



Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia

News

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Supreme Court Details Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Request for State's Judicial Branch

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia began detailing its Fiscal Year 2026 budget proposal for the state's judicial branch of government before lawmakers on the Finance Committee of the House of Delegates Monday morning in Charleston.

For the fiscal year that begins July 1, the Court is requesting approximately \$173.1 million to fund personnel and operations for the state's unified court system, which includes the Supreme Court, Intermediate Court of Appeals, along with the circuit, family and magistrate courts and probation offices operating in all 55 counties.

“Our budget request responsibly funds our state's unified court system and demonstrates our Court's efforts to properly steward the public funds that are entrusted to us,” said Chief Justice William R. “Bill” Wooton.

Nearly 85 percent of the judicial branch's budget is tied to personnel costs, including wages and benefits of the 1,679 budgeted full-time employees working across the state. Approximately 84 percent of those employees work in the county and circuit level.

“It's important to remember while these costs are listed under the Supreme Court in the budget, these funds are not just going to individuals working in the East Wing of the Capitol in Charleston,” Chief Justice Wooton said. “The overwhelming majority of our budget is used to provide salaries and benefits to people working at courthouses and judicial offices in towns and communities in all 55 counties across our state.”

The Supreme Court budget request for Fiscal Year 2026 is up approximately \$6.8 million from the prior year, due largely to:

- A \$1.5 million increase in Public Employees Insurance Agency (PEIA) premium contributions.
- A \$2.1 million increase to fund the 2023 [House Bill 3332](#) judicial realignment, which added five new circuit judges, one new family court judge and 10 new magistrates as of Jan. 1, 2025. Including support staff, this resulted in an

additional 20 new full-time employees at the circuit court level, three at the family court level, and 20 in magistrate courts.

- \$1 million to cover the Court's portion of costs tied to family treatment courts, which currently operate in 17 counties. The Court will continue to pursue grant opportunities to expand this successful program, which has generated a net savings of \$2.4 million in reduced subsidy payments due to its successful results since its inception.
- A \$460,000 increase in the Court's Board of Risk and Insurance Management (BRIM) premium.
- \$249,416 to fund three new probation positions, \$154,615 to fund two new Administrative Office positions, and \$266,000 to increase pay scales for court reporters and electronic reporting operations to help cover vacancies in those areas.

"Our budget is narrowly calculated and designed to only ask for the funds we actually need to operate the judicial branch," Chief Justice Wooton said. "This proposal represents our Court's ongoing commitment to efficiently and responsibly manage the taxpayer dollars appropriated to the judicial branch."

The Court's budget proposal is included in [House Bill 2026](#), the general revenue budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1.

A copy of the Court's budget PowerPoint presentation can be viewed here:

<https://www.courtswv.gov/sites/default/pubfiles/mnt/2025-02/FY26%20SCAWV%20Budget%20Presentation%20FINAL.pdf>.

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