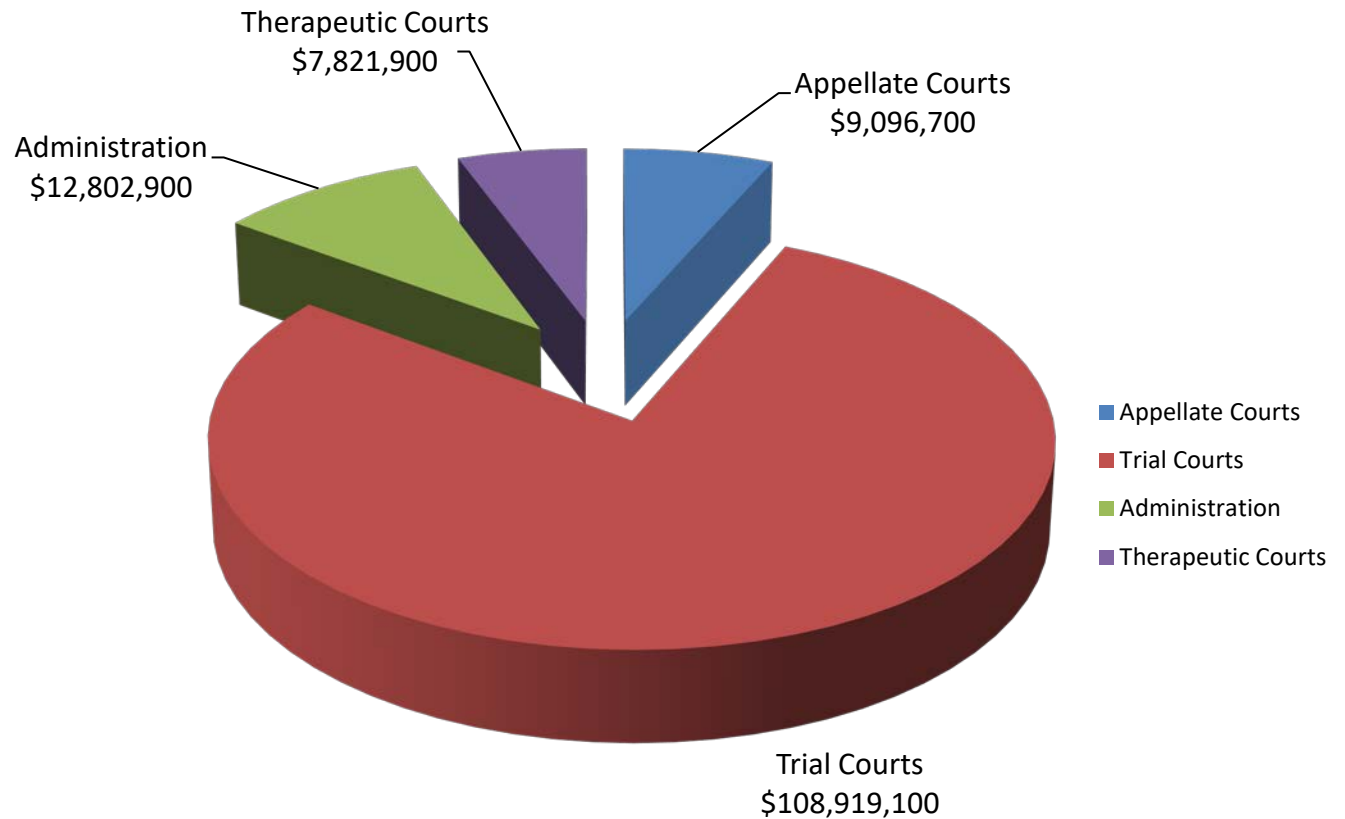
Source: Office of Management & Budget,
UGF/DGF/Other/Fed Summary by Department (1088)
Released December 14, 2023

Total FY25 Agency Operating Requests = \$9,896,067,800
Judiciary Budget = \$145,471,300
(Includes Judicial Council & Judicial Conduct, but
Excludes Therapeutic Courts Increment of \$126,100)



ALASKA COURT SYSTEM

Alaska Court System FY24 Operating Budget Appropriation All Fund Types



Total FY24 Funding = \$138,640,600

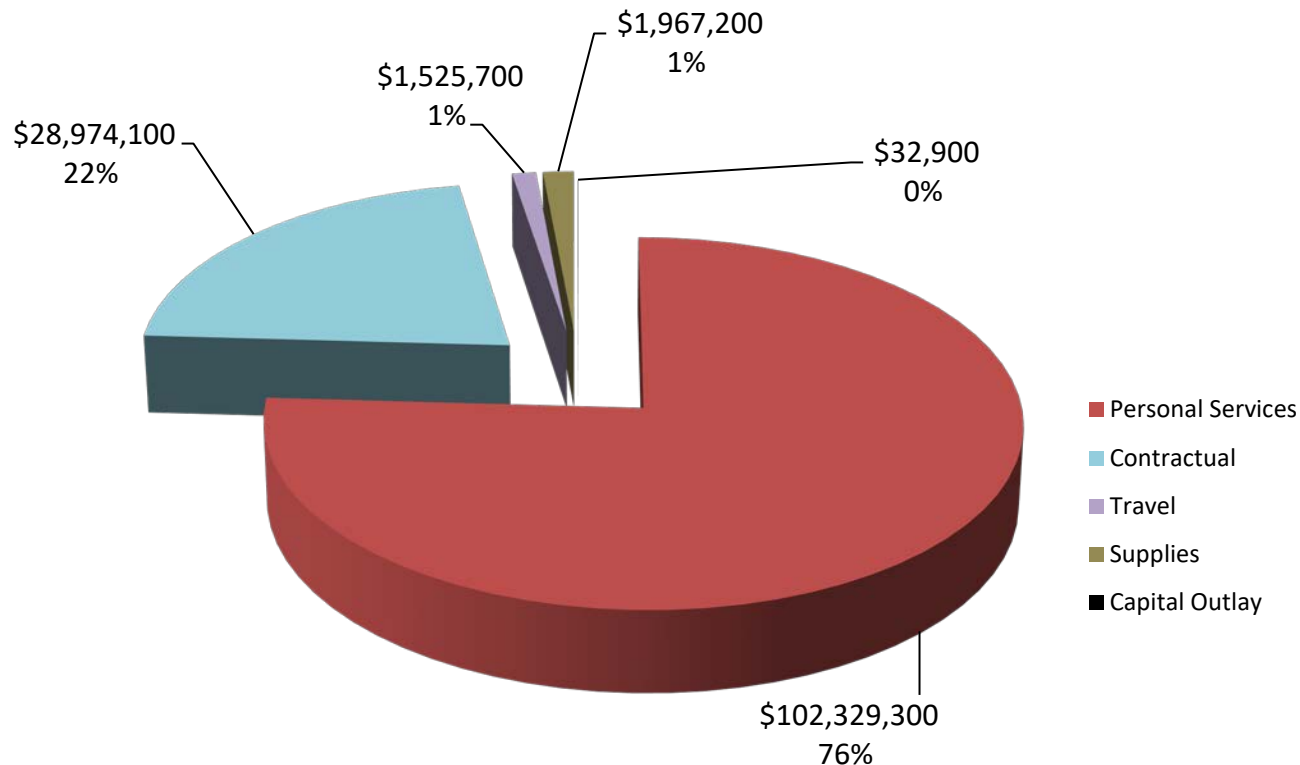


ALASKA COURT SYSTEM

FY24 Authorized Budget Overview

All Budget Units

(Unrestricted General Funds, Designated General Funds, and **ARPA Funds**)



Total FY24 Funding = \$134,829,200
(Excludes Interagency, Grants, and Mental Health Trust Authority Revenues)



ALASKA COURT SYSTEM

Distinguishing Characteristics of the Alaska Court System

- State Funded – No County or Municipal Courts
- Unified Judiciary





ALASKA COURT SYSTEM

Factors Impacting Workloads

- Population
- Police
- Economy
- Statutory Changes
- Recovery from Pandemic Era
- Staff Vacancies





ALASKA COURT SYSTEM

Vacancy Rates – FY2021 – FY2023

Fiscal Year	Vacancy Rate
2021	13.3%
2022	11.0%
2023	10.6%



- FY25 Personal Services Underfunding = 7.3%
- Temporary and non-permanent positions (including most grant-funded positions) are not included in vacancy calculations
- Judges are not included as hiring is not within the control of the Alaska Court System



ALASKA COURT SYSTEM

Recruitment Efforts

- Participated in six job fairs held in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau during 2023
- Social Media Outreach
 - Spotlight “Jobs of the Week” on Alaska Court System Facebook page
 - Direct outreach with Facebook groups such as the Military Spouses’ page
- HR Department is exercising flexibility with not requiring use of on-line application platforms and accepting applications and resumés via email
- Employee Referral Program – Successful referrals yield three paid days of leave





ALASKA COURT SYSTEM

Improved Recruitment Responses



- In 2022, the average number of applications received for each open position totaled 5.3
- In 2023, the average number of applications received for each open position totaled 6.2



ALASKA COURT SYSTEM

Employees in Transition*

Reason for Employment Change	2022	2023	Percentage Change 2022 to 2023
Retirements	12	18	50.0%
Separations	116	102	-12.1%
Internal Transfers	78	68	-12.8%



- With aging workforce future retirements may continue to increase (as of January 2024 payroll, 37% of the court's non-judge workforce is age 50+)
- Separations are declining and the number of exit survey responses citing pay as a reason for separation have declined
- Internal Transfers impact the vacancy rate (current employee accepts a new position, then the vacated position must be recruited)

*Totals exclude Judges and Non-Permanent Positions



ALASKA COURT SYSTEM

FY24 Court System Employees – 776 Authorized Positions

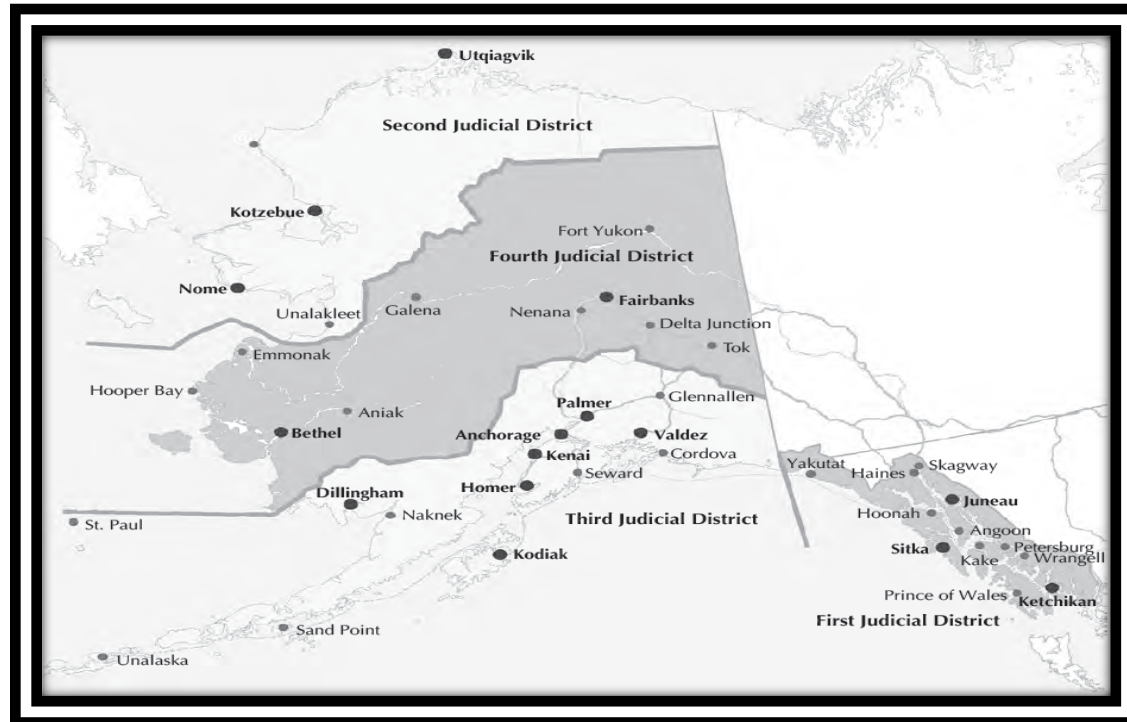
- Primarily Clerical Employees
- Five Supreme Court Justices
- Four Court of Appeal Judges
- 45 Superior Court Judges
- 20 District Court Judges
- 39 Magistrate Judges





ALASKA COURT SYSTEM

FY24 Court Locations & Authorized Positions by District



District	Appellate Court Judges	Trial Court Judges	Magistrate Judges	Non-Judicial Employees	Total
1	1	10	6	67	84
2		4	4	26	34
3	7	46	22	464	539
4	2	14	7	96	119
Total	10	74	39	653	776



ALASKA COURT SYSTEM

Contacts with Alaskans in 2023

- 92,454 new cases filed (trial and appellate courts)
- 5,532 contacts thru the Family Law Self-Help Center
- 3,447 Alaskans served on juries
- 7,741,111 visits to the court's website
- 2,399,429 CourtView searches
- 22,410 online payments made
- 393 therapeutic court participants
- Tens of thousands of on-line court forms accessed or downloaded





ALASKA COURT SYSTEM

Trial Court Caseloads – FY22 vs. FY23

- FY23 Trial Court Case Filings Totaled 91,953
 - Down 13.8 % from FY22 Total Trial Court Filings
- FY23 Superior Court Cases Totaled 21,365
 - Down 3.8% from FY22 Superior Court Case Totals
- FY23 District Court Cases Totaled 70,588
 - Down 16.4% from FY22 District Court Case Totals
 - Minor Offenses for FY23 totaled 12,892 fewer than in FY22





ALASKA COURT SYSTEM

FY25 Continuation Budget Request (UGF):



➤	\$ 957,100	Software Maintenance & Licensing
➤	473,900	Mediators, Interpreters, Visitors
➤	448,000	Facility Maintenance & Operations
➤	444,500	Therapeutic Courts Treatment, Counseling, Urinalyses, Juneau Mental Health Court*, Competency Calendar
➤	252,600	Security Screening Costs
➤	<u>38,200</u>	Appellate Court Travel
	<u><u>\$2,614,300</u></u>	Total Increased FY25 UGF Requested

*The court system has requested an amendment to the Governor's budget to include continuation funding of \$126,100 for the Juneau Mental Health Court.



ALASKA COURT SYSTEM

FY25 Guardianship Monitoring Initiative - New

- Alaska is facing a guardianship crisis due to OPA refusing to accept new cases based on their high caseloads.
- Newly hired professional guardians or family guardians will benefit from the a monitoring program to ensure they are fulfilling the protective services role for which they are appointed.
- The Alaska Court System is requesting \$417,000 to hire three positions to assist guardians and monitor their compliance with statutorily required reports.





ALASKA COURT SYSTEM

FY25 Operating Budget Requests (Non-UGF)

A vertical illustration of a traditional Native Alaskan mask, possibly from the Tlingit or Haida tribes. It features a large, curved, light-colored face with a dark eye, a blue and green headdress with white feathers, and a dark, patterned base.

\$ 525,000	Federal Grant Receipt Authority
178,300	Mental Health Trust Authority
<u>125,000</u>	Interagency Grant Receipts
<u>\$ 828,300</u>	Total FY25 Non-UGF Increase



ALASKA COURT SYSTEM

Thank you for your
time.

Questions?