

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 (Fund), a dedicated fund established by Idaho Code 1-1623 with 93% of its revenue provided through legislatively established fees imposed in both criminal and civil court cases.

This funding enables operations at the local courts that Idahoans use every day. It provides a statewide case management system, digital recordings for official court proceedings, videoconferencing systems, credit card processing, and information security systems. It pays the salaries of almost all state-level court technology staff.

However, the Fund is not sustainable under its current model. Court fines and fee receipts that support the Fund have declined an average of 2.1% each year over the last five years. Meanwhile, overall technology costs rose an average of 7% each year — a cumulative 35%.

Idaho's courts have been thrifty stewards of current technology funding, leveraging fund reserves to support ongoing operations and deferring expenditures.

BY THE NUMBERS

Local hands-on support across:

- 7 districts
- 44 counties
- 49 locations

Focused on over 5,000 users:

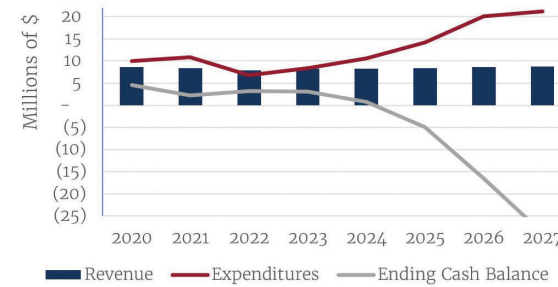
- 9 justices and appellate judges
- 218 other judges
- 82 law clerks
- 116 staff in state administration
- 28 elected clerks
- 668 court clerks
- 36 court reporters
- 14 trial court administrators
- 88 treatment court staff
- 255 other staff

Delivering connected value:

- 2,505 desktops and laptops
- 44 tablets
- 24 pretrial staff
- 26 family court
- 9 guardianship
- 4 domestic violence
- 34 bailiffs and law enforcement
- 179 misd. probation
- 147 prosecutors
- 116 public defenders
- 85 county auditors
- 2,890 extended access users

Public sector organizations across North America average \$18,294 in spending per user on technology. Idaho's Judicial Branch in FY2024 has averaged \$15,129 per user when considering only direct court staff, and \$4,847 per user when considering all supported users of the state courts.

Court Technology Fund
Past Performance & Projections



But even with those efforts, Fund reserves are nearly spent. Based on revenue projections and estimated expenditures, the Fund is expected to see shortfalls of \$5.7 million in FY2025, \$11.5 million in FY2026 and \$12.5 million in FY2027.

The Judicial Branch, working with an independent consultant, undertook a close review of technology needs and spending and is pleased to present a proposal to stabilize court technology funding.

STEPS TO STABILIZATION

Substantial technology improvements since Idaho first implemented digital court records have created more options for the hosting, management and security of court systems. The Judicial Branch has begun work to establish a statewide court computer network and to transition most services to a cloud-based network structure rather than traditional, local information hosting.

In short, these changes will alter both court technology costs and staffing needs throughout Idaho. While transition costs are being funded through the American Rescue Plan Act, a portion will become ongoing costs due to the nature of the spending.

TRENDS IN COURT FILINGS

District Court

Civil and Criminal



Criminal % Change
10 Year

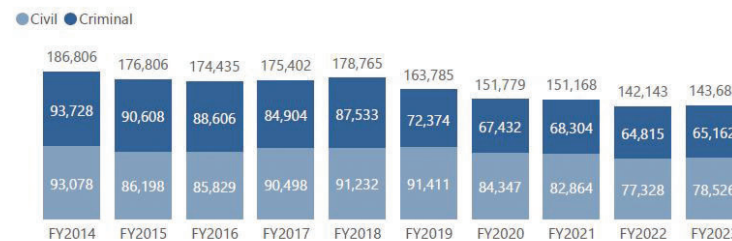
+ 14.1%

Civil % Change
10 Year

- 18.5%

Magistrate Court

Civil and Criminal



Criminal % Change
10 Year

- 30.5%

Civil % Change
10 Year

- 15.6%

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To support court technology in the state of Idaho and supplement existing revenue, the Court Technology Fund requires about \$12.5 million in additional ongoing funding — a portion of which will be requested each year over the next three years. The Fund will require subsequent inflationary increases as needed to bridge the funding gap. The independent consultant's review of court operations supports this plan.

Looking solely at FY2025, the Idaho Supreme Court requests an ongoing General Fund appropriation of a little more than \$9 million. This includes a transfer of 52.75 full-time positions to the General Fund, the addition of 11 full-time positions to support statewide networks and technology, and various court technology software costs. With personnel costs moved out of the Fund, it can be used to support ongoing operations costs including software licensing, cloud hosting and hardware costs.

This request is not simply about maintaining a technology system. The funding involved is essential to maintain existing court programs and continuity of court services as required by the Idaho Constitution. The alternative is for the Judicial Branch to cut or discontinue court services and programs across this state.

ENHANCING COURT TECHNOLOGY

The Idaho courts continue to take advantage of modern tools to provide access to justice. From January to November 2023, local district and magistrate courts held 34,631 court hearings and administrative meetings that included videoconferencing, spanning more than 267,000 hours of activity. The Judicial Branch partnered closely with counties to provide extra video, audio and application support needed during high-visibility court proceedings.

During FY2023, the Judicial Branch grew technical support for local courts by placing field service technicians across the seven judicial districts. These roles deploy new technology, solve technical issues and provide training for others who work for the courts.

The past year included a strong emphasis on cybersecurity. This ranged from deploying systems that address critical vulnerabilities to improved training on phishing and malware attacks.

Idaho's counties have historically handled most costs of jury management. The Judicial Branch now offers a jury management system. By early January 2024, Judicial Branch employees will have helped 27 counties, from every corner of the state transition to the new system, with more to come.

