

Alaska Court System

FY 2018 Operating Budget Request

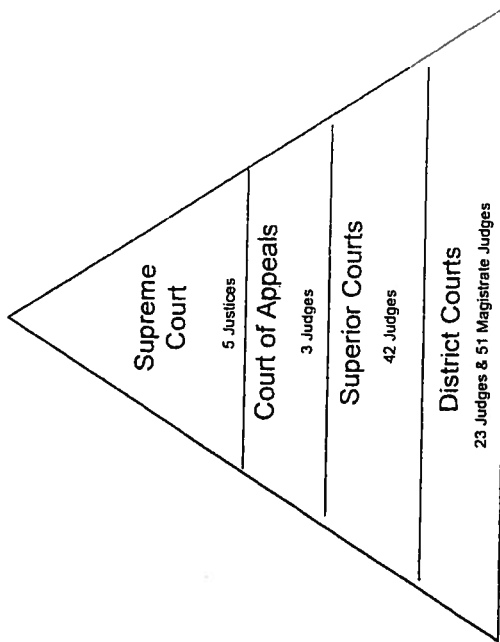
Organization Overview

Alaska has a unified, centrally administered, and totally state-funded judicial system. Municipal governments do not maintain an independent court system. There are four levels of courts in the Alaska Court System, each with different powers, duties, and responsibilities.

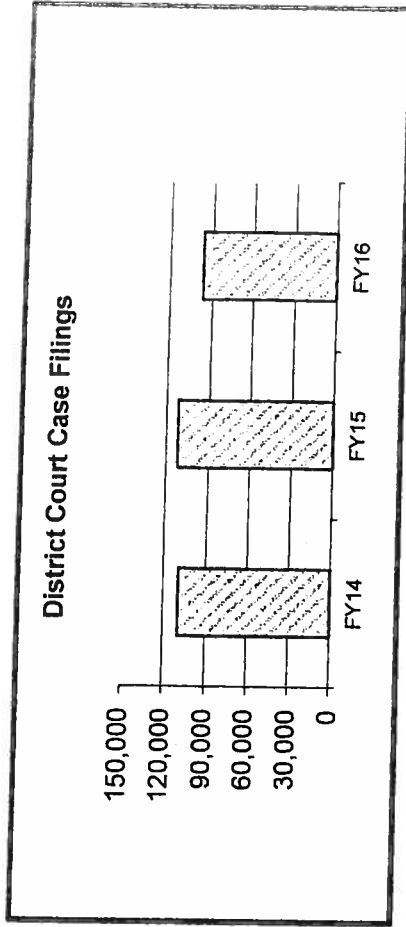
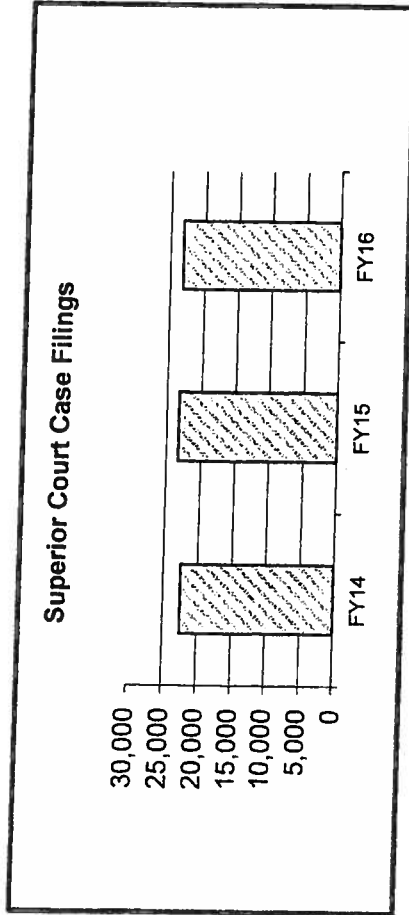
The four levels of courts in the Alaska Court System are the Alaska Supreme Court, the Alaska Court of Appeals, the superior court and the district court. The supreme court and the superior court were established in the Alaska Constitution. In 1959, the legislature created a district court for each judicial district and granted to the supreme court the power to increase or decrease the number of district court judges within each judicial district. In 1980, the legislature created the court of appeals.

The supreme court is the appellate court of final authority in Alaska consisting of a chief justice and four associate justices. With its headquarters in Anchorage and offices in Fairbanks and Juneau, this court hears cases on appeal from final judgment from the superior court and may also review criminal appeals from the court of appeals. In addition, the court oversees the admission and discipline of attorneys. The five supreme court justices, by majority vote, select one of their members to be the chief justice. The chief justice holds that office for three years and may not serve consecutive terms. The chief justice of the supreme court is the administrative head of the Alaska Court System. An administrative director, which is created by constitution, is appointed by the chief justice with concurrence of the supreme court. The administrative director supervises the administration of all courts in the state. Rules governing the administration of all courts and the rules of practice and procedure for civil and criminal cases are promulgated by the supreme court.

The court of appeals is comprised of a chief judge and two associate judges. The chief judge is appointed by the supreme court chief justice and serves a two year term. The judges, as a panel, hear criminal appeals from the superior and district courts and appeals in quasi-criminal cases such as juvenile delinquency cases. The supreme court and the court of appeals constitutes the appellate courts, which employ 56 full-time employees and one part-time employee. There were 397 cases filed in the supreme court and 313 cases filed in the court of appeals during fiscal year 2016.



The superior court is the trial court of general jurisdiction with original jurisdiction in all civil and criminal matters. It has the exclusive power to hear children's proceedings, probate and guardian matters, cases involving the involuntary commitment of persons to institutions for the mentally ill, and most domestic relations matters. This court also serves as an appellate court for appeals from the district court. There are 42 superior court judges in the state. In fiscal year 2016, 23,189 cases were filed in the superior court.



The district court is a trial court of limited jurisdiction. It has jurisdiction over all misdemeanor violations, violations of city and borough ordinances, and all civil matters involving sums less than specified amounts. The district court also handles first appearances and preliminary hearings in felony cases. In addition to the 23 district court judges located throughout Alaska, there are 51 magistrate judges who preside over certain district court matters where services of a full-time judge are not required. Some magistrate judges provide service to more than one location. In fiscal year 2016, 96,674 cases were filed in district court.

The superior courts and district courts, together, constitute the trial courts. For jurisdictional purposes, the state is divided into four judicial districts and the boundaries are defined by state statute. Each judicial district is administered by a presiding superior court judge, who is appointed by the supreme court chief justice. In response to reduced funding levels 38 positions were deleted in the trial courts in FY17. For FY18, the trial courts are authorized 587 permanent full-time positions and 29 permanent part-time positions.

Administration is comprised of the state law library and the administrative office, which includes human resources, fiscal operations, information systems support, facilities, special projects, supply, records management, the print shop, staff counsel, and magistrate services. These offices provide centralized support functions to the appellate and trial courts and to the public. The administrative office is managed by the administrative director of the courts. Administration is located in Anchorage and after deleting seven positions, administration is staffed with 78 permanent full-time positions and two permanent part-time positions.

Starting in 1998, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the Alaska Court System, and other criminal justice departments and agencies have partnered to offer a therapeutic alternative to targeted populations and communities in an effort to address the underlying issues related to contact with the criminal justice system in an effort to reduce recidivism. In FY10, the legislature created the therapeutic courts appropriation.

FY 2018 Budget Request

The FY 2018 budget request for the Alaska Court System is \$106,636,000, which is a reduction of \$2,097,300 from the FY 2017 final authorized amount of \$108,733,300 and \$1,622,000 from the FY 2018 adjusted base amount of \$108,258,000.

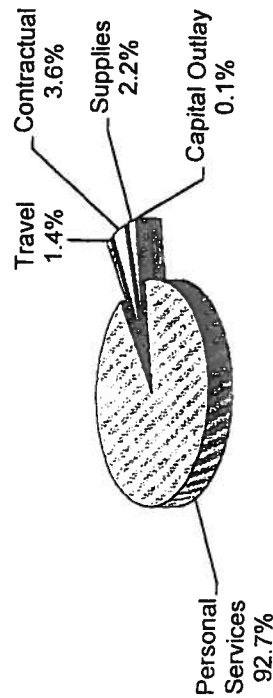
The court system is comprised of four budget request units: appellate courts, trial courts, administration, and therapeutic courts. The majority of the court system's budget is used for personal services. Statewide, the court system has 765 authorized positions. A brief explanation of the court system's budget request is provided below with additional information provided within the detailed budget request sections.

Appellate Courts

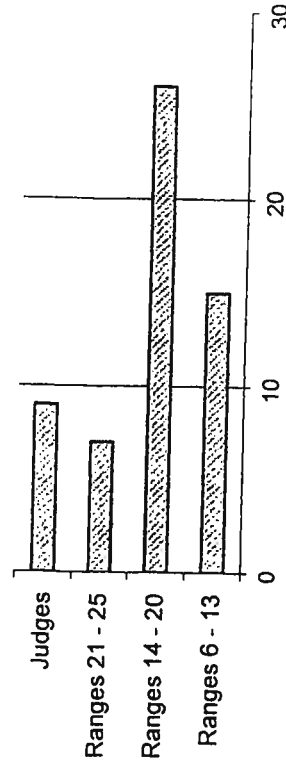
Excluding the mandatory increased cost for health insurance, the Alaska Court System's FY18 unrestricted general funds budget request is \$3,671,800 less than the FY17 final authorized budget. Within the appellate courts, the funding for supplies will be reduced by \$35,000.

The appellate courts are requesting \$135,500 for the Alaska Care rate increase from \$1,346 to \$1,555 per month for judicial branch employees.

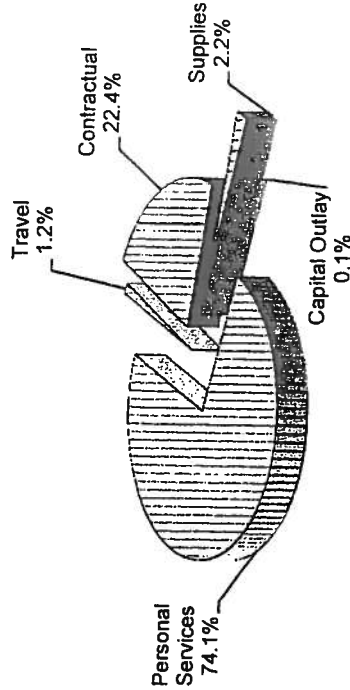
FY17 Appellate Courts Budget Allocation



FY17 Appellate Courts Permanent Staffing



FY17 Alaska Court System Authorized Budget Allocation - All Funds



Trial Courts

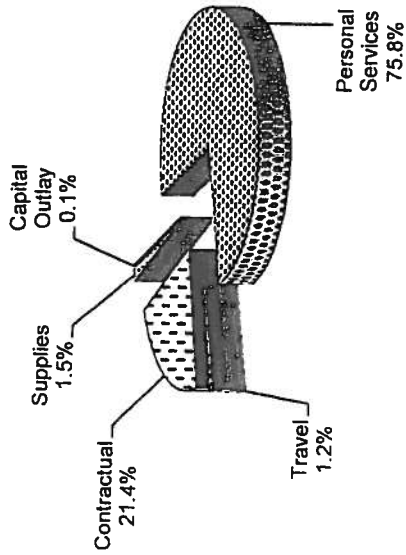
The trial courts are currently authorized for 616 permanent positions, of which 58.1% are classified at a range 13 and below. The trial courts' budget is the largest component of the court system budget.

Excluding the mandatory increased cost for health insurance, the Alaska Court System's FY18 unrestricted general funds budget request is \$3,671,800 less than the FY17 final authorized budget. Within the trial courts, the funding for personal services, contractual services, supplies, and capital outlay will be reduced by \$3,381,800.

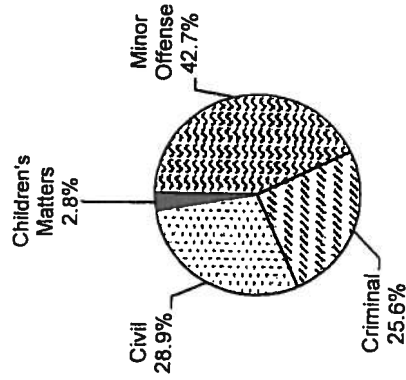
The trial courts are requesting \$1,456,400 for the Alaska Care rate increase from \$1,346 to \$1,555 per month for judicial branch employees.

The trial courts are seeking \$100,000 in additional program receipts authority to receive and expend grant funding from foundations or non-profits such as the National Center for State Courts or the American Bar Association.

FY17 Trial Courts Budget Allocation



FY16 Case Filings Distribution



FY17 Trial Courts Permanent Staffing

Range	Number	Percentage
6 - 13	358	58.1%
14 - 20	79	12.8%
21 - 25	14	2.3%
Law Clerks	44	7.1%
Magistrate Judges	51	8.3%
Judges (active / pro term)	70	11.4%
Total	616	100.0%

Trial Courts (continued)

The trial courts are seeking a reduction of \$300,000 for excess federal funding receipt authority in anticipation of reduced direct federal grant awards.

The trial courts request a net reduction of \$20,000 in interagency receipt authority. The trial courts received \$60,000 in interagency receipt authority in FY15 for increased transcripts' costs for the Office of Public Advocacy (OPA) and the Public Defender's Agency (PDA). These agencies did not receive the additional funding, therefore the trial courts are reducing the interagency receipt authority by the amount received in FY15. The Department of Public Safety (DPS) annually transfers approximately \$40,000 to the trial courts to pay lease expenses for shared space in Nenana. This transfer is facilitated through an unbudgeted reimbursable service agreement (RSA). The trial courts are seeking interagency receipt authority to budget for this revenue. This transaction does not impact the court system's unrestricted general funds allocation.

Administration

Excluding the mandatory increased cost for health insurance, the Alaska Court System's FY18 adjusted base unrestricted general funds budget request is \$3,671,800 less than the FY17 final authorized budget. Within administration, the funding for contractual services and supplies will be reduced by \$105,000.

Administration is requesting \$187,000 for the Alaska Care rate increase from \$1,346 to \$1,555 per month for judicial branch employees.

Therapeutic Courts

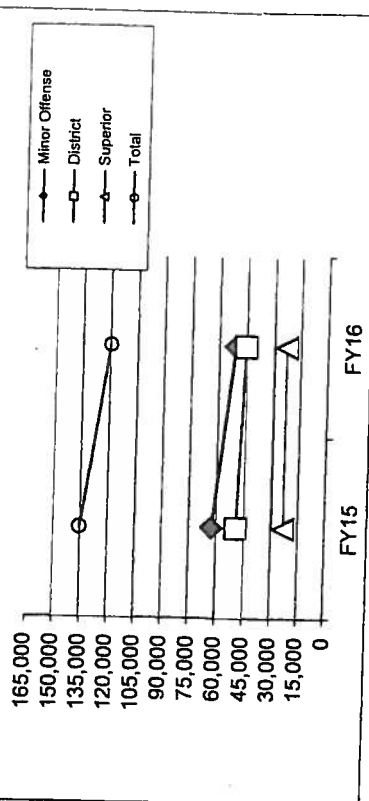
Excluding the mandatory increased cost for health insurance, the Alaska Court System's FY18 unrestricted general funds budget request is \$3,671,800 less than the FY17 final authorized budget. Within the therapeutic courts, the unrestricted general funding for contractual services will be reduced by \$150,000.

The therapeutic courts are requesting \$71,500 for the Alaska Care rate increase from \$1,346 to \$1,555 per month for judicial branch employees and RSAs with other agencies.

The therapeutic courts are seeking \$200,000 in authority to receive and expend federal grant funding.

The therapeutic courts are requesting funding of \$219,400 in Mental Health Trust Authority Authorized Receipts (MHTAAR) for the following projects recommended by the Mental Health Trust Authority: Juneau Mental Health Court: \$204,400; and Training for Staff: \$15,000.

Trial Courts Case Filings



Agency Overview

(continued)

Form A4

Agency Judiciary

RDU Alaska Court System

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FY 2018