



# Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

## News

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### **Legislature Approves Fiscally Responsible Budget for State's Court System**

For immediate release Wednesday, March 11, 2020

CHARLESTON. W.Va. – In the first year the West Virginia Legislature had more control over the judicial system budget, lawmakers generally approved the courts' budget as submitted, making only a minor adjustment relating to the judges' retirement system.

Last year the Supreme Court, working with state legislators, reduced its budget by more than \$6 million and returned \$10 million of unspent funds. The approved budget for the next fiscal year that begins July 1 is also \$4 million less than the judiciary budget five years ago.

The approved budget is \$135,499,000.

"The new system worked," said Chief Justice Tim Armstead.

"In 2018 the voters of our state approved an amendment to our state's Constitution that gave the Legislature oversight over the judiciary's budget. This year is the first year in which that oversight is effective, and I believe the Court and the Legislature worked well, in a cooperative manner, to craft a budget that funds the crucial work of our courts throughout the state in a responsible and fiscally conservative manner," Chief Justice Armstead said.

"Both the Court and the Legislature recognize that it is our responsibility to work together to prevent wasteful spending, and this budget fulfills that responsibility," Chief Justice Armstead said.

Approximately 82 percent of the judicial branch budget is for employee salaries and benefits. The budget funds approximately 1,468 full-time positions throughout the state and includes magistrate courts, family courts, circuit courts, probation offices and the Supreme Court. The budget also funds updates and improvements in technology and equipment to help make the court system more modern and accessible to citizens.

The \$4 million budget reduction in comparison to the Fiscal Year 2019 budget includes the two back-to-back 5 percent pay raises to all court employees (not including elected judges) at the same time as the West Virginia Legislature provided teachers and state employees commensurate pay raises in Fiscal Years 2019 and 2020.

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