

SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 5

Agenda

Senator Laura Richardson, Chair
Senator María Elena Durazo
Senator Kelly Seyarto



Thursday, February 26, 2026
9:30 a.m. or Upon Adjournment of Session
State Capitol – Room 112

Consultant: Nora Brackbill

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Public Comment

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ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

0250 JUDICIAL BRANCH

Issue 1: Overview of Court Facilities Funding

Panelists.

- Drew Soderborg, Deputy Legislative Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office
- Justice Brad Hill, Administrative Presiding Justice, Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District (Fresno) and Chair of the Court Facilities Advisory Committee
- Judge Ann C. Moorman, Judge of the Superior Court of Mendocino County and Chair of the Judicial Branch Budget Committee
- Judge Sergio C. Tapia II, Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County

Department of Finance is available for questions.

Background. The Judicial Council currently manages approximately 22 million square feet of facility space, with most of that in the more than 430 buildings and 2,100 courtrooms occupied by the trial courts. Responsibility for trial court facilities was shifted from the counties to the state by SB 1732 (Escutia), Chapter 1082, Statutes of 2002, also known as the Trial Court Facilities Act of 2002.

The Judicial Council relies on multiple sources of funding for facility construction, maintenance, and repairs, depending on the type and scale of the project. This includes some ongoing funding for maintenance and smaller projects, and some one-time, dedicated appropriations for larger projects, as listed below.

- Preventative maintenance, building operations, and small repairs are funded through an ongoing allocation of about \$198 million (\$104 million from the Court Facilities Trust Fund, including \$98 million from county contributions, and the remainder from General Fund). This funding has been increased in recent years to account for increases in the square footage managed by the Judicial Council.
- More significant repairs and facility modifications are funded through an annual \$80 million allocation (\$65 million State Court Facilities Construction Fund and \$15.4 million General Fund). Occasionally, one-time General Fund allocations are provided for specific large projects, or to address backlogs of deferred maintenance.
- Capital outlay projects, which involve new construction or major renovations with significant footprint increases or changes of use, typically receive dedicated General Fund and/or bond allocations.
- Debt service for some completed projects and administrative costs, including staff, project management, operations, compliance, legal, and other functions, are funded out of the State Court Facilities Construction Fund.

The following sections include more information about the identification and prioritization of projects within these funding streams.

Capital Outlay Projects. In a November 2019 assessment of its facilities, the Judicial Branch identified a need for a total of 80 trial court capital outlay projects—56 new buildings and 24 renovations—totaling \$13.2 billion¹. These include 18 immediate need projects (\$2.3 billion), 29 critical need projects (\$7.9 billion), 15 high need projects (\$1.3 billion), 9 medium need projects (\$1.6 billion), and 9 low need projects (\$100 million). However, the Legislative Analyst’s Office notes that due to cost increases and other adjustments since 2019, it is likely that at least \$21 billion is needed to complete the projects on the list².

The projects were identified through Court Facility Plans, which were created by each county in collaboration with the Judicial Council. These projects were consolidated into a statewide list, categorized by need, and ranked. Los Angeles completed an additional long-range planning study in 2024, which evaluated the overall needs and goals of that court system and resulted in some modifications to their projects³.

The criteria used to rank the projects is outlined in Section 70371.9 of the Government Code. The Judicial Council separates these into needs-based and cost-based criteria, listed below. The needs-based criteria were used to identify the category of each project, and the cost-based criteria were used to rank projects within categories. The November 2019 assessment includes the scores and resulting rankings for each of the trial court capital outlay projects.

The needs-based criteria include:

- (1) Projects that improve security, reduce overcrowding, correct physical hazards, and improve access to court services, as outlined in the *Update to Trial Court Capital-Outlay Plan and Prioritization Methodology* adopted on October 24, 2008⁴.
- (2) The level of seismic risk, environmental hazards, and other health and safety hazards.
- (3) The impact on court users, including, but not limited to, the level of public access to court services, such as accessibility to the courthouse.

The cost-based criteria include:

- (4) The cost avoidance or savings that would be achieved due to the project through operational or organizational efficiencies created for the court or the state.
- (5) Ways to minimize increased ongoing costs, including, but not limited to, trial court security and operating and maintenance costs.

¹ https://courts.ca.gov/system/files/legislative-reports/lr-2019-jc-reassessment-trial-court-capital-outlay-projects-gov70371_9.pdf

² <https://www.lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/5113>

³ <https://courts.ca.gov/system/files/file/los-angeles-planning-study.pdf>

⁴ <https://courts.ca.gov/sites/default/files/courts/default/2024-12/methodology-080124.pdf>

- (6) A comparison of the cost to repair or renovate the existing facility versus the cost of replacement.
- (7) The projected cost of each proposed project, per court user.
- (8) The total costs spent on the project as of the date of the assessment.

The Judicial Branch has initiated 12 projects from the “Immediate Need” category since 2019. Other projects underway at the branch include those initiated before the assessment, projects related to new judgeships, and an Appellate Court project. The table below shows the Judicial Branch’s active capital outlay projects as of January 2026.

Capital Outlay Current Active Projects as of January 20, 2026	Current Phase
Butte County – Butte County Juvenile Hall Addition and Renovation	Working Drawings
Fresno – New Fresno Courthouse	Acquisition
Kings County Courthouse – One New Shelled Courtroom for One New Judgeship	Working Drawings
Lake County – New Lakeport Courthouse	Design Build Entity
Los Angeles – Santa Clarita Courthouse	Acquisition
Mendocino County – New Ukiah Courthouse	Design Build Entity
Monterey County – New Fort Ord Courthouse	Performance Criteria
Nevada County – New Nevada City Courthouse	Acquisition
Plumas County – New Quincy Courthouse	Acquisition
Riverside – New Indio Juvenile and Family Courthouse	Construction
Sacramento Juvenile Courthouse – Two New Shelled Courtrooms for Two New Judgeships	Construction
San Bernardino County – San Bernardino Juvenile Dependency Courthouse Addition and Renovation	Construction
San Joaquin Stockton Courthouse – One New Shelled Courtroom for One New Judgeship	Working Drawings
San Luis Obispo – New San Luis Obispo Courthouse	Acquisition
Santa Clara – New Sixth Appellate District Courthouse	Design Build
Solano – New Solano Hall of Justice	Acquisition
Sonoma – New Santa Rosa Courthouse	Construction
Stanislaus – New Modesto Courthouse	Construction
Sutter County Courthouse – One New Shelled Courtroom for One New Judgeship	Working Drawings

The five-year infrastructure plan released with the Governor’s budget reflects \$2.7 billion for Judicial Branch capital outlay projects⁵. In addition to the continuation of active projects, the five-year plan reflects the initiation of the four remaining, immediate need projects:

- Lake – Clearlake Courthouse Renovation (scheduled for funding in 2027-28)
- San Joaquin – New Tracy Courthouse (scheduled for funding in 2028-29)
- Kern – New East Kern County Courthouse (scheduled for funding in 2029-30)
- Placer – Tahoe Courthouse Renovation (scheduled for funding in 2030-31)

⁵ <https://dof.ca.gov/media/docs/reports/other/INF-APP01.pdf>; <https://ebudget.ca.gov/2025-26/pdf/BudgetSummary/Infrastructure.pdf>

Facility Modification Projects. For facility modifications, courts submit projects to the Judicial Council, who assigns them a category: (1) immediate or critical, (2) necessary but not yet critical, (3) needed, (4) does not meet current code or standards, (5) beyond rated life but serviceable, (6) hazardous materials, managed but not abated⁶. Within each category, the projects are ranked by five criteria: (1) justification and effect on the court, (2) safety, security, and risk management, (3) feasibility, (4) cost/benefit, and (5) design status (how ready the project is). The Judicial Council may also consider whether there is a planned capital outlay project that would affect the need for the facility modification.

Facility modification projects are typically funded from the Judicial Council's annual allocations, which are used to target the highest priority projects. The Judicial Council noted that they are typically able to fund category (1) and many category (2) projects. Larger projects may be funded through dedicated General Fund allocations, depending on the budget condition and the needs of the branch. Projects that are not funded are placed on the deferred maintenance list.

Deferred Maintenance. Deferred maintenance broadly refers to facility needs that are not met by existing funding streams. In August 2025, the Judicial Branch identified 22,396 deferred maintenance projects totaling around \$5.4 billion⁷. Of this estimated cost, the state would be responsible for around \$4 billion. (The remaining amount would generally be the responsibility of counties that share space in court facilities). The Judicial Council submits this project list to the Department of Finance each year. The projects are funded through Judicial Council's ongoing appropriations when feasible, or through dedicated General Fund allocations for deferred maintenance when the budget condition allows. For example, \$188 million General Fund was provided in the 2021 Budget Act for deferred maintenance, of which \$49.5 million was reverted in 2023 as a budget solution.

Staff Recommendation. This item is informational, and no action is required.

⁶ <https://courts.ca.gov/system/files/jc-facility-modification-policy.pdf>

⁷ <https://courts.ca.gov/system/files/file/deferred-maintenance-report-fy-2026-27.pdf> ; other reports available here: <https://courts.ca.gov/programs-initiatives/facilities/program-overview-and-resources>

Issue 2: Court Facilities Proposals in the Governor's Budget**Panelists.**

- Zlatko Theodorovic, Director, Judicial Council Budget Services
- Tamer Ahmed, Director, Judicial Council Facilities Services
- Kate Bieker, Court Executive Officer, Superior Court of Ventura County, Chair of the Court Executives Advisory Committee
- Drew Soderborg, Deputy Legislative Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office
- Koreen van Ravenhorst, Principal Program Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
- Amanda Garcia, Staff Finance Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
- Mark Jimenez, Principal Program Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
- Henry Ng, Staff Finance Budget Analyst, Department of Finance

Proposal. The Governor's budget includes the following proposals for courthouse facility needs:

- *State Court Facilities Construction Fund (SCFCF) Backfill.* The proposed budget includes \$41 million General Fund in 2026-27 and \$56 million General Fund in 2027-28 and ongoing to backfill the SCFCF.
- *Continuing Courthouse Construction Projects.* The proposed budget includes \$320.3 million Lease Revenue Bond authority, \$3.8 million General Fund, and reappropriations of \$23.3 million General Fund to continue five courthouse construction projects in the counties of San Luis Obispo, Nevada, Plumas, Fresno, and Solano.
- *New Judgeships Courtroom Projects.* The proposed budget includes \$20.6 million General Fund for new courtrooms in San Joaquin, Kings, and Sutter counties for their previously approved new judgeships
- *Los Angeles Spring Street Courthouse Relocation.* The Governor's budget includes two proposals to facilitate the relocation of courtrooms from the Spring Street Courthouse in Los Angeles:
 - \$6.3 million General Fund to build out six courtrooms and associated space at the Chatsworth Courthouse.
 - \$4.6 million General Fund for facility modifications to relocate 17 courtrooms to other existing courthouses within the county.
- *Orange Central Justice Center Facility Modification.* The proposed budget \$36 million General Fund and \$3.6 million SCFCF reimbursement authority in 2026-27, and \$35 million one-time General Fund and \$3.5 million SCFCF reimbursement authority in 2027-28 to complete various fire life safety upgrades at the Central Justice Center in Orange County.

Background. As discussed in the previous issue, the Judicial Council relies on multiple funding streams to support its facilities statewide. The Governor’s budget includes dedicated allocations for various projects and General Fund backfill to support Judicial Council’s ongoing allocations, described below.

State Court Facilities Construction Fund (SCFCF) Backfill. The proposed budget includes \$41 million General Fund in 2026-27 and \$56 million General Fund in 2027-28 and ongoing to backfill the SCFCF. The SCFCF was created to support construction and facility-related expenses through fine and fee revenues, and has total authorized expenditures of roughly \$330 million annually. However, declining revenues have led to the shift of construction projects to General Fund, and the need for General Fund backfill in the tens of millions annually to support other activities funded out of the SCFCF, including facility modifications, maintenance, and debt service payments.

New Courthouse Construction Projects. The proposed budget includes \$320.3 million Lease Revenue Bond Authority, \$3.8 million General Fund, and reappropriations of \$23.3 million General Fund to continue five new courthouse construction projects in the counties of San Luis Obispo, Nevada, Plumas, Fresno, and Solano, outlined in the table below. These projects were all categorized as immediate need in the Judicial Branch’s 2019 *Reassessment of Trial Court Capital-Outlay Projects* ⁸.

Project	Request	Timeline	Description
Fresno County: New Fresno Courthouse Total project cost: \$964.6 million	Reappropriation of \$18.1 million General Fund for the Performance Criteria phase	Acquisition began in July 2022 and will conclude in April 2027. Performance Criteria is scheduled to begin in April 2027 and will be approved in September 2027. Design-Build is scheduled to begin in September 2027 and will be completed in November 2031.	The project consists of the construction of a new, 36-courtroom courthouse of approximately 413,000 square feet (SF) in the city of Fresno. It requires acquisition of a site of approximately 2.1 acres. The project will consolidate three facilities and provide two additional courtrooms. The Performance Criteria has been delayed due to an extended site selection process.
Nevada County: New Nevada City Courthouse Total project cost: \$206.8 million	\$1.5 million General Fund for the Performance Criteria phase	Acquisition began in July 2023 and will conclude in June 2026. Performance Criteria is scheduled to begin in July 2026 and will be approved in June 2027. Design-Build is scheduled to begin in July 2027 and will be completed in April 2031.	The project will provide construction of a new, six-courtroom courthouse of approximately 77,000 SF in the city of Nevada City. The project will require acquisition of a site of approximately 5.0 acres. The project will use a design-build delivery method. The project will replace the existing court-occupied space in the Nevada City Courthouse and Courthouse Annex.

⁸ https://courts.ca.gov/system/files/legislative-reports/lr-2019-jc-reassessment-trial-court-capital-outlay-projects-gov70371_9.pdf

Project	Request	Timeline	Description
<p>Plumas County: New Quincy Courthouse</p> <p>Total project cost: \$76.3 million</p>	<p>\$2.3 million General Fund for the Performance Criteria phase</p>	<p>Acquisition began in July 2022 and will conclude in June 2026. Performance Criteria is scheduled to begin in July 2026 and will be approved in June 2027. Design-Build is scheduled to begin in July 2027 and will be completed in September 2030.</p>	<p>The project will include construction of a new, two-courtroom courthouse of approximately 23,000 (SF) in the town of Quincy. The project will require acquisition of a site of approximately 1.9 acres. The project will use a design-build delivery method. The project will replace the existing court-occupied space in the historic Quincy Courthouse.</p>
<p>San Luis Obispo County: New San Luis Obispo Courthouse</p> <p>Total project cost: \$357.3 million</p>	<p>\$320.3 million Lease Revenue Bond Authority for the Design-Build phase</p>	<p>Acquisition began in July 2022 and will conclude in September 2026. Performance Criteria is scheduled to begin in September 2026 and will be approved in August 2027. Design-Build is scheduled to begin in September 2027 and will be completed in August 2031.</p>	<p>The project will provide construction of a new, 12-courtroom courthouse of approximately 145,000 (SF) in the city of San Luis Obispo. The project will require acquisition of a site of approximately 2.5 acres. The project will use a design-build delivery method. The project will replace the Courthouse Annex and the 1070 Palm Street facility.</p>
<p>Solano County: New Solano Hall of Justice (Fairfield)</p> <p>Total project cost: \$338.4 million</p>	<p>Reappropriation of \$5.2 million General Fund for the Performance Criteria phase</p>	<p>The Acquisition began in July 2022 and will be completed in December 2026. The Performance Criteria is scheduled to begin in December 2026 and will be approved in April 2027. Design-Build is scheduled to begin in April 2027 and will be completed in December 2030.</p>	<p>The project consists of the construction of a new 12-courtroom courthouse of approximately 141,000 (SF) in the city of Fairfield. It requires acquisition of a site of approximately 2.9 acres. The project will replace the court space in the existing Solano Hall of Justice. The Performance Criteria has been delayed due to an extended site selection process.</p>

New Courtrooms for New Judgeships. The proposed budget includes \$20.6 million for new courtrooms in San Joaquin, Kings, and Sutter counties to support previously approved new judgeships. The total cost is estimated at \$23.3 million. The 2022-23 budget included \$53.9 million General Fund for facility modifications and new construction to support 23 new judgeships (in addition to \$42.3 million ongoing for the judgeships and associated staff and operations costs). The judgeships were allocated based on the Judicial Council’s 2020 Judicial Needs Assessment⁹. The original funding was intended to cover all of the associated facility modifications, but the funding for these three projects has since reverted (a total of \$15.4 million). This proposal would cover the final set of projects associated with the 2022 judgeships.

Spring Street Transition. The Superior Court of Los Angeles County currently leases approximately 202,000 square feet in a federal building in downtown Los Angeles to operate a 24-courtroom civil courthouse, known as the Spring Street Courthouse. The federal government is divesting from the building, which is listed for accelerated disposition on the U.S. General Services Administration website¹⁰. The court’s lease expires on December 31, 2028, and will not be

⁹ https://courts.ca.gov/sites/default/files/courts/default/2024-12/2020_update_of_the_judicial_needs_assessment.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.gsa.gov/real-estate/real-property-disposition/assets-identified-for-accelerated-disposition>

renewed. The Governor’s budget includes two proposals to facilitate the relocation of court operations to other courthouses throughout the county.

The first proposal is \$6.3 million General Fund for the preliminary plans and working drawings phases of a project to build out six courtrooms and associated space at the Chatsworth Courthouse. The total project cost is estimated at \$41.1 million. The preliminary plans phase is scheduled to begin in July 2026 and will be completed in October 2026. The working drawings phase is scheduled to begin in October 2026 and will be approved in June 2027. Construction is scheduled to begin in June 2027 and will be completed in November 2028. The expansion of the Chatsworth Courthouse would also enable certain criminal matters that originate in that part of the county to be heard locally, instead of downtown. Renovation of the Chatsworth Courthouse was listed a critical need project in the 2019 facilities reassessment.

The second proposal is \$4.6 million one-time General Fund for facility modifications to relocate 17 courtrooms to nine other existing courthouses within the county, as shown in the table below.

Court District	Existing Courtrooms	Existing Courthouse	Estimated Cost ^{1, 2}	Plan for Space Needs
Northwest	1	Van Nuys West	\$ 313,000	Existing courtrooms may require repair of existing jury boxes, electrical and HVAC components, security systems, workstations, purchase of new audiovisual components or systems, and furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E).
North Central	1	Burbank	\$ 426,000	
West	2	Santa Monica	\$ 623,000	
South Central	3	Compton	\$ 747,000	
Southeast	1	Downey	\$ 432,000	
	1	Norwalk	\$ 440,000	
	1	Whittier	\$ 348,000	
Central	4	East Los Angeles	\$ 849,000	
	3	Metropolitan	\$ 396,000	
Indirect Administrative Costs			\$ 60,000	
Total	17		\$ 4,634,000	
<u>Table Footnotes:</u>				
1. Costs reflect an occupied building requiring night/weekend work only.				
2. Costs include court department moving expenses and judicial officer/staff relocation.				

Orange County Central Justice Center Facility Modification. The proposed budget includes \$36 million General Fund and \$3.6 million SCFCF reimbursement authority in 2026-27, and \$35 million one-time General Fund and \$3.5 million SCFCF reimbursement authority in 2027-28 to complete various fire life safety upgrades at the Central Justice Center (CJC) in Orange County. The CJC is owned by the state and occupied by both the county and the court. The SCFCF reimbursement authority will allow the state to collect the county contribution for this project (nine percent of the cost, based on the occupancy agreement).

In 2020, the State Fire Marshal mandated various updates to the CJC. The project was initially estimated to cost \$70.2 million, and the state share of \$64.1 million General Fund was provided in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 budgets. However, the total project cost has grown to an estimated \$148.3 million. As the project got underway, additional challenges were discovered, including inaccurate

building plans, asbestos, and general building deterioration and hidden structural damage. These challenges have led to an expanded scope for the project.

Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) Comments and Recommendations.

No Concerns With Requested Amounts... The state’s multiyear deficits means that any new General Fund spending comes at the expense of other programs, meaning new spending must meet a higher bar for approval. However, the LAO finds the proposed projects meet this higher bar as they seek to address critical health, safety, and other needs in buildings frequented by the public and their costs and scope seem reasonable.

...But Various Factors Raise Questions About Long-Term Plan for Addressing Court Facility Needs. The state’s slow pace at initiating construction projects, as well as increasing costs, raise questions about the long-term plan for fully addressing court facility needs. Delays in initiating projects could result in significant, unexpected costs occurring simultaneously if facilities worsen to the point of needing immediate replacement. As such, it could be reasonable to consider whether the state should concurrently or alternatively prioritize facility modification projects to extend and/or improve the usability of existing facilities.

Recommend Legislature Direct Judicial Branch to Report on Long-Term Plan for Facilities Based on Legislative Direction. Given the magnitude of the judicial branch’s facility needs and deficits facing the state General Fund, it cannot fully address such needs in the short run. Accordingly, the LAO recommends the Legislature instead consider how much General Fund to dedicate annually to court facility needs. The LAO also recommends it direct the judicial branch to provide by January 2028 a long-term plan for addressing facility needs. This should include an assessment of how the annual funding amount chosen by the Legislature should be divided between new construction and facility modification projects to maximize the life of existing facilities. Additionally, given the cost and scope changes for the CJC project, the LAO recommends the Legislature consider increasing oversight of facility modification projects receiving one-time General Fund support to help ensure it receives accurate and complete data and that state funds are used cost-effectively.

Staff Recommendation. Hold open.