



FY 20256-267 Budget Briefing Summary

Judicial Department – Independent Agencies

The Judicial Department is comprised of the traditional Judicial Branch and independent agencies. This includes the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, district courts (including the Denver probate and juvenile courts), and county courts (except Denver county court); and Probation. The Department includes 11 independent agencies: the *Office of the State Public Defender (OSPD)*; the *Office of the Alternate Defense Counsel (OADC)*; the *Office of the Child's Representative (OCR)*; the *Office of the Respondent Parents' Counsel (ORPC)*; the *Office of the Child Protection Ombudsman (OCPO)*; the *Independent Ethics Commission (IEC)*; the *Office of Public Guardianship (OPG)*; the *Commission on Judicial Discipline (CJD)*; *Bridges of Colorado*, aka the *Statewide Behavioral Health Court Liaison*, (BRI); the *Office of Administrative Services for Independent Agencies (ASIA)*; and the *Office of Judicial Ombudsman (OJO)*.

Summary of Request

Judicial Department

Item	Total Funds	General Fund	Cash Funds	Reapprop. Funds	Federal Funds	FTE
FY 2025-26 Appropriation						
SB 25-206 (Long Bill)	\$1,148,010,817	\$875,204,785	\$203,914,808	\$64,466,224	\$4,425,000	5,696.7
Other legislation	3,741,831	3,741,831	0	0	0	28.1
Total	\$1,151,752,648	\$878,946,616	\$203,914,808	\$64,466,224	\$4,425,000	5,724.8
FY 2026-27 Requested Appropriation						
FY 2025-26 Appropriation	\$1,151,752,648	\$878,946,616	\$203,914,808	\$64,466,224	\$4,425,000	5,724.8
OSPD R1 Aurora domestic violence docket [1]	1,186,852	1,186,852	0	0	0	11.8
OSPD R2 CBI DNA misconduct [1]	2,000,000	2,000,000	0	0	0	0.0
OSPD R3 IT true-up [1]	955,317	955,317	0	0	0	0.0
ADC R1 Caseload increase [1]	3,542,761	3,542,761	0	0	0	0.0
OCR R1 Court-appointed counsel [1]	-871,124	-871,124	0	0	0	0.0
ORPC R1 Court-appointed counsel and mandated costs [1]	-900,000	-900,000	0	0	0	0.0
IEC R1 Add investigator [1]	57,272	57,272	0	0	0	0.5
IEC R2 IT accessibility compliance [1]	12,000	12,000	0	0	0	0.0
OPG R1 Expansion guardians [1]	190,144	190,144	0	0	0	2.0
OJDO R1 Reinstate Judicial Discipline [1]	328,647	328,647	0	0	0	2.0

Item	Total Funds	General Fund	Cash Funds	Reapprop. Funds	Federal Funds	FTE
C&P ITCap 1 Judicial case management system	3,200,000	0	3,200,000	0	0	0.0
C&P R1 Judicial officers	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
C&P R2 Trial courts and appellate court programs	1,340,845	-642,152	1,982,997	0	0	10.0
C&P R3 Probation programs	1,341,851	-1,409,000	2,750,851	0	0	12.5
C&P R4 General courts administration	723,724	723,724	0	0	0	4.0
C&P R5 Judicial personnel system maintenance study [info only]	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
C&P R6 Information technology infrastructure	6,753,750	0	6,753,750	0	0	0.0
C&P R7 Statewide judicial security plan	118,740	118,740	0	0	0	1.0
C&P R8 Ralph L. Carr Colorado Judicial Center	119,949	-1,340,712	1,406,654	54,007	0	0.0
C&P R9 Courthouse furnishings and infrastructure maintenance	3,400,000	3,400,000	0	0	0	0.0
C&P R10 SB24-241 technical correction [requires legislation]	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
C&P R11 Increase cash fund revenue [requires legislation]	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
C&P R12 Language interpreters and translators	2,007,403	2,007,403	0	0	0	0.0
C&P R13 Court, jury, court-appointed counsel, and vacated conviction costs	1,310,756	1,310,756	0	0	0	0.0
C&P R14 Marijuana tax cash fund adjustments	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
C&P R15 Spending authority for Family Violence Justice Grants	150,000	0	150,000	0	0	0.0
C&P R16 Underfunded courthouse facility grants	1,500,000	0	1,500,000	0	0	0.0
C&P R17 Office of Dispute Resolution line item	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
C&P R18 True-up law library reappropriated funds	33,684	0	0	33,684	0	0.0
C&P R19 Pass-through requests	-1,894,269	314,184	-401,347	-1,807,106	0	0.0
C&P R20 Office of Atty Regulation Counsel pass-through	1,166,208	0	1,166,208	0	0	0.0
Employee compensation common policies	45,084,624	45,331,701	-540,307	293,230	0	0.0
Operating common policies	1,226,504	2,820,993	-979,562	-614,927	0	0.0
Impacts driven by other agencies	336,772	343,042	-6,270	0	0	1.4
Technical adjustments	1,598,801	1,598,801	0	0	0	0.0
Prior year actions	22,927,594	18,009,673	6,307,423	-1,389,502	0	79.5
Total	\$1,250,701,453	\$958,035,638	\$227,205,205	\$61,035,610	\$4,425,000	5,849.5
 Increase/-Decrease	 \$98,948,805	 \$79,089,022	 \$23,290,397	 -\$3,430,614	 \$0	 124.7
Percentage Change	8.6%	9.0%	11.4%	-5.3%	0.0%	2.2%

[1] Items addressed in this document.

OSPD R1 Aurora domestic violence docket: The request includes an increase of \$1.2 million General Fund and 11.8 FTE to respond to the City of Aurora no longer prosecuting domestic violence cases. Those cases are thus

filed in jurisdictions where OSPD provides representation and this request is for funding to address the new workload.

OSPD R2 CBI DNA misconduct impact: The request includes a joint request between Alternat Defense Counsel and the Office of the State Public Defender for an increase of \$2.0 million General Fund to support appeals commenced in response to the misconduct uncovered at the CBI lab. All incarcerated persons are considered indigent by law and thus qualify for legal services in such appeals provided by OSPB or ASDC. The appropriation would appear only in OSPD but ADC could access it through an interagency agreement already in place.

OSPD R3 IT true-up: The request includes an increase of \$1.0 million General Fund to address rising licensing costs of information technology solutions in use by the OSPD. Increased costs impact products including: VMWare, Westlaw, Microsoft, Adobe, Thomson Reuters, mobile and network connectivity, security, and transcription services. OSPD has managed these increasing costs within existing resources in response to budget concerns in prior years but can no longer delay addressing the need to directly fund the costs.

ADC R1 Caseload increase: The request includes an increase of \$3.5 million General Fund to account for recent caseload forecasts based on the best available data.

OCR R1 Court-appointed counsel and mandated costs: The request includes a decrease of \$871,124 General Fund in response to declining dependency and neglect case filings in the current fiscal year. Case filings, court appointment decisions, and case length determine OCR's caseload, while case complexity and attorneys' professional and ethical responsibilities determine workload. As the OCR does not have control over these two main drivers of its agency budgetary needs, the OCR relies on analysis of historical trends, current appointment numbers and costs, and assessment of impactful legal and practice developments to inform its caseload and workload projections.

ORPC R1 Court-appointed counsel and mandated costs: The request includes a decrease of \$900,000 General Fund in response to a decline in the current dependency and neglect case filings and the expected workload reduction that results. While the ORPC will reassess these figures as more data becomes available, this proposal will allow the agency to maintain its current service provision and will reduce the need to transfer funding between its two largest budget lines. The reduction is not expected to affect service delivery, workload, or core mandates.

IEC R1 Add investigator: The request includes an increase of \$57,272 and 0.5 FTE for additional investigator support to respond to increasing workload from increasing number of complaints for it to review. According to the IEC, complaint volume is expected to continue its rise due to the IEC's increased public visibility after processing several high-profile complaints and the increasing polarization in the national political environment. If the volume of complaints continues to increase, complainants and respondents will be faced with delays before cases can be resolved, likely leading to increases in litigant costs. Allowing a backlog of cases to build up before the IEC is also likely to adversely affect other work done by the IEC, such as increasing the time to issue advisory opinions and letter rulings and decreasing the IEC's ability to conduct outreach and training.

IEC R2 IT accessibility compliance: The request includes an increase of \$12,000 General Fund for the Independent Ethics Commission to contract for services to comply with HB 21-1110 (IT Accessibility). Now that the IEC's website has been successfully remediated, it is apparent that accessibility compliance will be an ongoing effort and this funding is to ensure continued compliance.

OPG R1 Program expansion guardians: The request includes an increase of \$190,144 General Fund and 2.0 FTE to continue expansion of the Public Guardianship program to two new judicial districts.

OJDO R1 Reinstate Judicial Discipline: The request includes an increase of \$328,647 General Fund and 2.0 FTE to reinstate funding for the Office of Judicial Discipline Ombudsmen.

C&P Items: See the staff briefing linked immediately after the summary table.

Employee compensation common policies: The request includes a net increase of \$45.1 million for employee compensation common policies. A common policy refers to general policies applied consistently to all departments.

Employee compensation common policies

Item	Total Funds	General Fund	Cash Funds	Reapprop. Funds	Federal Funds	FTE
Salary survey	\$17,860,095	\$16,874,602	\$917,526	\$67,967	\$0	0.0
Health, life, and dental	14,057,218	14,774,087	-927,648	210,779	0	0.0
Step plan	7,277,823	7,163,393	105,162	9,268	0	0.0
FY 26 HLD Base Reduction and HLD Adjustment	3,439,942	2,977,412	462,530	0	0	0.0
Unfunded liability amortization payments	2,337,003	3,374,277	-1,043,609	6,335	0	0.0
Paid family and medical leave insurance	105,416	152,092	-46,963	287	0	0.0
Short-term disability	7,127	15,838	-7,305	-1,406	0	0.0
Total	\$45,084,624	\$45,331,701	-\$540,307	\$293,230	\$0	0.0

Operating common policies: The request includes a net increase of \$1.2 million for operating common policies.

Operating common policies

Item	Total Funds	General Fund	Cash Funds	Reapprop. Funds	Federal Funds	FTE
State accounting system (CORE)	\$1,254,337	\$1,254,337	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0
Workers' compensation	391,902	391,902	0	0	0	0.0
Legal services	186,533	186,533	0	0	0	0.0
PERA direct distribution	157,235	349,642	-227,021	34,614	0	0.0
Office of Information Technology services	152,790	152,790	0	0	0	0.0
Digital trunked radios	10,737	10,737	0	0	0	0.0
Departmental indirect cost adjustment	-752,541	649,541	-752,541	-649,541	0	0.0
Risk management & property	-163,270	-163,270	0	0	0	0.0
Vehicle lease payments	-11,219	-11,219	0	0	0	0.0
Total	\$1,226,504	\$2,820,993	-\$979,562	-\$614,927	\$0	0.0

Impacts driven by other agencies: The request includes a net increase of \$336,772 for requests from other state agencies. These are also called "non-prioritized requests." The amount shown in the table below applies to the entire Judicial Department, only \$184,538 General Fund is attributable to agencies in this briefing document.

Impacts driven by other agencies

Item	Total Funds	General Fund	Cash Funds	Reapprop. Funds	Federal Funds	FTE
NP State accounting system (CORE) staff	\$161,899	\$161,899	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.0
NP IT accessibility	98,544	98,544	0	0	0	0.9
NP SB24-205 AI compliance	76,329	82,599	-6,270	0	0	0.5

Item	Total Funds	General Fund	Cash Funds	Reapprop. Funds	Federal Funds	FTE
Total	\$336,772	\$343,042	-\$6,270	\$0	\$0	1.4

Technical adjustments: The request includes a net increase of \$1.6 million for technical adjustments including:

- \$1.1 million General Fund for increased attributable to contract escalation related to Public Defender data storage agreement; and
- \$0.5 million General Fund for leased space escalators that impact the Office of the State Public Defender, the Office of the Child’s Representative, and the Office of Administrative Services for State Agencies.

Prior year actions: The request includes a net increase of \$22.9 million for the impact of prior year budget decisions and legislation.

Prior year actions

Item	Total Funds	General Fund	Cash Funds	Reapprop. Funds	Federal Funds	FTE
SB 25-024 Judicial Officers	\$6,751,339	\$6,751,339	\$0	\$0	\$0	60.0
FY 26 ITCAP1 CMS Year two	5,042,272	0	5,042,272	0	0	0.0
SB 23-227 State-funded attorney rate	4,682,455	4,679,059	0	3,396	0	0.0
FY 25-26 Increased caseload & case costs supp.	2,792,679	2,792,679	0	0	0	0.0
FY 25-26 Increased caseload & case costs add-on	2,534,914	2,534,914	0	0	0	0.0
FY26 BA1 Virtual Court	1,261,031	0	1,261,031	0	0	0.0
FY 26 R3 Aurora Muni DV Cases	1,232,285	1,181,965	50,320	0	0	12.5
HB 24-1355 Measures Reduce Comp Wait List	593,962	593,962	0	0	0	5.5
Bridges FY 25-26 Assessment services funding	288,099	288,099	0	0	0	0.0
HB 25-1275 Forensic Science Integrity	80,136	80,136	0	0	0	0.9
FY 26 R2 Budget Analyst	48,971	55,171	-6,200	0	0	1.0
FY 25-26 Support parent-advocates	7,102	0	0	7,102	0	0.0
SB23-064 Cont Off. of Public Guardianship	6,624	6,624	0	0	0	0.0
FY 25-26 Step plan	2	1	1	0	0	0.0
FY 25-26 Salary survey	0	1	-1	0	0	0.0
FY 25-26 ADC Case management/billing system	-1,400,000	0	0	-1,400,000	0	0.0
HB 24-1133 Crim Record Sealing and Expunge	-514,320	-514,320	0	0	0	0.0
FY 25-26 CBI DNA misconduct impact	-300,000	-300,000	0	0	0	0.0
HB 24-1046 Child welfare system tools	-116,463	-116,463	0	0	0	-0.5
FY 25-26 BA1 Leased space	-40,000	0	-40,000	0	0	0.0
HB 25-1062 Penalty for Theft of Firearms	-13,500	-13,500	0	0	0	0.0
FY 25-26 OPG staff	-9,994	-9,994	0	0	0	0.1
Total	\$22,927,594	\$18,009,673	\$6,307,423	-\$1,389,502	\$0	79.5

Issues Presented

This is a summary of the briefing issues presented to the Joint Budget Committee by their dedicated non-partisan staff.

Budget Reduction Options – Public Defense: This issue brief reviews additional options identified by staff to assist in balancing the budget.

Budget Reduction Options – Other Independent Agencies: The request from Judicial Independent Agencies contains reductions totaling almost \$1.8 million General Fund. This issue brief reviews these proposals and additional options identified by staff.

Expanding and New Program Updates: The General Assembly has recently created a number of new independent agencies that exist on the periphery of the Judicial Department. This issue highlights three of the independent agencies staff thought was notable for the Joint Budget Committee. Two of those programs, the Office of Public Guardianship and Bridges of Colorado, are expanding from serving some judicial districts to operating in all of them. While the Office of Administrative Services for Administrative Agencies was created by the JBC to find administrative efficiencies and fulfill needs unmet by the State Court Administrator's Office previously.

For More Information

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To read the entire briefing: Go to leg.colorado.gov/content/budget/budget-documents to use the budget document search tool. Select this department's name under Department/Topic, "Briefing" under Type, and select a Start date and End date to show documents released in November and December of 2025.