

Court Technology



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STATUS OF THE FUND

The Idaho Supreme Court’s technology system is primarily supported through the Court Technology Fund (CTF), a dedicated fund established by Idaho Code 1-1623 with 91% of its revenue provided through legislatively established fees imposed in both criminal and civil court cases.

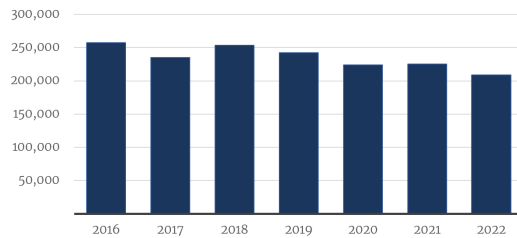
The fund supports a statewide case management system, courtroom technology resources, videoconferencing systems, computer equipment, computer network infrastructure, credit card processing for court fine and fee payments, information security systems, and various other software and equipment supporting court administration.

The fund and the courts have faced unprecedented challenges in recent fiscal years. At a time when technology support has never been more vital, revenues in the dedicated fund still are not keeping pace with the cost of supporting access to justice in a modern court system.

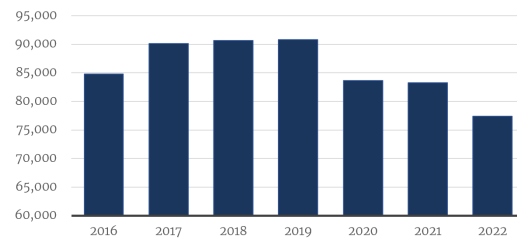
While some of this problem is due to the coronavirus pandemic, national trends reflecting declining case filings exacerbate the situation. Court fines and fee receipts that support the CTF have declined an average of 5.2% each year over the last three years. In FY2022, fund revenue totaled \$7.89 million, the lowest amount flowing into the fund since 2015 when the Legislature approved new civil filing fees.

Meanwhile, court technology costs have increased about 9.3% each year for the last five years. Reasons for the increases include the implementation of new cybersecurity systems and significant hardware and software purchases for remote court proceedings. The Court has also experienced remarkable increases in software licensing and credit card processing fees — by as much as 30% in the current year. Technology, like so much else, simply costs more.

Criminal Filings

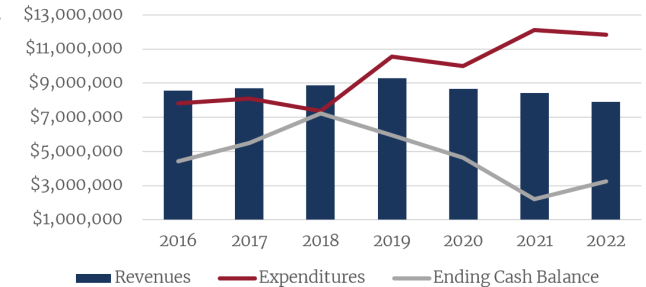


Civil Filings



In FY2024, fund expenditures are projected to exceed fund receipts by \$3.67 million. The Court is actively engaged in reassessing expected costs and developing a sufficient, long-term statewide funding structure for ongoing technology costs. This process, however, takes time.

Court Technology Fund Financial Activity



The 2022 Legislature made appropriations to support short-term, necessary investment in court technology infrastructure while this work proceeds. These included a one-time appropriation of \$1.55 million to pay the cost of electronic envelope fees for online court filings, and a one-time appropriation of \$19.99 million from the American Rescue Plan Act. (An update on the Court’s ARPA work is included in a separate report.)

The Court again requests budget enhancement line items to provide short-term support for necessary court technology as work on a long-term solution continues. These funding requests, described both here and in our report on requests for our judicial districts, are essential to maintaining access to justice for the public.

FUNDING REQUEST: CTF SUPPLEMENTAL

A third-party consultant is helping the Court develop a clear understanding of best-practice staffing models and efficient cost of court services.

Their work concerns more than just how the courts exist today: Court technology services are currently undergoing a transformation, including the development of a statewide court computer network. This transition will make significant changes to the way court technology is provided throughout the state, altering both costs and staffing needs. The consultant’s work focuses on the end state of services after this transformation is complete.

This transition itself is funded through ARPA. However, due to the decline in CTF revenues, the courts do not have sufficient funding to maintain current operations and staffing while the transition completes. For FY2024, the Court requests a one-time General Fund appropriation of \$990,000 to supplement funding needs in the CTF.



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FUNDING REQUEST: PERSONNEL COSTS

The Court has identified three key information technology management positions currently funded through the CTF that provide ongoing, crucial services and will remain necessary following implementation of the court technology transformation plan. The Chief Information Officer, Deputy Chief Information Officer and Chief Information Security Officer support continuity of essential court services. Because of the nature of these positions, the Court requests an ongoing General Fund appropriation of \$512,900 to transition them from the CTF to the General Fund.

COURT TECHNOLOGY: ONGOING MAINTENANCE, REPLACEMENT, EXTENSION OR ENHANCEMENT

The Idaho Supreme Court continues to invest in protecting against attacks on an increasingly computerized court system. This involves concerns beyond the state level: Conflict in Europe and other parts of the world brings a potential increase in cyberattacks against the U.S. homeland. In support of protecting the Judicial Branch's information — and that of the court users we serve — the Idaho Supreme Court deployed:

- A new endpoint protection software that provides more security capabilities for desktops and laptops issued to trial courts and ISC staff.
- New applications that have increased detection, visibility and remediation of email security threats; the ability to alert the Idaho Supreme Court cybersecurity team of potential bad actors logging in to the system; and the ability to identify and destroy potentially malicious email attachments in a safe environment, if malware is detected.
- New web security applications that detect and block threats such as automated attacks and that prevent access to non-public information.

In other work, the statewide project to replace courtroom recording systems and in-courtroom clerk computers has been completed. Some of this effort included investing in and supporting new and remodeled courtrooms.

Videoconferencing and livestreaming solutions first introduced during the pandemic continue to be of value to the courts. The Idaho Supreme Court has continued to grow these hybrid court solutions to enable courts to provide easier access to justice. (This is addressed further in a separate report.)

