



**FY 2018 JUDICIAL BRANCH OPERATING BUDGET**

**Background.** [Senate File 508](#) (Judicial Branch Appropriations Act) appropriated a total of \$175.7 million from the General Fund to the Judicial Branch for FY 2018. This is no change in funding compared to estimated net FY 2017 and a decrease of \$3.0 million compared to FY 2016.

**Operating Budget.** The Iowa Supreme Court recently approved the Judicial Branch operating budget for FY 2018. The Office of State Court Administration has indicated that an appropriation of \$191.0 million would have been required to fully fund the Judicial Branch operations. In order to balance the \$15.0 million shortfall, the following actions have been approved for FY 2018:

- Funding all positions on the payroll in April 2017 (including judicial vacancies currently being filled).
- Maintaining a hiring freeze from FY 2017, with limited exceptions.
- Filling remaining vacant judgeships on hold from FY 2017.
- Filling 18.0 FTE positions identified as most critical.
- Utilizing technology funds to offset some nonpersonnel information technology (IT) expenses.
- Maintaining reductions instituted in FY 2017 to the following nonpersonnel line items:
  - 20.0% – Office supplies and postage
  - 10.0% – Telephone service
  - 50.0% – Furniture and non-IT equipment
  - 10.0% – Education and training
- Restoring funding for travel to FY 2016 actual expenditure levels.
- Continuing the moratorium on expansion of specialty courts. The State Court Administrator will work with various specialty courts to decrease the amount of time devoted to specialty courts by judges and to develop a way to phase out specialty courts in FY 2018 if there is still a budget deficit.

**Salary Increases.** The approved FY 2018 operating budget includes salary increases for both judicial officers and nonjudicial officer staff, as follows:

- **Judges and Magistrates:** Senate File 508 permits the Iowa Supreme Court to increase the annual salaries of judges and magistrates by a maximum of 2.5% during FY 2018. The Supreme Court approved the increase at an estimated cost of \$1.1 million. The most recent salary increase was implemented in FY 2014 and increased the salaries for judges and magistrates by 4.5%. The following chart compares the salaries for judges and magistrates in FY 2017 and FY 2018:

<b>Annual Judicial Salaries</b>		
	FY 2017	FY 2018
<b>Supreme Court</b>		
Chief Justice	\$ 178,538	\$ 183,001
Justices	\$ 170,544	\$ 174,808
<b>Court of Appeals</b>		
Chief Judge	\$ 159,885	\$ 163,882
Judges	\$ 154,556	\$ 158,420
<b>District Court</b>		
Chief Judge	\$ 149,226	\$ 152,957
District Judges	\$ 143,897	\$ 147,494
District Associate	\$ 127,908	\$ 131,106
Juvenile Associate	\$ 127,908	\$ 131,106
Probate Associate	\$ 127,908	\$ 131,106
Magistrates	\$ 39,438	\$ 40,424
Senior Judges	\$ 8,527	\$ 8,740

- **Nonjudicial Officer Staff:** The Iowa Supreme Court approved a 1.0% across-the-board salary increase for all contract and noncontract covered employees at an estimated cost of \$1.0 million. In addition, all contract and noncontract covered employees not already at the top step of their pay grade will receive an automatic step increase on their salary review date. This increase is estimated to cost \$876,399.

All increased costs resulting from the salary increases will be covered by holding additional positions vacant. Any district court judgeship that becomes vacant will be held open for the balance of the fiscal year following that judge's retirement, except in cases where there is more than one vacancy in one judicial election district. Over 5.0% of district court judges left the Judicial Branch last year, and nearly 9.0% more are anticipated to leave in FY 2018. The Office of State Court Administration anticipates a savings of more than \$1.4 million from vacant judgeships held open during FY 2018. There are currently 153 FTE position vacancies, comprising 10.0% of the Judicial Branch workforce. This number is estimated to increase to about 13.0% by the end of the fiscal year. The current Judicial Branch employees will take on the extra work created by holding positions vacant at all levels of the Judicial Branch.

**Clerk of Court Positions.** Currently, there are 62 clerks of court who supervise the operations of the clerk's offices in the 100 county courthouses. There are a total of 644 staff members in the clerk's offices around the State, a reduction of about 10.0% from 10 years ago.

**Workload Analysis.** During FY 2017, the Judicial Branch worked with the National Center for State Courts to complete a workload analysis for judges and magistrates as well as support staff in the clerk's offices. A study of the juvenile court services operations will begin this year.

**Additional Information.** Further detail regarding the FY 2018 operating budget is available on the Judicial Branch [website](#).

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