



Circuit Court

RECOMMENDED FY24 BUDGET

\$17,655,333

FULL TIME EQUIVALENTS

126.50

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 FY24 Operating Budget for the Circuit Court is \$17,655,333, an increase of \$1,129,461 or 6.83 percent from the FY23 Approved Budget of \$16,525,872. Personnel Costs comprise 83.87 percent of the budget for 124 full-time position(s) and five part-time position(s), and a total of 126.50 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 16.13 percent of the FY24 budget.

COUNTY PRIORITY OUTCOMES

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

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

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Timothy Sheridan 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 FY23 estimates reflect funding based on the FY23 Approved Budget. The FY24 and FY25 figures are performance targets based on the FY24 Recommended Budget and funding for comparable service levels in FY25.

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.

FY24 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY23 Approved	3,957,175	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.	233,969	2.00
FY24 Recommended	4,191,144	35.50

✦ 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 FY21	Actual FY22	Estimated FY23	Target FY24	Target FY25
Case Clearance Rate (includes re-opened cases) - Civil	98.78%	99.8%	89.4%	90.8%	92.4%
Case Filings (includes re-opened cases) - Civil	5,813	5,794	7,244	7,490	7,697
Case Terminations (includes re-opened cases) - Civil (including District Court appeals)	6,155	5,781	6,475	6,800	7,109
Case Clearance Rate (includes re-opened cases) - Criminal	100.26%	99.8%	100.3%	105.3%	113.3%
Case Filings (includes re-opened cases) - Criminal	4,566	3,735	3,355	3,190	3,009
Case Terminations (includes re-opened cases) - Criminal (including District Court appeals)	4,578	3,729	3,366	3,359	3,409
Case Clearance Rate (includes re-opened cases) - Domestic Relations	103.14%	91.8%	83.3%	82.8%	81.7%
Case Filings (includes re-opened cases) - Domestic Relations	11,354	10,649	10,701	11,048	11,350
Case Terminations (includes re-opened cases) - Domestic Relations	11,710	9,777	8,908	9,151	9,275
Case Clearance Rate (includes re-opened cases) - Juvenile	112.66%	107.3%	107.3%	107.3%	107.3%
Case Filings (includes re-opened cases) - Juvenile	1,895	1,010	1,010	1,010	1,010

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY21	Actual FY22	Estimated FY23	Target FY24	Target FY25
Case Terminations (includes re-opened cases) - Juvenile (including Delinquency, CINA, and TPR)	2,135	1,084	1,084	1,084	1,084
Case Clearance Rate	101.75%	96.1%	88.9%	89.7%	90.5%
Number Case Filings	27,822	21,188	22,310	22,738	23,066
Number of Case Terminations	28,308	20,371	19,834	20,393	20,877
Number of Trials	922	1,183	1,196	1,201	1,195

FY24 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY23 Approved	3,268,329	10.23
Increase Cost: Increase in Jury Service Reimbursement Fee	200,000	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.	(671,883)	(2.00)
FY24 Recommended	2,796,446	8.23

☀ 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.

FY24 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY23 Approved	1,438,819	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.	(22,859)	(1.00)
FY24 Recommended	1,415,960	14.00

☀ 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 Court has an initiative that is allowing litigants to meet with a courthouse appointed mediator at no cost to the community. This is a response to the pandemic to allow litigants to have a licensed mediator to help them reach an agreement before going to trial.

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.

FY24 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY23 Approved	1,503,488	15.00
Re-align: Adjustment to Family Division Services	185,309	0.37
Technical Adj: Family Grant and Juvenile Program Personal Adjustment	45,617	0.63
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	115,225	(0.73)
FY24 Recommended	1,849,639	15.27

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 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.

FY24 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY23 Approved	627,147	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.	142,806	1.00
FY24 Recommended	769,953	7.00

Grants

The Family Law Grant is funded by the State Judiciary 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 Judiciary 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.

FY24 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY23 Approved	2,727,985	23.27
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	589,656	1.73
FY24 Recommended	3,317,641	25.00

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.

FY24 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY23 Approved	726,901	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.	231,472	0.00
FY24 Recommended	958,373	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.

FY24 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY23 Approved	467,953	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.	32,571	0.00
FY24 Recommended	500,524	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.

FY24 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY23 Approved	1,539,032	13.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	21,164	(1.00)
FY24 Recommended	1,560,196	12.00

☼ 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.

FY24 Recommended Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY23 Approved	269,043	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.	26,414	0.00
FY24 Recommended	295,457	2.50

BUDGET SUMMARY

	Actual FY22	Budget FY23	Estimate FY23	Recommended FY24	%Chg Bud/Rec
COUNTY GENERAL FUND					
EXPENDITURES					
Salaries and Wages	7,644,893	8,494,116	7,922,840	8,941,132	5.3 %
Employee Benefits	2,454,402	2,587,156	2,459,912	2,864,456	10.7 %
County General Fund Personnel Costs	10,099,295	11,081,272	10,382,752	11,805,588	6.5 %
Operating Expenses	2,572,174	2,601,965	2,584,717	2,549,967	-2.0 %
County General Fund Expenditures	12,671,469	13,683,237	12,967,469	14,355,555	4.9 %
PERSONNEL					
Full-Time	95	99	99	99	—
Part-Time	4	4	4	4	—
FTEs	97.29	101.23	101.23	101.60	0.4 %
REVENUES					
State Jury Fee Reimbursement	219,360	482,785	482,785	1,165,570	141.4 %
Miscellaneous Revenues	54,291	55,230	55,230	55,230	—
County General Fund Revenues	273,651	538,015	538,015	1,220,800	126.9 %

GRANT FUND - MCG

BUDGET SUMMARY

	Actual FY22	Budget FY23	Estimate FY23	Recommended FY24	%Chg Bud/Rec
EXPENDITURES					
Salaries and Wages	2,154,612	1,884,882	1,884,882	2,306,629	22.4 %
Employee Benefits	744,345	660,694	660,694	696,090	5.4 %
Grant Fund - MCG Personnel Costs	2,898,957	2,545,576	2,545,576	3,002,719	18.0 %
Operating Expenses	209,426	297,059	297,059	297,059	—
Grant Fund - MCG Expenditures	3,108,383	2,842,635	2,842,635	3,299,778	16.1 %
PERSONNEL					
Full-Time	28	24	24	25	4.2 %
Part-Time	1	1	1	1	—
FTEs	28.21	24.27	24.27	24.90	2.6 %
REVENUES					
State Grants	2,869,626	2,842,635	2,842,635	3,299,778	16.1 %
Federal Grants	241,837	0	0	0	—
Grant Fund - MCG Revenues	3,111,463	2,842,635	2,842,635	3,299,778	16.1 %
DEPARTMENT TOTALS					
Total Expenditures	15,779,852	16,525,872	15,810,104	17,655,333	6.8 %
Total Full-Time Positions	123	123	123	124	0.8 %
Total Part-Time Positions	5	5	5	5	—
Total FTEs	125.50	125.50	125.50	126.50	0.8 %
Total Revenues	3,385,114	3,380,650	3,380,650	4,520,578	33.7 %

FY24 RECOMMENDED CHANGES

	Expenditures	FTEs
COUNTY GENERAL FUND		
	FY23 ORIGINAL APPROPRIATION	13,683,237 101.23
<u>Other Adjustments (with no service impacts)</u>		
Increase Cost: Annualization of FY23 Compensation Increases	565,772	0.00
Increase Cost: FY24 Compensation Adjustment	480,523	0.00
Increase Cost: Increase in Jury Service Reimbursement Fee [Administration]	200,000	0.00
Re-align: Adjustment to Family Division Services [Family Division Services]	185,309	0.37
Increase Cost: Printing and Mail	2,318	0.00
Decrease Cost: Motor Pool Adjustment	(2,183)	0.00
Decrease Cost: Retirement Adjustment	(4,956)	0.00
Decrease Cost: Elimination of One-Time Items Approved in FY23	(252,133)	0.00
Decrease Cost: Annualization of FY23 Personnel Costs	(502,332)	0.00
	FY24 RECOMMENDED	14,355,555 101.60

FY24 RECOMMENDED CHANGES

	Expenditures	FTEs
GRANT FUND - MCG		
FY23 ORIGINAL APPROPRIATION	2,842,635	24.27
Other Adjustments (with no service impacts)		
Increase Cost: Annualization of FY23 Personnel Costs	411,526	0.00
Technical Adj: Family Grant and Juvenile Program Personal Adjustment [Family Division Services]	45,617	0.63
FY24 RECOMMENDED	3,299,778	24.90

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Program Name	FY23 APPR Expenditures	FY23 APPR FTEs	FY24 REC Expenditures	FY24 REC FTEs
Adjudication	3,957,175	33.50	4,191,144	35.50
Administration	3,268,329	10.23	2,796,446	8.23
Case Assignment	1,438,819	15.00	1,415,960	14.00
Family Division Services	1,503,488	15.00	1,849,639	15.27
Family Magistrates	627,147	6.00	769,953	7.00
Grants	2,727,985	23.27	3,317,641	25.00
Jury	726,901	4.00	958,373	4.00
Law Library	467,953	3.00	500,524	3.00
Technical Services	1,539,032	13.00	1,560,196	12.00
Trust and Guardianships	269,043	2.50	295,457	2.50
Total	16,525,872	125.50	17,655,333	126.50

FUNDING PARAMETER ITEMS

CE RECOMMENDED (\$000S)

Title	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29
COUNTY GENERAL FUND						
EXPENDITURES						
FY24 Recommended	14,356	14,356	14,356	14,356	14,356	14,356
No inflation or compensation change is included in outyear projections.						
Labor Contracts	0	355	355	355	355	355
These figures represent the estimated annualized cost of general wage adjustments, service increments, and other negotiated items.						
Subtotal Expenditures	14,356	14,711	14,711	14,711	14,711	14,711

ANNUALIZATION OF FULL PERSONNEL COSTS

	FY24 Recommended	FY25 Annualized

	Expenditures	FTEs	Expenditures	FTEs
Family Grant Juvenile Social Worker - Alignment of Positions to Split General Fund and Grant Fund	45,617	(0.37)	136,881	(0.37)
Total	45,617	(0.37)	136,881	(0.37)

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