

# FY 2026 Judicial Branch Budget Presentation

**Bob Gast**

**State Court Administrator**

# Agenda

- Judicial Branch Overview
- FY 2026 Judicial Budget Request
- Improvements Moving Forward

# Judicial Branch People

**Judges and Magistrates** use their legal expertise and knowledge to impartially apply laws to serve the public.

**Clerks of Court and Clerk Staff** oversee the operations of the clerks' offices in each of Iowa's county courthouses. Across 99 counties, clerks' office staff perform a wide variety of tasks including: processing and maintaining all documents filed with the court; collecting and processing fines, fees, and restitution; assisting citizens with filing documents; and sharing court information with state agencies.

**Juvenile Court Officers** and administrative staff protect the public by working directly with delinquent youths and their families to develop skills needed to address negative behaviors.

**Court Reporters** keep the record of trials, hearings, and court proceedings and provide administrative support to judges.

# Judicial Branch People

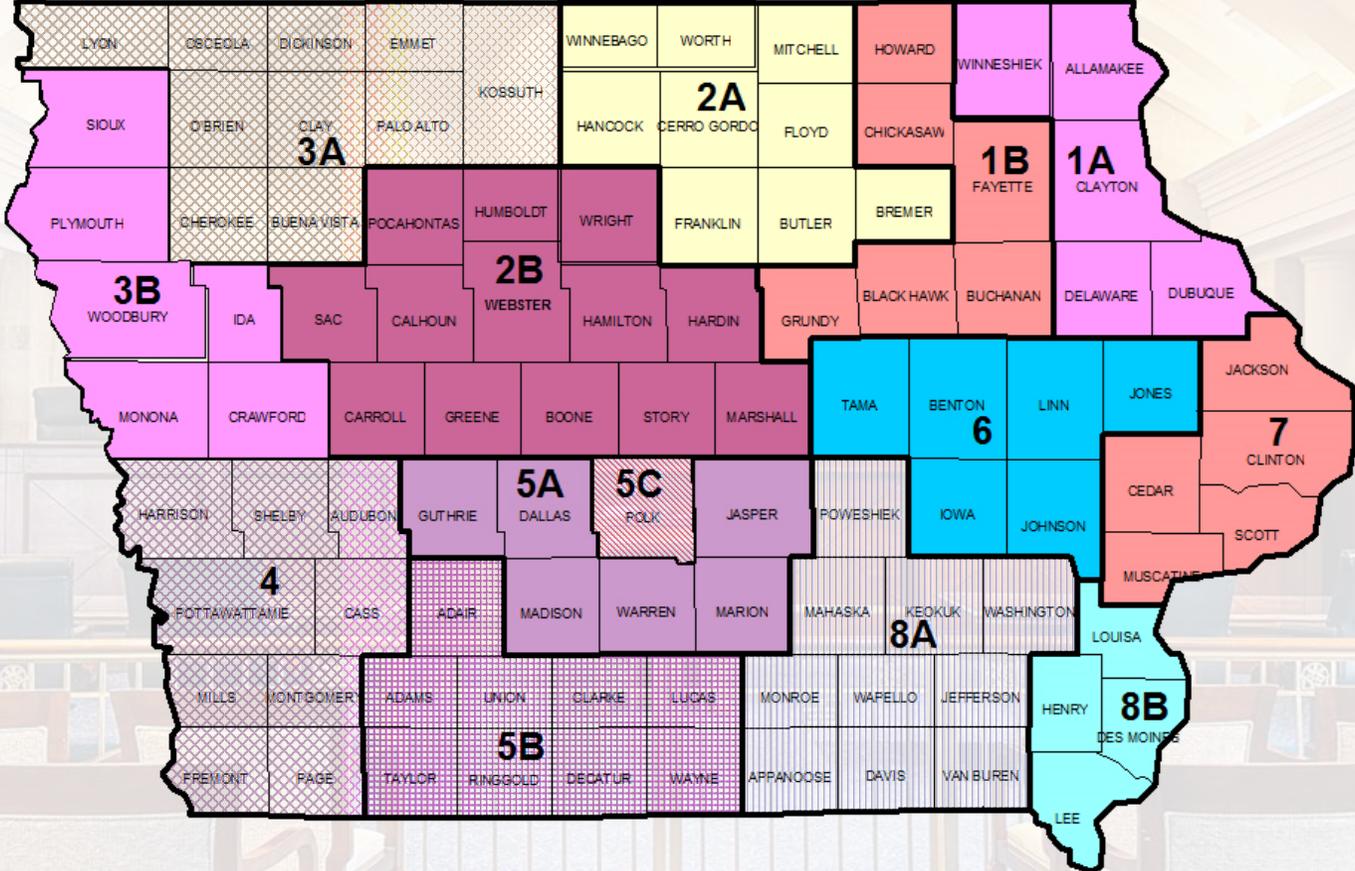
**Court Administrators** and their staff help schedule trials and manage the business side of the courts, such as human resources, accounting, purchasing, information technology, and training and education.

**Judicial Specialists** conduct scheduling conferences, prepare scheduling and other orders, and assist with jurors and jury trials and other court proceedings.

**Information Technology Professionals** provide ongoing maintenance, support, refinement, and improvement of the subsystems that comprise the Electronic Document Management System as well as other systems.

**Law Clerks** are attorneys who conduct legal research and analysis, draft routine court orders, and perform other law-related duties.

# Judicial Election Districts



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# Division of Funding

## State funding:

- Judges and court staff
- Information technology
- Continuing education
- Furniture and equipment

## County funding:

- Courthouses
- Court security
- 25% of Furniture and Equipment for county-initiated renovation or new build

# Iowa Court Revenue Collections FY 2024

TYPE OF FEE	AMOUNT
Fines, Infractions, Civil Penalties, LE Surcharge	\$ 60,572,517
Miscellaneous Court Fees and Items	\$ 21,524,623
Court Costs	\$ 16,143,485
County and County Fines, Fees, Surcharges, Etc.	\$ 20,120,705
Filing Fees	\$ 16,598,592
Criminal Surcharges	\$ 10,843,706
Indigent Defense Reimbursement	\$ 3,194,802
	<b>Total</b> \$ 148,998,430

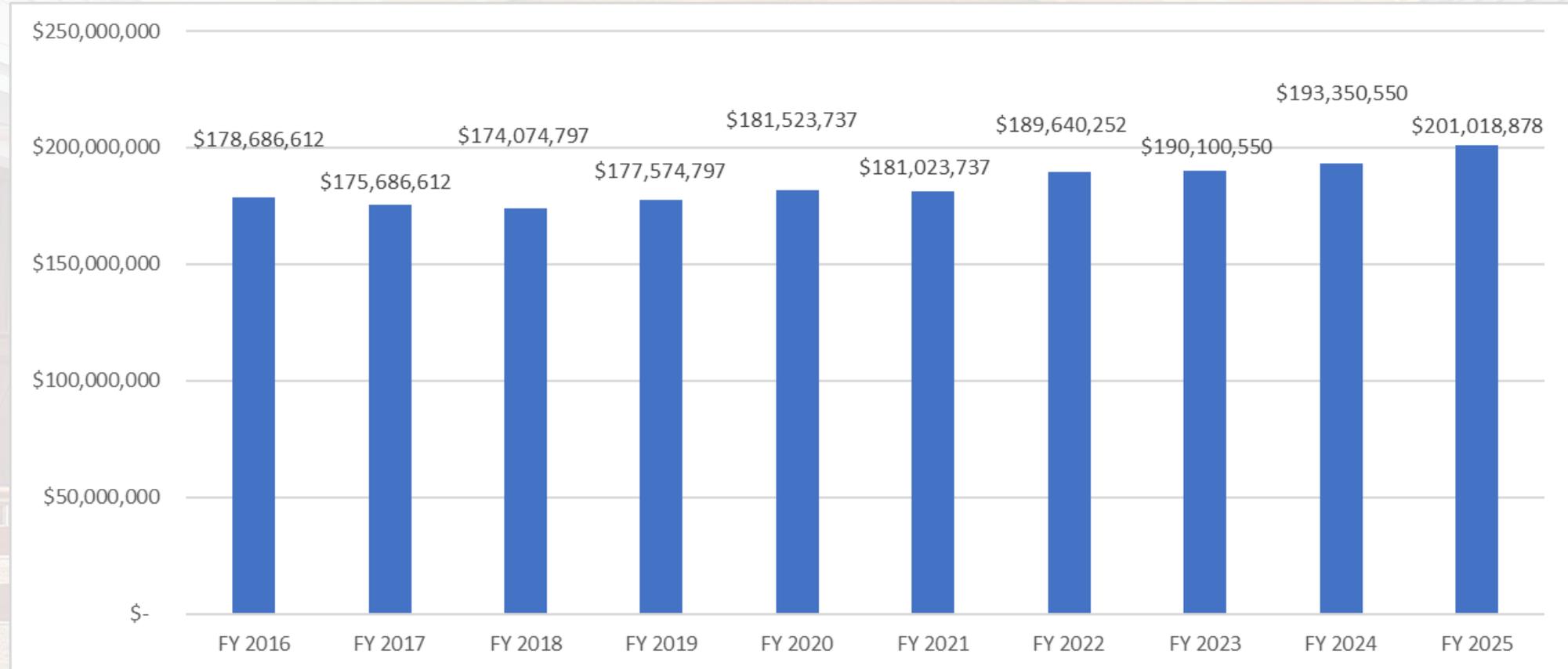
# Accomplishments in FY 2024

- Juvenile Court Services diverted 4,537 youth from involvement in the juvenile court. More than 80% of the youth diverted did not reoffend.
- Iowa treatment courts have participated in 11 Foundational Training or Operational Trainings. These trainings help treatment courts adhere to national best practices and standards to increase effectiveness. These were the first trainings of their type in 10 years for Iowa.

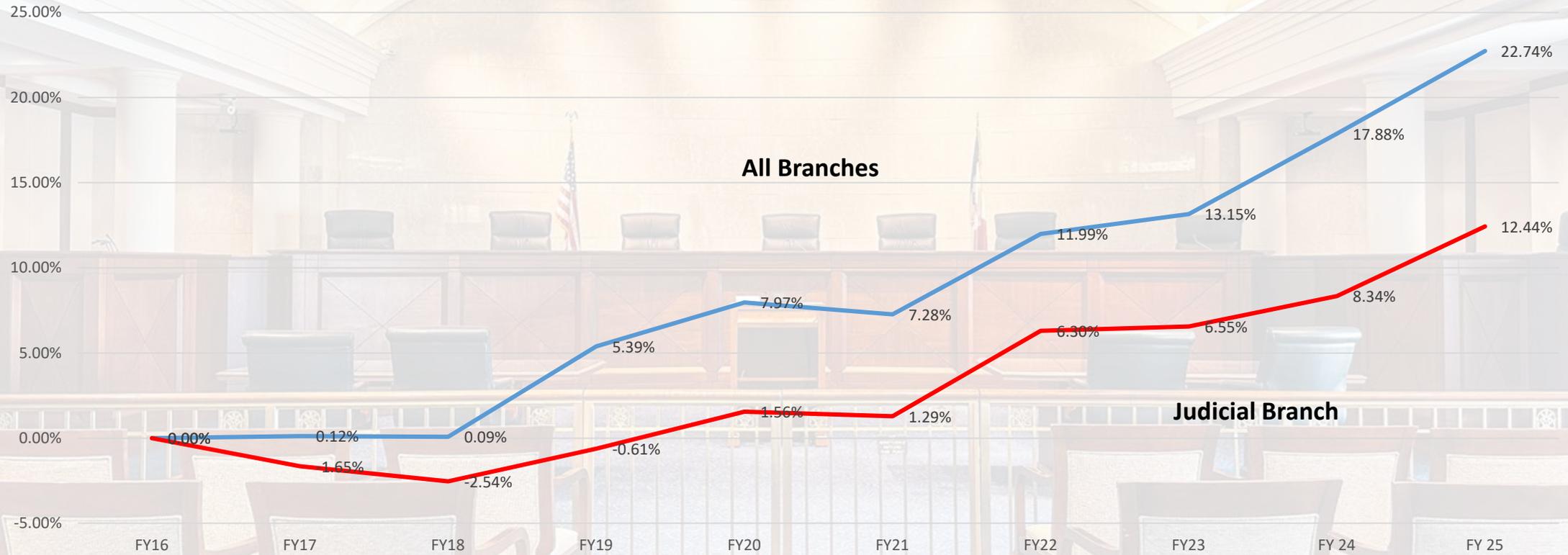
# Accomplishments in FY 2024

- In FY24 Iowa Self-represented litigants completed more than 19,000 free, easy to use online interviews that use a question-and-answer format to gather information to complete court forms used in legal proceedings. In the past five years nearly 55,000 interviews were completed.
- In February 2024 the Supreme Court established a Court Navigator Pilot Project Task Force. In spring of 2025 the initial location in Clinton will be put on-line. Court navigators assist self represented litigants access court services.

# General Fund Appropriation History

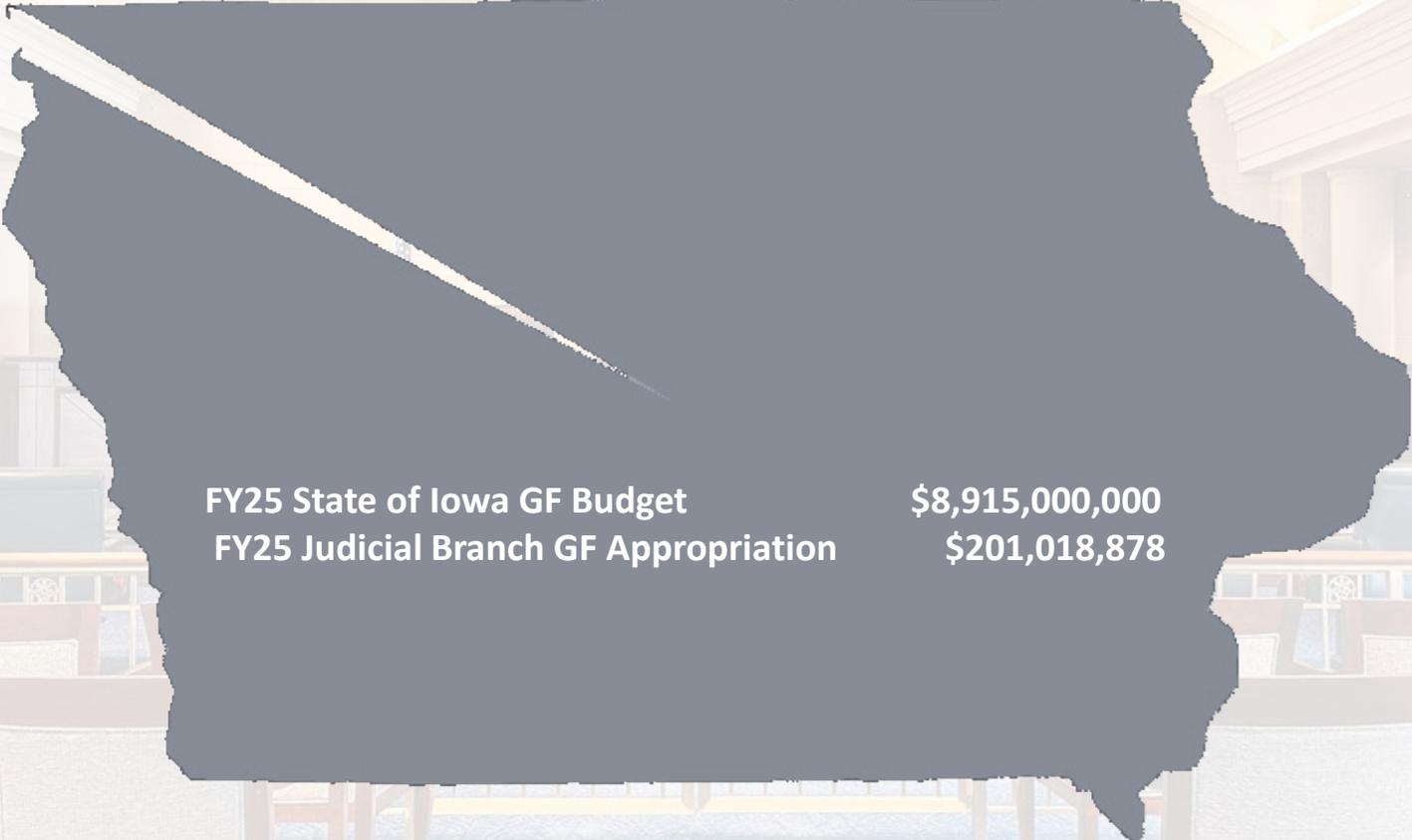


# Judicial Branch and State Budget Change Since FY 2016



# Judicial Branch Funding as % of State Budget

2.25%



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# FY 2026 Judicial Branch Request

Description	Amount
FY 25 Judicial Branch Appropriation	\$ 201,018,878
<b>FY 26 New Funding Request Details:</b>	
Judicial Officer Salary Increase	\$ 2,828,127
Total New Request	\$ 2,828,127

# Details on Judicial Officer Salary Plan

- This proposal would codify a formula for judicial officer salary by tying it to the salary of a U.S. district judge
- Would establish a mechanism to increase judicial salary annually and would include a four-year catch-up period
- This proposal sets an Iowa District Judge salary at 75% of a U.S. District Judge salary phased in over four fiscal years
- The plan provides that the remaining classes of judges would be calculated from the Iowa district judge figure
- The cost for this plan in FY26 would be approximately \$2,828,127

# Current District Judge Salaries in Iowa and Neighboring States

State	Salary	Rank	Amount Above Iowa	% Above Iowa
Illinois	\$ 246,099	1	\$80,140	48.29%
Nebraska	\$ 208,176	18	\$42,217	25.44%
Minnesota	\$ 190,117	26	\$24,158	14.56%
Kansas	\$ 185,550	30	\$19,591	11.80%
South Dakota	\$ 181,246	33	\$15,287	9.21%
Missouri	\$ 177,609	35	\$11,650	7.02%
Wisconsin	\$ 174,512	37	\$8,553	5.15%
<b>Iowa</b>	<b>\$ 165,959</b>	<b>43</b>		

# Current District Judge Salaries in Iowa and Neighboring States— Rank Adjusted for Cost of Living

State	Salary	Rank	Amount Above	
			Iowa	% Above Iowa
Illinois	\$ 246,099	1	\$ 80,140	48.29%
Nebraska	\$ 208,176	9	\$ 42,217	25.44%
Minnesota	\$ 190,117	19	\$ 24,158	14.56%
Kansas	\$ 185,550	18	\$ 19,591	11.80%
South Dakota	\$ 181,246	21	\$ 15,287	9.21%
Missouri	\$ 177,609	14	\$ 11,650	7.02%
Wisconsin	\$ 174,512	30	\$ 8,553	5.15%
<b>Iowa</b>	<b>\$ 165,959</b>	<b>32</b>		

# Details on Capital Request – RIIF Request

## Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund (RIIF)

FY 26 New Funding Request Details:

Linn County Courthouse Renovation

\$

229,000

# Current Initiatives

- Ongoing audit of Court Debt Programming by Outside Vendor
- Verification of Court Debt Misallocation Amount by the State Auditor's Office
- Completion of contract to evaluate IT Case Management System and best practices moving forward
- Magistrate Modernization Plan
- Statewide Workload Study

# QUESTIONS

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this request with you.

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