



Circuit Court

RECOMMENDED FY23 BUDGET

\$16,525,872

FULL TIME EQUIVALENTS

125.50

JAMES A. BONIFANT, ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Circuit Court is to serve Sixth Judicial Circuit residents in the determination of litigation in serious criminal matters, substantive civil cases, domestic cases, and child support cases in accordance with the United States and Maryland Constitutions while administering justice in an honest, fair, and efficient manner.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

The total recommended FY23 Operating Budget for the Circuit Court is \$16,525,872, an increase of \$669,953 or 4.23 percent from the FY22 Approved Budget of \$15,855,919. Personnel Costs comprise 82.46 percent of the budget for 123 full-time position(s) and five part-time position(s), and a total of 125.50 FTEs. Total FTEs may include seasonal or temporary positions and may also reflect workforce charged to or from other departments or funds. Operating Expenses account for the remaining 17.54 percent of the FY23 budget.

COUNTY PRIORITY OUTCOMES

While this program area supports all seven of the County Executive's Priority Outcomes, the following are emphasized:

- Effective, Sustainable Government**
- Thriving Youth and Families**
- Safe Neighborhoods**

INNOVATIONS AND PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENTS

- Transitioned to the Maryland Electronic Courts (MDEC) system, creating a single Judiciary-wide integrated case management system that is used by all courts within the State Court system.

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Kara Hawkins of the Circuit Court at 240.777.9103 or Derrick Harrigan of the Office of Management and Budget at 240.777.2759 for more information regarding this department's operating budget.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance measures for this department are included below (where applicable), with multi-program measures displayed at the front of this section and program-specific measures shown with the relevant program. The FY22 estimates reflect funding based on the FY22 Approved Budget. The FY23 and FY24 figures are performance targets based on the FY23 Recommended Budget and funding for comparable service levels in FY24.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

☀️ Adjudication

Adjudication encompasses support staff for the Judiciary, Differentiated Case Management (DCM), and Quality Control. Conceptually, this division monitors case assignments (criminal, civil, and family cases), provides expedited case disposition for incarcerated offenders, and provides supervision consistent with the complexity of each case filed. Adjudication and DCM improve the efficiency of case processing and reduce the demand for judicial intervention at various stages of litigation. To minimize case delay, each case is assigned to an appropriate track that allows for the performance of pre-trial tasks and allocates the appropriate level of judicial intervention. Tracks are monitored for performance and are evaluated based on established performance measures. Quality Control maintains the integrity of the information the Court generates and improves the quality of the data the Court collects.

FY23 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY22 Approved	3,670,386	33.50
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	286,789	0.00
FY23 Recommended	3,957,175	33.50

☀️ Administration

The Administrative Office of the Circuit Court serves as a conduit for many operations of the Court. The Court Administrator's role is to facilitate the administrative functions of the Court and to develop policies to enhance systems performance, while maintaining the independence of the Judiciary. Basic functions performed by the Court Administrator and staff include the following: fiscal administration of the budget, human resources, case flow management and statistics, technology management, information management, jury management, space management, intergovernmental liaison, and public information.

The Trial Court Researchers, funded in part by the Trial Court Research Partnership Grant, provide research and statistical support for judiciary-wide research projects; prepare reports based on statistics and other data collected from the Montgomery County Circuit Court; establish links to national research/statistical sources relative to courts; and analyze court-wide programs, functions, and organizations to determine whether current management systems accomplish objectives efficiently.

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY20	Actual FY21	Estimated FY22	Target FY23	Target FY24
Case Clearance Rate (includes re-opened cases) - Civil	96.46%	98.78%	104.31%	104.89%	105.49%
Case Filings (includes re-opened cases) - Civil	10,052	10,007	10,340	10,095	9,851
Case Terminations (includes re-opened cases) - Civil (including Registrar of Wills, District Court appeals)	10,421	9,885	10,786	10,589	10,392
Case Clearance Rate (includes re-opened cases) - Criminal	94.54%	100.26%	98.26%	98.09%	97.93%

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY20	Actual FY21	Estimated FY22	Target FY23	Target FY24
Case Filings (includes re-opened cases) - Criminal	5,226	4,566	5,876	5,822	5,768
Case Terminations (includes re-opened cases) - Criminal (including District Court appeals)	5,528	4,578	5,773	5,711	5,648
Case Clearance Rate (includes re-opened cases) - Domestic Relations	98.78%	103.14%	100.56%	100.63%	100.69%
Case Filings (includes re-opened cases) - Domestic Relations	11,414	11,354	13,081	12,957	12,833
Case Terminations (includes re-opened cases) - Domestic Relations	11,275	11,710	13,155	13,038	12,922
Case Clearance Rate (includes re-opened cases) - Juvenile	93.87%	112.66%	103.68%	104.52%	105.52%
Case Filings (includes re-opened cases) - Juvenile	2,159	1,895	2,050	1,892	1,733
Case Terminations (includes re-opened cases) - Juvenile (including Delinquency, CINA, and TPR)	2,300	2,135	2,126	1,977	1,829
OVERALL Case Clearance Rate	96.79%	101.75%	101.57%	101.78%	102.01%
TOTAL Case Filings	29,663	27,822	31,347	30,766	30,185
TOTAL Case Terminations	28,712	28,308	31,839	31,315	30,791
Total Trials	1,197	922	1,312	1,298	1,283

FY23 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY22 Approved	3,261,607	10.29
Decrease Cost: FTE Adjustment	0	(0.06)
Technical Adj: FTE Adjustment	0	0.06
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	6,722	(0.06)
FY23 Recommended	3,268,329	10.23

Case Assignment

The Assignment Office schedules and maintains all hearings, trials, and motion dates as well as special event dates for Judges and Family Magistrates of the Court, and ensures that these events are scheduled in accordance with the Court's DCM plans. The Assignment Office maintains all scheduling information related to criminal indictments and information; criminal jury demands and appeals; civil, juvenile, and family trial assignments; civil, family, and juvenile motions; and bench warrants. The Assignment Office also manages all courtroom information sheets, locates all files for assigned calendars, reviews each file, and delivers files.

FY23 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY22 Approved	1,301,888	15.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	136,931	0.00
FY23 Recommended	1,438,819	15.00

Family Division Services

This program provides a variety of services for children and families, most of them funded by the Family Law Grant. Services include case managers that provide day-to-day management of cases supported by Family Magistrates, Judges, counsel, and litigants; custody mediation involving litigants in an effort to obtain a settlement of custody issues prior to litigation; the Family Law Self Help Center staffed by attorneys to help individuals representing themselves in uncomplicated family law cases involving divorce, custody and child support; psychological evaluations when psychological testing is necessary as an adjunct to arriving at a decision in the best interest of the children; best interest attorney appointments to specifically represent the interests of children; and operating expenses associated with managing the division.

Family Division Services also handles adoption investigations, as well as child custody and visitation evaluations. After the establishment of a Court Order, independent evaluations for child custody and visitation and adoption investigations are conducted by Court staff possessing substantial experience in social science or suitable credentials in the field of social work. The evaluator meets with the litigants and children and interviews professionals and collateral references to ascertain the appropriate custodial situation for the children.

The Juvenile Division is also a part of Family Division Services and is responsible for oversight of delinquency petitions, Child in Need of Assistance (CINA) petitions, Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) petitions, Voluntary Placement petitions, and Petitions for Peace Orders. These matters, which are governed by strict statutory timeframes, require a high degree of judicial oversight by the Court on a long term basis.

FY23 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY22 Approved	1,031,491	10.00
Shift: Remote Hearings, Court Trials, and Judicial Proceedings Positions - Grant Fund (ARPA) to the General Fund	291,432	4.00
Shift: Remote Hearings, Court Trials, and Judicial Proceedings Positions - Grant Fund (ARPA) to the General Fund	(291,432)	(4.00)
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	471,997	5.00
FY23 Recommended	1,503,488	15.00

Family Magistrates

Family Magistrates are qualified individuals appointed by the Judges of the Circuit Court to hear family matters and make reports and recommendations based on testimony and analysis of the testimony received at hearings. Family Division Judges continue to review the recommendations, make rulings, and issue orders based on the recommendations of the Family Magistrates and any exceptions filed. The Special Juvenile Magistrate is an officer of the Court assigned to conduct proceedings on matters within the Juvenile Court of the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, pursuant to the Annotated Code of Maryland and the Maryland Rules, and in accordance with the Juvenile Differentiated Case Management plan, procedures and policies. Juvenile Judges continue to review the recommendations and hear immediate reviews and exceptions in addition to other juvenile and CINA matters.

FY23 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY22 Approved	581,239	6.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	45,908	0.00
FY23 Recommended	627,147	6.00

Grants

The Family Law Grant is funded by the State and provides services to families to reduce conflict and introduce the parties involved in litigation to problem-solving techniques to help reduce future litigation. See the Family Division Services Program for a description of the services supported by this grant.

The Trial Court Research Partnership Grant supports one Trial Court Researcher assigned to the Administration Program. This individual provides research, analysis, statistical support, and related reports on County and judiciary-wide research projects.

The Montgomery County Adult Drug Court is funded by the State through a grant from the Office of Problem Solving Courts. The mission of the Adult Drug Court is to eliminate drug abuse, crime, and their consequences by forging continuing partnerships with the Court, health treatment providers, concerned community organizations, and law enforcement. By leveraging its partnerships and its authority, the Court directs substance-abusing offenders into evaluation and treatment to achieve personal responsibility and productive citizenship.

FY23 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY22 Approved	3,152,191	28.21
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	(424,206)	(4.94)
FY23 Recommended	2,727,985	23.27

Jury

The Jury Office manages prospective and active jurors for civil and criminal proceedings. In accordance with Maryland Courts and Judicial Proceedings, Title 8, every citizen may serve as a juror and must serve when summoned. The Jury Commissioner and staff dispatch questionnaires to prospective jurors using information gathered from voter registration and Motor Vehicle Administration listings. The Jury Commissioner maintains a qualified jury pool from the individuals who are determined to be qualified as jurors under Maryland Courts and Judicial Proceedings § 8-207.

FY23 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY22 Approved	696,438	4.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	30,463	0.00
FY23 Recommended	726,901	4.00

Law Library

The Law Library supports the research activities of the Court, the Bar, and the public, and is the only law library open to the public in Montgomery County. The Library has a comprehensive collection of law, including U.S. statutes and the codes of Maryland, Washington D.C., Virginia, and local ordinances. It has a complete collection of judicial opinions and a variety of subject treatises and reference materials. The Law Library also offers free access to the major online legal databases. Library staff are available to answer questions regarding the library and its collection but cannot give legal opinions or advice. The staff will provide limited assistance over the telephone and by e-mail.

FY23 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY22 Approved	454,379	3.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	13,574	0.00
FY23 Recommended	467,953	3.00

Technical Services

Technical Services is responsible for every aspect of the Court's information systems. The duties of, and services performed, range from installing and maintaining server/PC hardware and software applications to designing and troubleshooting complex computer networks and information databases. The department manages the electronic recording of all courtroom and hearing room proceedings. All video conferencing between the Circuit Court, District Court, Montgomery County Detention Center, and Montgomery County Correctional Facility is handled through this division. This equipment is used on a daily basis in order to conduct bond hearings via a video connection. Copies of court transcripts are purchased through this division. The Court's website and internal servers for the Court and Clerk's Office are administered by Technical Services.

FY23 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY22 Approved	1,454,112	13.00
Increase Cost: Replace/Upgrade Courtroom AV Equipment	150,000	0.00
Increase Cost: Ransomware Data Protection	102,133	0.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	(167,213)	0.00
FY23 Recommended	1,539,032	13.00

Trust and Guardianships

The Trust Office administers the case files for fiduciary entities (primarily guardianships) who are required to comply with the reporting requirements set forth in the Maryland Court Rules, Title 10, Guardians and Other Fiduciaries. The reports required to be filed include the Inventory and Information Report and Annual Fiduciary Report for guardianships of the property of a minor or disabled person and the Annual Report of the guardianship of the person. The Trust Clerk examines the Annual Fiduciary Reports filed and prepares the Report of Trust Clerk for the Court.

FY23 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY22 Approved	252,188	2.50
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	16,855	0.00
FY23 Recommended	269,043	2.50

BUDGET SUMMARY

	Actual FY21	Budget FY22	Estimate FY22	Recommended FY23	%Chg Bud/Rec
COUNTY GENERAL FUND					
EXPENDITURES					
Salaries and Wages	7,602,505	7,925,104	7,848,691	8,494,116	7.2 %
Employee Benefits	2,528,838	2,452,931	2,434,469	2,587,156	5.5 %
County General Fund Personnel Costs	10,131,343	10,378,035	10,283,160	11,081,272	6.8 %
Operating Expenses	1,933,033	2,343,817	2,384,766	2,601,965	11.0 %
County General Fund Expenditures	12,064,376	12,721,852	12,667,926	13,683,237	7.6 %
PERSONNEL					
Full-Time	95	95	95	99	4.2 %

BUDGET SUMMARY

	Actual FY21	Budget FY22	Estimate FY22	Recommended FY23	%Chg Bud/Rec
Part-Time	4	4	4	4	—
FTEs	99.38	97.29	97.29	101.23	4.1 %
REVENUES					
Miscellaneous Revenues	55,235	55,230	55,230	55,230	—
State Jury Fee Reimbursement	23,205	482,785	225,000	482,785	—
County General Fund Revenues	78,440	538,015	280,230	538,015	—

GRANT FUND - MCG

EXPENDITURES

Salaries and Wages	1,941,351	2,128,658	2,128,658	1,884,882	-11.5 %
Employee Benefits	663,807	708,350	708,350	660,694	-6.7 %
Grant Fund - MCG Personnel Costs	2,605,158	2,837,008	2,837,008	2,545,576	-10.3 %
Operating Expenses	219,049	297,059	297,059	297,059	—
Grant Fund - MCG Expenditures	2,824,207	3,134,067	3,134,067	2,842,635	-9.3 %

PERSONNEL

Full-Time	24	28	28	24	-14.3 %
Part-Time	1	1	1	1	—
FTEs	22.12	28.21	28.21	24.27	-14.0 %

REVENUES

American Rescue Plan Act	0	273,308	273,308	0	-100.0 %
Federal Grants	30,031	0	0	0	—
State Grants	2,790,157	2,860,759	2,860,759	2,842,635	-0.6 %
Grant Fund - MCG Revenues	2,820,188	3,134,067	3,134,067	2,842,635	-9.3 %

DEPARTMENT TOTALS

Total Expenditures	14,888,583	15,855,919	15,801,993	16,525,872	4.2 %
Total Full-Time Positions	119	123	123	123	—
Total Part-Time Positions	5	5	5	5	—
Total FTEs	121.50	125.50	125.50	125.50	—
Total Revenues	2,898,628	3,672,082	3,414,297	3,380,650	-7.9 %

FY23 RECOMMENDED CHANGES

	Expenditures	FTEs
COUNTY GENERAL FUND		
	FY22 ORIGINAL APPROPRIATION	12,721,852 97.29
Other Adjustments (with no service impacts)		
Shift: Remote Hearings, Court Trials, and Judicial Proceedings Positions - Grant Fund (ARPA) to the General Fund [Family Division Services]	291,432	4.00

FY23 RECOMMENDED CHANGES

	Expenditures	FTEs
Increase Cost: Annualization of FY22 Compensation Increases	238,258	0.00
Increase Cost: FY23 Compensation Adjustment	208,683	0.00
Increase Cost: Replace/Upgrade Courtroom AV Equipment [Technical Services]	150,000	0.00
Increase Cost: Ransomware Data Protection [Technical Services]	102,133	0.00
Increase Cost: Printing and Mail Adjustment	4,756	0.00
Increase Cost: Motor Pool Adjustment	1,259	0.00
Decrease Cost: FTE Adjustment [Administration]	0	(0.06)
Decrease Cost: Retirement Adjustment	(35,136)	0.00
FY23 RECOMMENDED	13,683,237	101.23

GRANT FUND - MCG

FY22 ORIGINAL APPROPRIATION	3,134,067	28.21
Other Adjustments (with no service impacts)		
Technical Adj: FTE Adjustment [Administration]	0	0.06
Shift: Remote Hearings, Court Trials, and Judicial Proceedings Positions - Grant Fund (ARPA) to the General Fund [Family Division Services]	(291,432)	(4.00)
FY23 RECOMMENDED	2,842,635	24.27

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Program Name	FY22 APPR Expenditures	FY22 APPR FTEs	FY23 REC Expenditures	FY23 REC FTEs
Adjudication	3,670,386	33.50	3,957,175	33.50
Administration	3,261,607	10.29	3,268,329	10.23
Case Assignment	1,301,888	15.00	1,438,819	15.00
Family Division Services	1,031,491	10.00	1,503,488	15.00
Family Magistrates	581,239	6.00	627,147	6.00
Grants	3,152,191	28.21	2,727,985	23.27
Jury	696,438	4.00	726,901	4.00
Law Library	454,379	3.00	467,953	3.00
Technical Services	1,454,112	13.00	1,539,032	13.00
Trust and Guardianships	252,188	2.50	269,043	2.50
Total	15,855,919	125.50	16,525,872	125.50

FUNDING PARAMETER ITEMS

CE RECOMMENDED (\$000S)

Title	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28
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COUNTY GENERAL FUND

FUNDING PARAMETER ITEMS

CE RECOMMENDED (\$000S)

Title	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28
EXPENDITURES						
FY23 Recommended	13,683	13,683	13,683	13,683	13,683	13,683
No inflation or compensation change is included in outyear projections.						
Elimination of One-Time Items Recommended in FY23	0	(252)	(252)	(252)	(252)	(252)
Items recommended for one-time funding in FY23, including Ransomware Data Protection and replace/upgrade Courtroom AV Equipment, will be eliminated from the base in the outyears.						
Labor Contracts	0	566	566	566	566	566
These figures represent the estimated annualized cost of general wage adjustments, service increments, and other negotiated items.						
Subtotal Expenditures	13,683	13,997	13,997	13,997	13,997	13,997

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