

**Information Regarding Courthouse Facilities Construction Timetable for Polk County  
Iowa Judicial Branch—State Court Administration  
December 2015**

- I. General Information
  - a. In November 2013, Polk County voters approved (with 67% of the vote) an \$81 million bond referendum.
  - b. The project consists of five phases. Currently, Phase II is in progress; however, Phase III cannot begin until Phase II is complete. Phase IV cannot begin until Phase III is complete. A table on the reverse side provides specific information about each phase of the project and the interplay of how the completion of each phase relates to each subsequent phase.
  - c. Immediate need exists for necessary furniture and technology to allow Phase III to begin on schedule in April of 2016. Funding is needed as the current furniture does not fit in the new area and is not in sufficient quantity to address the need.
- II. Iowa Law
  - a. Iowa Code Section 602.1303 mandates that counties shall provide courtrooms, offices and other physical facilities which, in the judgment of the boards of supervisors, are suitable for district court.
  - b. Iowa Code Sections 602.1302 and 602.11101 require the costs of the judicial branch related to furnishings, supplies and equipment for the use of judicial officers and staff for the operation of the court are the responsibility of the state and is funded through appropriations to the judicial branch.
- III. Other County Courthouse Projects
  - a. Over the last 10 years the judicial branch has expended \$3.1 million to pay for furniture and equipment in 41 different counties. These moneys have been set aside by the judicial branch from the judicial branch operating budget appropriation.
  - b. Per fiscal year, the judicial branch utilizes an average of \$300,000 of the judicial branch operating budget appropriation to provide furniture and equipment for county courthouses.
  - c. The needs of Polk County far exceed what the judicial branch is able to absorb in its annual appropriation from the general fund.
  - d. Mitchell, Dickinson, Pottawattamie, Dallas, Union, Linn, Scott, Mahaska, Washington and Black Hawk are recent examples of counties where the judicial branch paid for furniture and equipment in county courthouses.
- IV. Polk County Project Funding
  - a. Polk County taxpayers elected to pay \$81 million to upgrade courthouse facilities in order to provide a suitable space for the court.
  - b. In its FY 16 budget request, the judicial branch submitted a capitals request of \$2,723,151 to meet the furniture and technology needs of Phase II of the project which are necessary to start Phase III. The capitals request was not funded.
  - c. In its FY 17 budget capital request, the judicial branch will ask for \$6,718,433 to meet the furniture and technology needs of Phases II and III of the project.
  - d. The capital request is not an ongoing expense of the judicial branch, it is a one-time expenditure by the court due to the size of the Polk County project.

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Phase	Project Timeline	Description
Phase I <i>Exterior Restoration</i>	Complete 2015.	Restoration of the exterior of the historic courthouse.
Phase II <i>Justice Center</i> -FY 16 \$2,723,151	Currently under construction; scheduled to open April, 2016.	<p>Phase II transforms the former Wellmark/JC Penny building into a modern justice center for juvenile, traffic and small claims court. Juvenile Court will be located on the second floor along with the Juvenile Division of the Clerk’s Office. Traffic and small claims court will be on the first floor with an associated Clerk’s office. Juvenile Court Services and the Clerk of Court’s Records Divisions will be housed in the lower level.</p> <p>The south end of the historic courthouse’s first floor <u>must</u> be vacated in April, 2016 to allow construction of a temporary secure holding area in that space. Without such, construction cost delays <u>will</u> occur with the Criminal Courthouse project. That construction <u>cannot</u> begin until the old main jail is completely vacated. Therefore, Traffic and Small Claims court, with associated Clerk’s Office functions must move into the Justice Center with existing furniture and equipment, which does not fit the new sized offices and is not sufficient in quantity. Due to inability to secure funding for furniture and equipment for the Justice Center in FY 2016, the juvenile court facilities on the second floor and offices on the ground level for Juvenile Court Services will be unable to open according to schedule in April, 2016. Existing furniture does not fit into the new offices and key furniture and technology does not currently exist for the juvenile courtrooms.</p>
Phase III <i>Criminal Court Building</i> -FY 17 \$2,853,008	Construction begins in May 2016 upon completion of Justice Center; scheduled to open in November, 2017.	Immediately following the completion of the Justice Center, Phase III of the project will renovate the obsolete downtown jail west of the courthouse into a five-story Criminal Courts building. Again, the old jail must be completely vacated to allow construction to commence on schedule and on budget. The secure holding area for defendants <u>must be</u> temporarily relocated to the historic courthouse. Each floor will have space for three courtrooms, high volume misdemeanor and felony courts will occupy this new space. The Criminal Courts building will have three separate zones of circulation for the public, court staff, and inmates, so that prisoners will no longer share corridors with jurors, witnesses, lawyers, judges, and citizens attending court. .
Phase IV <i>Historic Courthouse</i> -FY 17 \$1,142,274 -FY 18 \$1,142,274 -FY 19 \$1,811,691	Commences late 2017 upon completion of Criminal Court; scheduled to open in 2019.	Once Phase III of the project is complete, Phase IV will renovate the historic Polk County Courthouse. The courthouse will be rehabilitated to accommodate the 21 <sup>st</sup> century demands of probate, family law, and civil litigation. Overcrowding will be relieved; the building will be brought up to code; and court security will be enhanced. Family courts will be moved from the fourth floor to the first floor, with waiting areas for families and victims of domestic violence. The second and third floors will be remodeled with courtrooms large enough for civil trials, equipped with modern courtroom technology.