

Judicial Branch Appropriations Bill

Senate File 2486

Last Action:
Senate Appropriations
Committee
April 8, 2026

An Act relating to and making appropriations to the Judicial Branch.

Fiscal Services Division
Legislative Services Agency

NOTES ON BILLS AND AMENDMENTS (NOBA)

Available online at www.legis.iowa.gov/publications/information/appropriationBillAnalysis

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FUNDING SUMMARY

General Fund FY 2027: Appropriates a total of \$221.8 million from the General Fund to the Judicial Branch for FY 2027. This is no change in funding compared to estimated net FY 2026. The appropriations include the following:

- \$202.7 million for general operations within the Judicial Branch.
- \$3.6 million to the Jury Witness Fee Revolving Fund.
- \$3.3 million for court-ordered services.
- \$12.3 million for juvenile delinquent graduated sanctions services.

STUDIES AND INTENT

Intent

Requires appropriations to be distributed among the judicial districts, as determined by the State Court Administrator, within 30 days of the date on which the annual census data is released.	Page 2, Line 1
Prohibits a district or juvenile court from ordering any service that is a charge to the State pursuant to Iowa Code section 232.141 if there are insufficient funds to pay for the service. Requires the Chief Juvenile Court Officer to use the funds in a manner that will cover the entire fiscal year and permits funds to be transferred between districts.	Page 2, Line 8
Prohibits a district or juvenile court from ordering a county to pay for a service provided to a juvenile that is chargeable to the State under Iowa Code section 232.141 (4).	Page 2, Line 22
Prohibits the Judicial Branch from duplicating current State payroll, budgeting, and accounting systems, except for the purposes of internal processing.	Page 3, Line 21
Requires the Judicial Branch to focus efforts on collecting delinquent fines and fees.	Page 4, Line 2
Specifies that it is the intent of the General Assembly that the offices of the clerks of the district court operate in all 99 counties and be accessible to the public as much as is reasonably possible to address the relative needs of the citizens of each county. Requires that an office of the clerk of the district court be open during regular courthouse hours.	Page 4, Line 5

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

JUDICIAL BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS BILL

SENATE FILE 2486

Permits parties to a civil case, including a jury trial, to move the case to a contiguous county during FY 2027 if all parties in a case agree, even if the contiguous county is located in an adjacent judicial district. Specifies that if the trial is moved to an adjacent judicial district, the judicial officers within the adjacent district must preside over the case.

Page 5, Line 2

Permits a judicial officer to waive travel reimbursement for any official judicial business travel outside the county of residence of the judicial officer during FY 2027.

Page 5, Line 11

Permits the Supreme Court to order judicial officers to take unpaid leave in the same manner as noncontract employees of the Judicial Branch during FY 2027.

Page 5, Line 16

Specifies that it is the intent of the General Assembly that the Judicial Branch use the Iowa Communications Network (ICN) or other secure electronic communications instead of traveling during FY 2027.

Page 5, Line 30

Nonreversion

Allows any unencumbered or unobligated funds appropriated to the Judicial Branch for court-ordered services from the General Fund to remain available for expenditure through FY 2030.

Page 3, Line 2

Allows any unencumbered or unobligated funds appropriated to the Judicial Branch for Juvenile Court Services from the General Fund to remain available for expenditure through FY 2030.

Page 3, Line 16

Required Reports

Requires the Judicial Branch to submit monthly financial statements for all appropriated accounts to the Legislative Services Agency (LSA) and to the DOM. Specifies the format and content to be included in the financial statements.

Page 3, Line 27

Requires the Judicial Branch to notify the LSA prior to any intradepartmental transfer of funds and specifies the contents to be included in the notice.

Page 4, Line 11

Requires the Judicial Branch to provide a semiannual report to the LSA and the DOM specifying the amounts of fines, surcharges, and court costs collected using the Iowa Court Information System (ICIS). Requires the Judicial Branch to continue to share vital sentencing and other information with other State departments and government agencies involved with the criminal justice system through the ICIS.

Page 4, Line 20

Requires the Judicial Branch to provide a report to the General Assembly and the Department of Management (DOM) by January 1, 2027, specifying funds received and expended from the Court Technology and Modernization Fund during FY 2027 and the plans for expenditures from the Fund during

Page 4, Line 29

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
JUDICIAL BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS BILL

FY 2027.

SIGNIFICANT CODE CHANGES

Requires the Judicial Council to conduct an open session meeting when discussing the Judicial Retirement System.

Page 5, Line 35

The State Court Administrator must advise the Judicial Council regarding all decisions made about the Judicial Retirement System.

Page 6, Line 13

Senate File 2486 provides for the following changes to the Code of Iowa.

Page #	Line #	Bill Section	Action	Code Section
5	35	6	Amend	602.1202
6	13	7	Amend	602.9102

1 1 Section 1. JUDICIAL BRANCH.

1 2 1. There is appropriated from the general fund of the state
1 3 to the judicial branch for the fiscal year beginning July 1,
1 4 2026, and ending June 30, 2027, the following amounts, or so
1 5 much thereof as is necessary, to be used for the purposes
1 6 designated:

1 7 a. For salaries of supreme court justices, appellate court
1 8 judges, district court judges, district associate judges,
1 9 associate juvenile judges, associate probate judges, judicial
1 10 magistrates and staff, state court administrator, clerk of
1 11 the supreme court, district court administrators, clerks of
1 12 the district court, juvenile court officers, board of law
1 13 examiners, board of examiners of shorthand reporters, and
1 14 commission on judicial qualifications; receipt and disbursement
1 15 of child support payments; reimbursement of the auditor
1 16 of state for expenses incurred in completing audits of the
1 17 offices of the clerks of the district court during the fiscal
1 18 year beginning July 1, 2026; and maintenance, equipment, and
1 19 miscellaneous purposes:
1 20 \$ 202,691,378

General Fund appropriation to the Judicial Branch for operations.

DETAIL: This is no change in funding compared to estimated net FY 2026.

1 21 b. For deposit in the revolving fund created pursuant to
1 22 section 602.1302, subsection 3, for jury and witness fees,
1 23 mileage, costs related to summoning jurors, costs and fees for
1 24 interpreters and translators, and reimbursement of attorney
1 25 fees paid by the state public defender:
1 26 \$ 3,600,000

General Fund appropriation to the Jury and Witness Fee Revolving Fund for the reimbursement of juror and witness fees and mileage; costs related to summoning jurors, interpreters, and translators; and reimbursement of attorney fees paid by the Office of the State Public Defender.

DETAIL: This is no change in funding compared to estimated net FY 2026.

1 27 c. For payment of expenses for court-ordered services
1 28 provided to juveniles who are under the supervision of juvenile
1 29 court services, which expenses are a charge upon the state
1 30 pursuant to section 232.141, subsection 4:
1 31 \$ 3,290,000

General Fund appropriation to the Judicial Branch for court-ordered services provided to juveniles.

DETAIL: This is no change in funding compared to estimated net FY 2026.

1 32 (1) Of the moneys appropriated in this lettered paragraph,
1 33 no more than \$1,556,000 is allocated to provide school-based

Allocates no more than \$1,556,000 for school-based supervision of delinquent children, of which \$25,000 may be used for

1 34 supervision of children under chapter 232, of which no more
1 35 than \$25,000 may be used for purposes of training.

training. A portion of the cost for school-based liaisons is required to be paid by school districts.

DETAIL: The overall allocation is no change compared to estimated net FY 2026.

2 1 (2) Notwithstanding section 232.141 or any other provision
2 2 of law to the contrary, the moneys appropriated in this
2 3 lettered paragraph shall be distributed to the judicial
2 4 districts as determined by the state court administrator. The
2 5 state court administrator shall make the determination of the
2 6 distribution amounts within thirty days of the date on which
2 7 the annual census data is released.

CODE: Requires appropriations to be distributed among the judicial districts, as determined by the State Court Administrator, within 30 days of the date on which the annual census data is released.

2 8 (3) Notwithstanding chapter 232 or any other provision of
2 9 law to the contrary, a district or juvenile court shall not
2 10 order any service which is a charge upon the state pursuant
2 11 to section 232.141 if there are insufficient court-ordered
2 12 services moneys available in the district court distribution
2 13 amounts to pay for the service. The chief juvenile court
2 14 officer shall encourage use of the moneys appropriated in this
2 15 lettered paragraph such that there are sufficient moneys to pay
2 16 for all court-ordered services during the entire fiscal year.
2 17 The chief juvenile court officer shall attempt to anticipate
2 18 potential surpluses and shortfalls in the distribution amounts
2 19 and shall cooperatively request the state court administrator
2 20 to transfer moneys between the judicial districts' distribution
2 21 amounts as prudent.

CODE: Prohibits a district or juvenile court from ordering any service that is a charge to the State pursuant to Iowa Code section [232.141](#) if there are insufficient funds to pay for the service. Requires the Chief Juvenile Court Officer to use the funds in a manner that will cover the entire fiscal year and permits funds to be transferred between districts.

2 22 (4) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary,
2 23 a district or juvenile court shall not order a county to pay
2 24 for any service provided to a juvenile pursuant to an order
2 25 entered under chapter 232 which is a charge upon the state
2 26 under section 232.141, subsection 4.

Prohibits a district or juvenile court from ordering a county to pay for a service provided to a juvenile that is chargeable to the State under Iowa Code section [232.141](#)(4).

2 27 (5) Of the moneys appropriated in this lettered paragraph,
2 28 no more than \$83,000 may be used by the judicial branch
2 29 for administration of the requirements under this lettered
2 30 paragraph.

Allocates no more than \$83,000 to the Judicial Branch for administration related to court-ordered services.

DETAIL: This is no change in funding compared to estimated net FY 2026.

2 31 (6) Of the moneys appropriated in this lettered paragraph,
 2 32 an amount not to exceed the actual cost of the annual
 2 33 membership fee is allocated to the judicial branch to support
 2 34 the interstate commission for juveniles in accordance with
 2 35 the interstate compact for juveniles as provided in section
 3 1 232.173.

Allocates moneys to the Judicial Branch to be used to support the Interstate Commission for Juveniles in accordance with the Interstate Compact for Juveniles.

3 2 (7) Notwithstanding section 8.33, moneys appropriated in
 3 3 this lettered paragraph that remain unencumbered or unobligated
 3 4 at the close of the fiscal year shall not revert but shall
 3 5 remain available for expenditure for the purposes designated
 3 6 until the close of the fiscal year that begins July 1, 2029.

CODE: Allows any unencumbered or unobligated funds appropriated to the Judicial Branch for court-ordered services from the General Fund to remain available for expenditure through FY 2030.

3 7 d. For juvenile delinquent graduated sanctions services
 3 8 pursuant to section 232.192:
 3 9 \$ 12,253,000

General Fund appropriation to the Judicial Branch for juvenile delinquent graduated sanctions services.

DETAIL: This is no change in funding compared to estimated net FY 2026.

3 10 (1) Any state moneys saved as a result of efforts by
 3 11 juvenile court services to earn a federal fund match pursuant
 3 12 to Tit.IV-E of the federal Family First Prevention Services
 3 13 Act of 2018, Pub.L.No.115-123, for juvenile court services
 3 14 administration is appropriated to the judicial branch for
 3 15 purposes of this lettered paragraph.

Appropriates to the Judicial Branch any moneys saved as a result of efforts by Juvenile Court Services to earn a federal fund match pursuant to Tit. IV-E of the federal [Family First Prevention Services Act](#) for Juvenile Court Services administration.

3 16 (2) Notwithstanding section 8.33, moneys appropriated in
 3 17 this lettered paragraph that remain unencumbered or unobligated
 3 18 at the close of the fiscal year shall not revert but shall
 3 19 remain available for expenditure for the purposes designated
 3 20 until the close of the fiscal year that begins July 1, 2029.

CODE: Allows any unencumbered or unobligated funds appropriated to the Judicial Branch for Juvenile Court Services from the General Fund to remain available for expenditure through FY 2030.

3 21 2. The judicial branch, except for purposes of internal
 3 22 processing, shall use the current state budget system, the
 3 23 state payroll system, and the Iowa finance and accounting
 3 24 system in administration of programs and payments for services,
 3 25 and shall not duplicate the state payroll, accounting, and
 3 26 budgeting systems.

Prohibits the Judicial Branch from duplicating current State payroll, budgeting, and accounting systems, except for the purposes of internal processing.

3 27 3. The judicial branch shall submit monthly financial
 3 28 statements to the legislative services agency and the

Requires the Judicial Branch to submit monthly financial statements for all appropriated accounts to the Legislative

<p>3 29 department of management containing all appropriated accounts 3 30 in the same manner as provided in the monthly financial status 3 31 reports and personal services usage reports of the department 3 32 of administrative services. The monthly financial statements 3 33 must include a comparison of the dollars and percentage 3 34 spent of budgeted versus actual revenues and expenditures on 3 35 a cumulative basis for full-time equivalent positions and 4 1 dollars.</p>	<p>Services Agency (LSA) and to the DOM. Specifies the format and content to be included in the financial statements.</p>
<p>4 2 4. The judicial branch shall focus efforts upon the 4 3 collection of delinquent fines, penalties, court costs, fees, 4 4 surcharges, or similar amounts.</p>	<p>Requires the Judicial Branch to focus efforts on collecting delinquent fines and fees.</p>
<p>4 5 5. It is the intent of the general assembly that the offices 4 6 of the clerks of the district court operate in all 99 counties 4 7 and be accessible to the public as much as is reasonably 4 8 possible in order to address the relative needs of the citizens 4 9 of each county. An office of the clerk of the district court 4 10 shall be open regular courthouse hours.</p>	<p>Specifies that it is the intent of the General Assembly that the offices of the clerks of the district court operate in all 99 counties and be accessible to the public as much as is reasonably possible to address the relative needs of the citizens of each county. Requires that an office of the clerk of the district court be open during regular courthouse hours.</p>
<p>4 11 6. In addition to the requirements for transfers under 4 12 section 8.39, the judicial branch shall not change the 4 13 appropriations from the amounts appropriated to the judicial 4 14 branch in this Act unless notice of the revisions is given to 4 15 the legislative services agency prior to the effective date. 4 16 The notice must include information on the judicial branch's 4 17 rationale for making the changes and details concerning the 4 18 workload and performance measures upon which the changes are 4 19 based.</p>	<p>Requires the Judicial Branch to notify the LSA prior to any intradepartmental transfer of funds and specifies the contents to be included in the notice.</p>
<p>4 20 7. The judicial branch shall submit a semiannual update to 4 21 the legislative services agency and department of management 4 22 specifying the amounts of fines, surcharges, and court costs 4 23 collected using the Iowa court information system since the 4 24 last report. The judicial branch shall continue to facilitate 4 25 the sharing of vital sentencing and other information with 4 26 other state departments and governmental agencies involved in 4 27 the criminal justice system through the Iowa court information 4 28 system.</p>	<p>Requires the Judicial Branch to provide a semiannual report to the LSA and the DOM specifying the amounts of fines, surcharges, and court costs collected using the Iowa Court Information System (ICIS). Requires the Judicial Branch to continue to share vital sentencing and other information with other State departments and government agencies involved with the criminal justice system through the ICIS.</p>
<p>4 29 8. The judicial branch shall provide a report to the general 4 30 assembly and department of management by January 1, 2027,</p>	<p>Requires the Judicial Branch to provide a report to the General Assembly and the DOM by January 1, 2027,</p>

4 31 concerning the amounts received and expended from the court
 4 32 technology and modernization fund created in section 602.8108,
 4 33 subsection 7, during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025,
 4 34 and ending June 30, 2026, and the plans for expenditures from
 4 35 the fund during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and
 5 1 ending June 30, 2027.

specifying the amounts received and expended from the Court Technology and Modernization Fund during FY 2026 and the plans for expenditures from the Fund during FY 2027.

5 2 Sec. 2. CIVIL TRIALS — LOCATION. Notwithstanding any
 5 3 provision to the contrary, for the fiscal year beginning July
 5 4 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027, if all parties in a case
 5 5 agree, a civil trial including a jury trial may take place in a
 5 6 county contiguous to the county with proper jurisdiction, even
 5 7 if the contiguous county is located in an adjacent judicial
 5 8 district or judicial election district. If the trial is moved
 5 9 pursuant to this section, court personnel shall treat the case
 5 10 as if a change of venue occurred.

Permits parties to a civil case, including a jury trial, to move the case to a contiguous county during FY 2027 if all parties in a case agree, even if the contiguous county is located in an adjacent judicial district. Specifies that if the trial is moved to an adjacent judicial district, the judicial officers within the adjacent district must preside over the case.

5 11 Sec. 3. TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT. Notwithstanding section
 5 12 602.1509, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and
 5 13 ending June 30, 2027, a judicial officer may waive travel
 5 14 reimbursement for any travel outside the judicial officer's
 5 15 county of residence to conduct official judicial business.

Permits a judicial officer to waive travel reimbursement for any official judicial business travel outside the county of residence of the judicial officer during FY 2027.

5 16 Sec. 4. JUDICIAL OFFICER — UNPAID LEAVE. Notwithstanding
 5 17 the annual salary rates for judicial officers established by
 5 18 2025 Iowa Acts, chapter 158, section 6, for the fiscal year
 5 19 beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027, the supreme
 5 20 court may by order place all judicial officers on unpaid leave
 5 21 status on any day employees of the judicial branch are placed
 5 22 on temporary layoff status. The biweekly pay of the judicial
 5 23 officers shall be reduced accordingly for the pay period in
 5 24 which the unpaid leave date occurred in the same manner as
 5 25 for noncontract employees of the judicial branch. Through
 5 26 the course of the fiscal year, the judicial branch may use an
 5 27 amount equal to the aggregate amount of salary reductions due
 5 28 to the judicial officer unpaid leave days for any purpose other
 5 29 than for judicial salaries.

Permits the Supreme Court to order judicial officers to take unpaid leave in the same manner as noncontract employees of the Judicial Branch during FY 2027.

5 30 Sec. 5. IOWA COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK. It is the intent
 5 31 of the general assembly that the judicial branch utilize
 5 32 the Iowa communications network or other secure electronic
 5 33 communications in lieu of traveling for the fiscal year

Specifies that it is the intent of the General Assembly that the Judicial Branch use the Iowa Communications Network (ICN) or other secure electronic communications instead of traveling during FY 2027.

5 34 beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027.

5 35 Sec. 6. Section 602.1202, Code 2026, is amended to read as
6 1 follows:

6 2 602.1202 JUDICIAL COUNCIL.

6 3 1. A judicial council is established, consisting of the
6 4 chief judges of the judicial districts, the chief judge of
6 5 the court of appeals, and the chief justice who shall be the
6 6 chairperson. The council shall convene not less than twice
6 7 each year at times and places as ordered by the chief justice.
6 8 The council shall advise the supreme court with respect to the
6 9 supervision and administration of the judicial branch.

6 10 2. A meeting of the judicial council in which the judicial
6 11 retirement system is discussed shall not be held as a closed
6 12 session under section 21.5.

6 13 Sec. 7. Section 602.9102, Code 2026, is amended to read as
6 14 follows:

6 15 602.9102 ADMINISTERED BY COURT ADMINISTRATOR.

6 16 1. The court administrator ~~shall be vested with authority~~ is
6 17 authorized to administer the system and related reports and may
6 18 promulgate rules therefor not inconsistent with the provisions
6 19 of this article.

6 20 2. The state court administrator shall advise the
6 21 judicial council on all determinations made by the state court
6 22 administrator concerning the judicial retirement system.

CODE: Requires the Judicial Council to conduct an open session meeting when discussing the Judicial Retirement System.

CODE: The State Court Administrator must advise the Judicial Council regarding all decisions made about the Judicial Retirement System.

Justice System General Fund

	Actual FY 2025 <u>(1)</u>	Estimated Net FY 2026 <u>(2)</u>	Senate Approp FY 2027 <u>(3)</u>	Sen Appr FY27 vs Est Net FY 2026 <u>(4)</u>	Page and Line # <u>(5)</u>
Judicial Branch					
Judicial Branch					
Judicial Branch	\$ 201,018,878	\$ 202,691,378	\$ 202,691,378	\$ 0	PG 1 LN 7
Jury & Witness Fee Revolving Fund	3,600,000	3,600,000	3,600,000	0	PG 1 LN 21
Court-Ordered Services	3,290,000	3,290,000	3,290,000	0	PG 1 LN 27
Graduated Sanctions	12,253,000	12,253,000	12,253,000	0	PG 3 LN 7
Total Judicial Branch	<u>\$ 220,161,878</u>	<u>\$ 221,834,378</u>	<u>\$ 221,834,378</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>	
Total Justice System	<u>\$ 220,161,878</u>	<u>\$ 221,834,378</u>	<u>\$ 221,834,378</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>	