



COUNCIL BUDGET STAFF REPORT

CITY COUNCIL of SALT LAKE CITY
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TO: City Council Members

RE: **FY2023 BUDGET - JUSTICE COURT**

FROM: Sylvia Richards
Policy and Budget Analyst

DATE: May 24, 2022

PROJECT TIMELINE:

Briefing: May 24, 2022

Public Hearings: May 17 & June 7

Potential Action: June 14, 2022

ISSUE AT-A-GLANCE

The Justice Court handles misdemeanor criminal citations, small claims, traffic citations, and traffic school for moving violations. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 budget proposes a total budget of \$5,204,990 and 42 full-time employees (FTE). There is an increase of \$354,084 (7.3%) from the FY 2022 Adopted budget. The proposed budget does not include any new programs or services. There is one cut to existing services and programs. See page two for details. Information regarding the proposed budget is included on pages 40 and 191 through 195 of the Mayor's Recommended Budget FY 2023.

BUDGET SYNOPSIS

The chart on the following page shows the Justice Court's recommended budget for FY2023. In addition, personal services details are included for FY2023.

Justice Court Budget FY2023



	FY2020 Actual	FY2021 Budget	FY2021 Actual	FY2022 Budget	FY2023 Recommended
Personal Services	\$ 3,982,182	\$ 4,108,349	\$ 4,046,203	\$ 4,231,849	\$ 4,585,933
Operating & Maintenance Supply	\$ 42,921	\$ 59,116	\$ 38,717	\$ 65,507	\$ 65,507
Charges and Services	\$ 425,720	\$ 549,401	\$ 233,019	\$ 543,550	\$ 543,550
Capital Expenditures	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
TOTAL	\$ 4,450,822	\$ 4,726,866	\$ 4,317,939	\$ 4,850,906	\$ 5,204,990
Personal Services difference (FY2023 Recommended less FY2022 Budget)			\$ 354,084		
Detail					
Personal Services Base to Base Changes			\$ (9,761)		
Pension Changes			\$ (4,228)		
Insurance Rate Changes			\$ 26,912		
Merit Changes			\$ 27,269		
Salary Proposal			\$ 168,634		
NFP & CCAC Cost Projections [4 Impacted Employees]			\$ 21,319		
Budget Amendment #2 - Salary Changes			\$ 123,939		
TOTAL			\$ 354,084		

Table 1 Personal Service Base to Base Changes FY 2021 Provided by Administrative Staff

Potential Remodel of Courtroom

Administrative staff indicate the Court is speaking with an architect and a designer regarding the possibility of remodeling at least one of the courtrooms. The Court indicates they want to create a more helpful environment, such as providing computers, phones, and private settings to speak with a judge or attorney or attend court-ordered classes. Some who come in-person are often individuals struggling with homelessness, mental health issues, or who are facing other obstacles to participating using their own devices, according to the Court. These individuals often must wait for extended periods of time in lobby spaces that were not designed for these purposes. There is about 3000 sq. ft. of courtroom space that is rarely used and could be utilized as part of the remodeled space.

The Court indicates they do not currently have the budget for these changes, so they may come back to the Administration and Council with a budget amendment request during the upcoming fiscal year. The Council may wish to note that the conversations with the architect and designer are in the preliminary stages and next steps have not been determined. As a side note, there may be an opportunity for financial support from the Utah Bar Foundation for this project.

- ***The Council may wish to ask the percentage of Court appearances that are remote versus in-person, and how that percentage compares to the numbers from the last fiscal year.***

Veterans Court Closure

The Council may wish to note that after the retirement of Judge Baxter on July 1, 2022, the Court will be discontinuing the Veterans Court. While the Court has found it to be useful, Veterans Court is scheduled only once a month, and there are very few cases involved, according to Administrative staff. (Veterans courts nationwide are experiencing a decrease in numbers.) As far as impact, veterans will still be able to access the Third District veterans court, including support from legal defense and Veterans Affairs. The Court indicates they are working with the district court and Veterans Affairs to ensure a seamless transition. ***The Council may wish to ask what the cost savings are for discontinuation of this service and discuss it further with the Administration.***

ADDITIONAL POLICY QUESTIONS

- 1. The Council may wish to ask about the Justice Court's outreach and engagement to the Hispanic/Latinx community.***
- 2. The Council may wish to ask about the progress and next steps of the Justice Court's partnership with Harvard University for a study on implicit bias with juries.***

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Tracking Measurements

The Justice Court uses four metrics included in Table 2 to measure performance monthly; access and fairness (customer satisfaction), time to disposition for criminal Court cases, age of active pending criminal cases, and Criminal Case Clearance rate.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	Fy2019 Actual	FY2020 Actual	FY2021 Actual	FY2022 YTD	FY2023 Target	State Average
Access & Fairness – Percentage of Justice Court customers satisfied with service received.	95%	NA	NA	NA	>90%	NA
Time to Disposition – 95% of criminal case dispositions should meet established guidelines for Time to Disposition (6 months)	89%	91%	58%	56%	>95%	73%
Age of Acting Pending Cases – 95% of all criminal cases should have a disposition within a 180-day time frame.	83%	77%	50%	62%	>95%	65%
Criminal Case Clearance Rate – A Clearance Rate of 100% means the court has disposed of as many cases as were filed, i.e., the court is keeping up with its incoming caseload	103%	174%	90%	130%	100%	91%

Table 2 Justice Court Performance Measures (Mayor's Budget Book p. 193)

Justice Court Background

The Salt Lake City Justice Court is the largest municipal Court in the State of Utah with a very high volume of misdemeanor cases. The Court is a limited jurisdiction Court under the umbrella of the Utah State Court system.

The Justice Court is responsible for and processes Class B and C misdemeanor, infractions and small claims cases, jury trials, appeals and expungements, video hearings, prisoner transports, and daily interaction with jails throughout the State of Utah. The Court monitors and tracks probation, warrants, community service, and restitution, collections of monetary penalties, appeals, expungements, and plea in-abeyance cases. The Court also provides traffic school, coordination of interpreter services, and any ADA needs that arise.

The Justice Court judiciary, employees, and security team describe their environment as “dedicated to open and transparent access to the Court, bringing justice for all, and providing a safe and civil environment for dispute resolution”.

Vision Statement

Creating a Court that is just, equitable, and trusted by all.

Court Core Values***Excellence***

Having the desire to succeed and the motivation to reach our full potential, going above and beyond in to accomplish the task at hand.

Respect

Recognize and appreciate the value of each individual and their experience and situation.

Integrity

Doing what we say we are going to do, applying honesty and accountability with openness.

Community

Bridging the gap between Court, community, and other agencies, improving access to resources and information.

Unity

Supporting one another and fostering growth while reaching our goals and adhering to our values.