

**FY2026 Budget
Context:**

Justice Court,
City Prosecutor's
Office,
and
Legal Defenders
Association (LDA)



Where we are



Total case filings at the Justice Court have rebounded since the pandemic but remain below pre-pandemic levels.

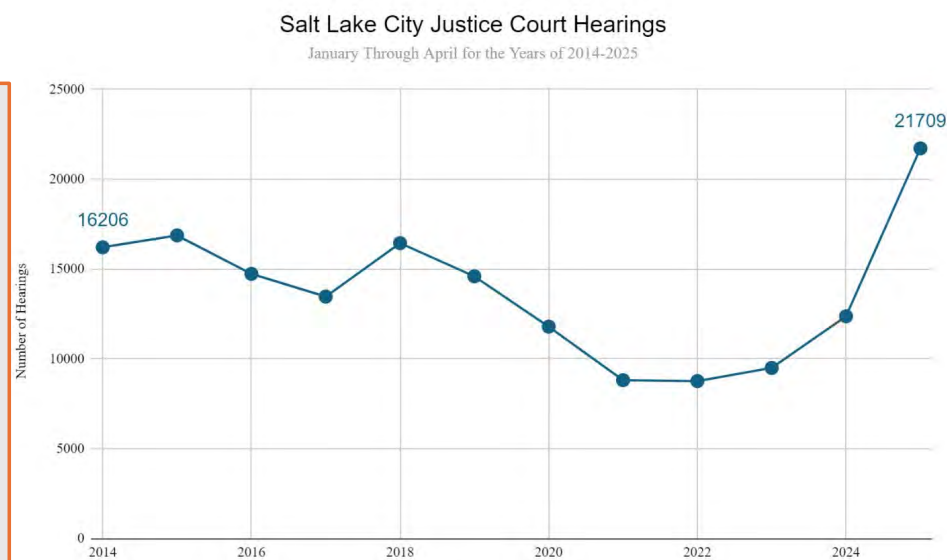


FY2026 budget includes:

- **\$56,356 to replace legacy prosecutor software system** that's past useful life. It's anticipated to reduce workload through more efficient processing of cases, and
- **Two new victim advocates** in the City Prosecutor's Office domestic violence program are pending Victim of Crime Act or VOCA grant award notifications. Would free up prosecutor time to work on other matters. There is currently a single victim advocate for DV in the office.



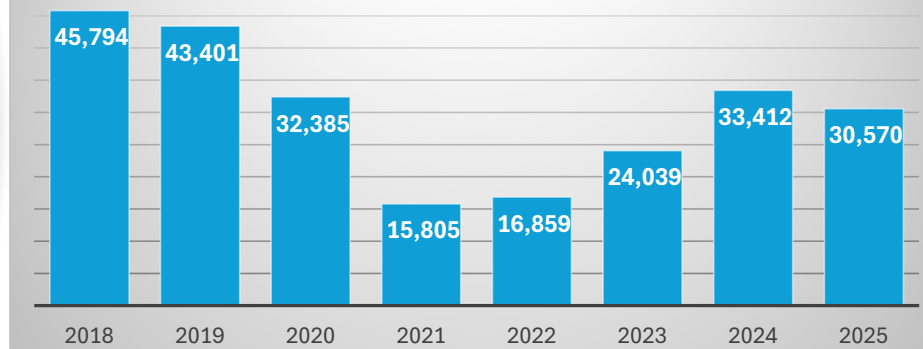
- Comparison of January through April from 2014 to 2025. The Justice Court has seen a significant increase in the number of hearings typically held during the first four months of the calendar year.
- Increased criminal case filings appear to be a contributing factor.
- For comparison, the Third District Court's monthly hearings volume has remained flat since September.





- Total case filings for FY2025 could be 41,010; 3,500 case filings per month (average over the past 12 months)
- Not all cases are equivalent; some cases have multiple hearings and take longer to reach resolution.
- The criminal case clearance rate shows a significant decrease from 102% in 2023 to 77% in 2024 meaning more cases are being filed than resolved.

Justice Court Case Filings by Fiscal Year

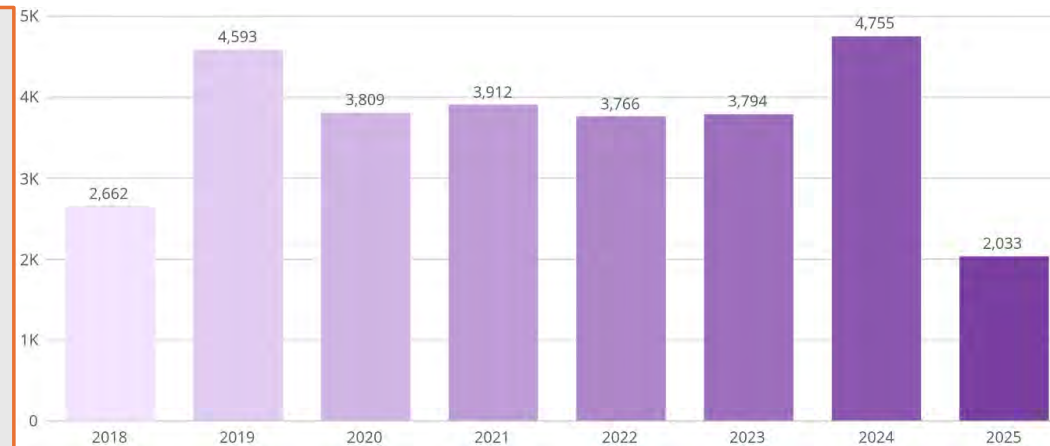




LDA Cases by Calendar Year

2025 is January - March

Justice Court cases involving the Legal Defenders Association (LDA) are a subset of total case filings and seeing an increase during the first quarter of 2025. Judges and prosecutors touch every criminal case. The LDA doesn't get involved in cases that are resolved before appointment and are not usually appointed on cases that involve only infraction level charges.

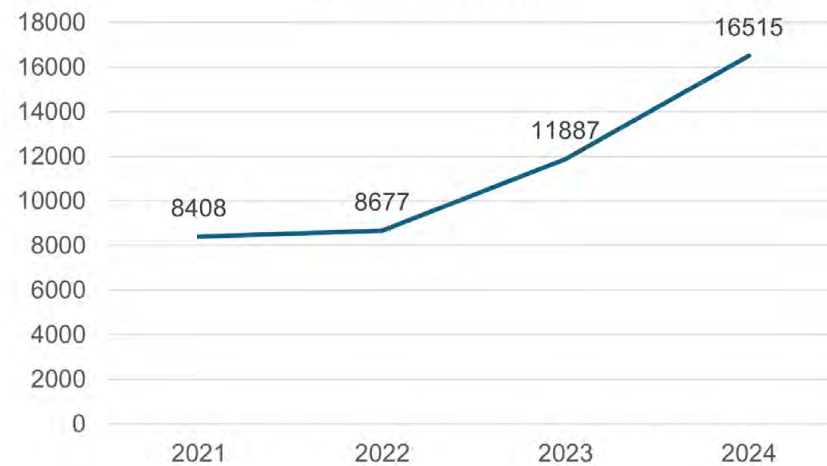




Prosecutor's Office reports that core criminal filings (excluding parking and small-claims matters) are significantly increasing; 39% from FY2023 to FY2024, and January 2025 arraignments were double January 2024, that is, ~2,000 vs ~1,000

City Prosecutor's Office Cases by Fiscal Year

Total caseload





Temporary or Trend?

It remains to be seen whether the recent increase in case filings and hearings will plateau or is a persistent trend.

A Sixth Judge?

Adding a sixth judge at the Justice Court has domino effects potentially \$1.7 Million:

- Support staff of three judicial assistants and potentially a court manager
- LDA assigns two attorneys and one legal assistant per judge
- City Prosecutor's Office may need three attorneys and two assistants

Other Considerations:

- Justice Court is at capacity; two studies underway: 5th floor buildout at City Hall, and overall spacing needs
- Explore ordinance amendment to *City Code 2.84.020*; limit of five full time judges and three part time judges
- Studying case loads and staffing
- Increasing dedicated County jail beds and pilot program for high repeat offenders