

**Judicial branch
Budget No. 180
Senate Bill No. 2002**

	FTE Positions	General Fund	Other Funds	Total
2025-27 legislative appropriations	394.00	\$147,252,753	\$5,647,758	\$152,900,511
2025-27 base budget	384.00	128,256,984	1,440,428	129,697,412
Legislative increase (decrease) to base budget	10.00	\$18,995,769	\$4,207,330	\$23,203,099

ONGOING AND ONE-TIME GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATIONS

	Ongoing General Fund Appropriation	One-Time General Fund Appropriation	Total General Fund Appropriation
2025-27 legislative appropriations	\$145,512,437	\$1,740,316	\$147,252,753
2023-25 legislative appropriations	128,256,984	1,153,720	129,410,704
2025-27 legislative increase (decrease) to 2023-25 appropriations	\$17,255,453	\$586,596	\$17,842,049
Percentage increase (decrease) to 2023-25 appropriations	13.5%	50.8%	13.8%

SUMMARY OF LEGISLATIVE CHANGES TO THE BASE BUDGET AND MAJOR FUNDING ITEMS
Changes to Base Budget

	FTE Positions	General Fund	Other Funds	Total
The legislative action:				
Adjusted funding for base payroll changes, including step increases in the judicial branch pay plan		\$3,490,350	(\$114,374)	\$3,375,976
Added funding to provide employee salary increases of 3 percent on July 1, 2025, and 3 percent on July 1, 2026		2,998,833	30,331	3,029,164
Added funding for employee health insurance premiums to reflect a revised premium estimate of \$1,893 per month		2,365,333	18,767	2,384,100
Added funding for judges' and justices' salary increases		2,078,868		2,078,868
Added funding for a 2 percent salary adjustment for the judicial branch pay plan		1,352,118	7,093	1,359,211
Added funding to replace the 2023-25 biennium new and vacant FTE funding pool, including \$443,240 for new positions and \$2,036,164 for vacant positions		2,455,681	23,723	2,479,404
Added new FTE juvenile court administrative assistant positions	1.50	152,771		152,771

Added a new FTE district court administrative assistant position	1.00	170,025		170,025
Added a new FTE district court deputy court administrator position	1.00	272,529		272,529
Added new FTE district court programmer analyst positions	2.00	421,496		421,496
Added new FTE district court network analyst positions	2.00	421,496		421,496
Added a new FTE district court technology coordinator position	1.00	196,210		196,210
Added a new FTE Supreme Court staff attorney position	1.00	293,625		293,625
Increased a 0.5 FTE Supreme Court administrative assistant position to a full-time position	0.50	65,161		65,161
Transferred \$1,993,313 for 10 new FTE positions from the salaries and wages line items to the new and vacant FTE pool line item and reduced the amount to \$1,793,982 resulting in the savings as shown		(199,331)		(199,331)
Transferred \$8,827,129 for estimated savings from vacant FTE positions from the salaries and wages and judicial conduct commission and disciplinary board line items to the new and vacant FTE pool line item and reduced the amount to \$6,178,991, resulting in savings as shown		(2,629,226)	(18,912)	(2,648,138)
Added funding for a mental health treatment court in Mandan and a veterans court in Cass County for the 2 nd year of the biennium		124,492		124,492
Reduced funding for judges' retirement		(13,666)		(13,666)
Added funding for information technology (IT) system maintenance and enhancements		2,059,179		2,059,179
Added funding for the law library reference materials subscription		73,882		73,882
Added funding for operating costs		409,699	(7,298)	402,401
Added funding for interpreters		125,500		125,500
Added funding for county clerk of court contract costs		189,428		189,428
Added funding for the rural attorney recruitment program		36,000		36,000
Added funding for the guardian ad litem program		700,000		700,000
Transferred funding for an attorney FTE position to the newly created Office of Guardianship and Conservatorship separate from the judicial branch		(355,000)		(355,000)
Added one-time funding for an IT equipment lease		874,216		874,216
Added one-time funding for cloud-based storage fees		866,100		866,100
Added one-time funding from the strategic investment and improvements fund (SIIF) to transition the case management system to cloud-based hosting			758,000	758,000
Added one-time funding from SIIF for clerk filing software			1,250,000	1,250,000

Added one-time funding from SIIF for a court records access system			960,000	960,000
Added one-time funding from SIIF for courtroom audio and video systems			1,200,000	1,200,000
Added one-time funding from SIIF for Cass County courtroom equipment			100,000	100,000
Total	10.00	\$18,995,769	\$4,207,330	\$23,203,099

FTE Changes

The Legislative Assembly approved 394.00 FTE positions for the judicial branch for the 2025-27 biennium, an increase of 10.00 FTE positions from the 2023-25 biennium authorized amount of 384.00 FTE positions. The Legislative Assembly added 10.00 FTE positions as follows:

- 1.50 FTE juvenile court administrative assistant positions;
- 1 FTE district court administrative assistant position;
- 1 FTE district court deputy court administrator position;
- 2 FTE district court programmer analyst positions;
- 2 FTE district court network analyst positions;
- 1 FTE district court technology coordinator position;
- 1 FTE Supreme Court staff attorney position; and
- 0.50 FTE Supreme Court part-time administrative assistant position increase to full-time.

One-Time Funding

The following is a summary of one-time funding items for the judicial branch for the 2025-27 biennium:

	General Fund	Other Funds	Total Funds
IT equipment lease	\$874,216		\$874,216
Cloud-based storage fees	866,100		866,100
Case management system migration to cloud-based computing (SIIF)		\$758,000	758,000
Clerk filing software (SIIF)		1,250,000	1,250,000
Court records access system (SIIF)		960,000	960,000
Courtroom audio and video systems (SIIF)		1,200,000	1,200,000
Cass County courtroom equipment (SIIF)		100,000	100,000
Total	\$1,740,316	\$4,268,000	\$6,008,316

Office of Guardianship and Conservatorship

The Legislative Assembly, in Senate Bill No. 2002, appropriated \$355,000 from the general fund to the newly created Office of Guardianship and Conservatorship for the purpose of providing salaries, wages, and operations funding for an attorney position to be transferred from the Supreme Court to the office on July 1, 2025, pursuant to Senate Bill No. 2029. The remaining guardianship and conservatorship funding (\$375,478) and FTE positions in the judicial branch budget were transferred to an office of guardianship and conservatorship line item under the Supreme Court. The FTE position remaining after the July 1, 2025, transfer and any unspent funding in the line item are to be transferred to the newly created Office of Guardianship and Conservatorship by April 1, 2026.

Other Sections in Senate Bill No. 2002

New and vacant FTE pool - Section 3 provides language regarding the use of funding in the new and vacant FTE pool line item.

Appropriation - Section 4 appropriates to the judicial branch all funds received pursuant to federal acts and private gifts, grants, and donations, for the purpose as designated in the federal acts or private gifts, grants, and donations, for the period beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027.

Appropriation - Office of Guardianship and Conservatorship - Section 5 appropriates \$355,000 to the Office of Guardianship and Conservatorship for attorney salaries and wages and related operations.

Transfer - SIIF - Court facilities improvement and maintenance fund - Section 6 provides for the transfer of \$200,000 from SIIF to the court facilities improvement and maintenance fund.

Strategic Investment and Improvements Fund - Section 7 identifies \$4,268,000 from SIIF is included in Section 1 for various one-time appropriations.

Supreme Court justices' salaries - Section 8 provides the statutory changes to increase Supreme Court justices' salaries by approximately 11.1 percent on July 1, 2025. Supreme Court justices' annual salaries will be increased from the current level of \$186,484 to \$207,249 effective July 1, 2025. The Chief Justice would be entitled to receive an additional \$7,647 per annum effective July 1, 2025, an increase from the current additional amount for the Chief Justice of \$5,274 per annum.

District court judges' salaries - Section 9 provides the statutory changes to increase district court judges' salaries by approximately 7.7 percent on July 1, 2025. District court judges' annual salaries will be increased from the current level of \$171,113 to \$184,366 effective July 1, 2025. A presiding judge of a judicial district would be entitled to receive an additional \$5,162 per annum effective July 1, 2025, an increase from the current additional amount for presiding judges of \$4,862 per annum.

Credit card and bank fees - Section 10 provides authority for the judicial branch to charge a fee as a service charge for the acceptance of a payment made by a credit or debit card.

Line item transfers - Section 11 requires the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to transfer appropriation authority between line items for the judicial branch as requested by the Supreme Court.

Related Legislation

House Bill No. 1032 - City ordinances - This bill provides authority for the district court to hear city ordinance cases for cities of fewer than 5,000 people.

House Bill No. 1047 - Psychological counseling services - This bill provides for the court to offer psychological counseling services to jurors who served in a trial involving extraordinarily graphic, gruesome, or emotional evidence or testimony.

House Bill No. 1263 - Petition to seal criminal records - This bill allows for individuals to appeal the denial of a petition to seal a criminal record from a district court judge.

House Bill No. 1328 - Juvenile court referrals - This bill requires a school to exhaust all school discipline policies and procedures before referring a child to juvenile court.

House Bill No. 1347 - Supervised treatment programs - This bill clarifies responsibilities for district court supervised treatment programs.

House Bill No. 1417 - Court fines and fees - This bill provides for a Legislative Management study of court fines and fees.

Senate Bill No. 2029 - Office of Guardianship and Conservatorship - This bill establishes the Office of Guardianship and Conservatorship and provides for the transfer of guardianship and conservatorship related funding and FTE positions from the Supreme court to the newly created office.

Senate Bill No. 2036 - Due process rights - This bill codifies due process rights, provides a method for juvenile competency remediation, and allows the court to deflect cases based on prior judicial findings of a lack of fitness to proceed.

Senate Bill No. 2037 - Sex offenses - This bill amends the statutory provisions relating to age-based sex offenses, sexual offender registration, child offender registration, domestic violence laws, and criminal responsibility for juvenile offenders.

Senate Bill No. 2056 - Right to appeal - This bill allows for an arrested person to waive the right to appear before a district court judge prior to being transferred to the custody of the applicable tribal authority.

Senate Bill No. 2057 - Filing fees - This bill increases the restitution collection assistance, civil filing, and Supreme Court filing fees.