CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND JUDICIAL BRANCH

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) incarcerates people convicted of the most serious and violent felonies, supervises those released to parole, and provides rehabilitation programs to help people reintegrate into the community. The Department strives to facilitate the successful reentry of the individuals in its care back to their communities, equipped with the tools to be drug-free, healthy, and employable members of society by providing education, treatment, and rehabilitative and restorative justice programs. The Budget includes total funding of approximately $14.2 billion ($13.8 billion General Fund and $400 million other funds) for CDCR. Of this amount, approximately $4.1 billion General Fund is for health care programs, which provide incarcerated individuals access to mental health, medical, nursing, and dental care services.

The adult incarcerated population is projected to continue its overall long-term downward trend over the next few years. Fall projections estimate the average daily adult incarcerated population for 2025-26 to be 89,162, a decrease of 2.2 percent from the spring 2025 projections, and 87,613 in 2026-27, a decrease of 5.5 percent from the spring projections. In the longer term, the population is projected to decline to 84,664 incarcerated individuals by June 30, 2030. While the overall population is projected to continue its decline, the number of adult incarcerated individuals age 55

and older is currently more than 19,000. Older incarcerated individuals tend to have complex needs that drive higher costs.

Proposition 36, passed in November 2024, was expected to increase CDCR's population by 1,878 in 2025-26 and 3,597 upon broader implementation as of spring projections. Fall projections now indicate Proposition 36 impacts will be 562 in 2025-26 and approximately 1,200 upon full implementation. The active parolee average daily population is projected to be 33,816 in 2025-26, declining to 32,432 in 2026-27. The parole population is projected to decline further to 30,785 by June 30, 2030.

PRISON CAPACITY AND CLOSURE

The adult prison population has declined steadily in recent years, which has provided opportunities for CDCR to eliminate its reliance on contract prison capacity. CDCR terminated its final remaining contract to house incarcerated persons out-of-state in June 2019, and its final in-state contract community correctional facility in May 2021. Additionally, CDCR terminated the lease of the California City Correctional Facility (California City), its last privately-owned prison contract in March 2024. In total, the termination of these contracts has saved the state hundreds of millions of dollars in annual expenditures.

CDCR has closed three state-owned adult institutions since 2021: (1) Deuel Vocational Institution (Tracy) in September 2021, (2) California Correctional Center (Susanville) in June 2023, and (3) Chuckawalla Valley State Prison (Blythe) in March 2025, and plans to close a fourth institution, the Correctional Rehabilitation Center (Norco) by October 2026. These four closures will save approximately $594 million General Fund annually by 2027-28.

These closures have also resulted in additional savings of $11.1 million ongoing General Fund, which reflects a reduction in administrative workload and positions associated with supporting the four prison closures.

Apart from the four full prison closures, since 2021-22, CDCR closed facilities in six other male institutions and the Folsom Women's Facility within Folsom State Prison. These facility closures save $208.3 million General Fund annually.

To balance the importance of providing services to the incarcerated population while also reducing excess capacity, CDCR has deactivated 42 housing units across 11 prisons since 2024-25, achieving estimated annual ongoing savings of $82 million General Fund, along with facility deactivations at four prisons, achieving estimated

ongoing savings of $65.5 million. The deactivation of these housing units and facilities allows the Department to maintain the use of its programming space, providing for the continuation of rehabilitative programming while simultaneously reducing the number of available beds and achieving additional savings. The cumulative savings from full prison closures, facility closures, facility deactivations, and contract terminations will be approximately $4.9 billion by 2027-28. The prison and facility closures noted above result in a reduction of 15,113 beds, while the housing unit deactivations took approximately 5,494 additional beds offline.

In assessing capacity, CDCR takes into consideration a variety of factors for the safety and security of its population, specialized bed needs, and available health care, educational, and rehabilitation programming space, while also assessing the amount and type of space needed to provide services and a more normalized living environment to support the incarcerated population.

The Administration remains committed to meeting the needs of staff and the incarcerated population while right-sizing California's prison system as the prison population declines, and to addressing space needs as the state transforms the carceral system to one more focused on rehabilitation in preparation for reentry into communities.

JUVENILE JUSTICE REALIGNMENT

In 2020, California held approximately 800 youth in state juvenile detention facilities. Justice-involved youth were realigned to county probation departments, and counties are responsible for the care of all justice-involved youth. Transition of youth from the Division of Juvenile Justice began in 2021 and all state juvenile facilities were closed by June 30, 2023. In addition, the state created the Office of Youth and Community Restoration within the Health and Human Services Agency to help improve outcomes and support counties in serving justice-involved youth. The Office promotes trauma-responsive and developmentally-appropriate services for youth involved in the juvenile justice system that support their successful transition into adulthood.

SIGNIFICANT BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

The Budget includes resources to address essential CDCR workload and baseline costs:

- **Lump Sum Payments**—$90.1 million ongoing General Fund to pay accrued leave balances to employees upon retirement or separation from state service. While

CDCR has historically absorbed these costs through salary savings, that flexibility has been greatly reduced due to lower vacancy rates, largely a result of prison capacity reductions.

- **ADA Facility Improvements**—$23.1 million one-time General Fund in 2026-27 to complete accessibility improvements at eight institutions.
- **Statewide Fire Alarm Replacements and Fire Watch**—$15.2 million one-time General Fund in 2026-27 for overtime for staff to patrol for fires, as mandated by the Office of the State Fire Marshal, and reappropriation of prior year funding to complete fire alarm replacement projects.
- **Board of Parole Hearings Information Technology System (BITS) Contract**—$1.2 million General Fund in 2026-27, growing to $1.5 million General Fund in 2029-30 and ongoing, to support increased costs for BITS' new contract term.

REHABILITATION AND REENTRY

Increasing access to rehabilitative and reentry programs is integral to improving post-release outcomes for incarcerated individuals and reducing recidivism. CDCR operates a wide range of rehabilitative programs with the goal of supporting individuals successfully reintegrating into their communities following their release from prison.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **San Quentin Rehabilitation Center and the California Model**—In March 2023, the Administration announced a plan to transform San Quentin State Prison, the oldest in the state, into the San Quentin Rehabilitation Center, focused on providing every incarcerated person access to rehabilitation and education programs, as well as the opportunity to gain resources and skills to improve their outcomes upon reentering their communities (see the Infrastructure Overview Chapter for additional information related to the San Quentin Rehabilitation Center). Through CDCR's Executive Steering Committee and Planning and Implementation Team, the Department has implemented California Model initiatives that expand rehabilitative programs and provide professional development focused on behavior change while focusing on the principles of dynamic security, normalization, peer support, and becoming a trauma-informed organization. These initiatives promote the health and well-being of those who work and live within the prison environment.

- **Pre-Release Community Correctional Reentry Centers**—Recognizing the important role that reentry facilities play in rehabilitation and successful reentry into the community, the Administration has funded the establishment of two new community reentry program sites, with six more planned to activate by 2028. Upon full activation, these programs will serve approximately 2,000 participants concurrently. Since 2020, 9,095 incarcerated persons have participated in reentry programs.
- **Post-Release Community Reentry Programs**—CDCR operates a wide range of rehabilitative programs with the goal of supporting individuals in successfully reintegrating into their communities following their release from prison. These programs serve an average of 15,000 participants annually, with $148.4 million General Fund and $44.2 million in reimbursement funding included in the Budget to support these services. Additionally, methodologies implemented to support these services will increase funding in future years to support the costs of these programs. Since 2020, 55,271 supervised persons have participated in post-release community reentry programs.
- **Community-Based Organizations**—The Administration continues to support grants and funding for community-based organizations that assist formerly incarcerated individuals transitioning into the community. The Budget includes $23.3 million General Fund and $10.7 million in ongoing reimbursements to support these organizations and their missions.
- **Post-Secondary Education**—Through in-prison services like literacy programs and community programs like Project Rebound, the Administration has supported an increased presence of education in CDCR settings. In 2022, ongoing funding was included in the Budget to support bachelor's degree programs at seven institutions in collaboration with the California State University system. The Budget includes $259.8 million General Fund and $8.5 million in ongoing reimbursements for the academic and vocational education of the incarcerated population. Since 2022, 248 incarcerated students have received a bachelor's degree.
- **Free Voice Calling for Incarcerated Individuals**—Chapter 827, Statutes of 2022 (SB 1008) authorized the Department of Finance to determine funding for voice calling services for incarcerated individuals. The Budget includes $31.6 million General Fund in 2025-26 and $28.7 million in 2026-27 to continue providing free voice calling for the incarcerated population. Additionally, the distribution of tablets to all incarcerated persons facilitates greater connection with support systems in the community.

SIGNIFICANT BUDGET ADJUSTMENT

- **Post-Release Community Reentry Programs**—$5.3 million General Fund in 2026-27, increasing to $14.3 million General Fund in 2030-31, to increase contract rates for post-release reentry programs. This completes the right-sizing of all post-release reentry programs, a process that started in the 2024 Budget Act.

HEALTH CARE SERVICES FOR INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

The Budget continues the state's commitment to delivering quality health care services to incarcerated individuals. This includes approximately $4.1 billion General Fund in 2026-27 for CDCR health care programs, which provide incarcerated individuals access to medical, nursing, mental health, and dental care services that are consistent with the standards and scope of care appropriate within a custodial environment.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Delegation of Institutions**—In 2015, the *Plata* Receiver began transitioning institutional medical care back to the state's control. In 2019, 15 institutions remained under control of the Receiver and, as of December 1, 2025, 11 of these institutions have been delegated. There are currently only four institutions remaining to be transitioned back to the state.
- **Integrated Substance Use Disorder Treatment Program (ISUDT)**—The ISUDT Program was implemented in 2019 to combat alcohol and opioid addiction-related issues within state prisons. This program includes the use of medication-assisted treatment for incarcerated individuals with opioid and alcohol use disorders, cognitive behavioral treatment curriculum, development and management of patient treatment plans, as well as substance use disorder-specific pre-release transition planning. The Budget includes $285.3 million ongoing General Fund to maintain this program.
- **Telemental Health**—Since 2019, the Administration has greatly expanded the Telemental Health Program, which includes psychiatry, psychology, and social work disciplines. The use of telehealth services has proven successful in enhancing CDCR's ability to effectively and efficiently deliver medical and mental health care services to patients, while also supporting staff recruitment and retention for clinical positions that have historically been hard to fill. The Budget includes an augmentation of $8.9 million General Fund and 69 positions in 2026-27, and $13.5 million and 119 positions in 2027-28 and ongoing, to support expanded use of

telemental health services, bringing the total ongoing Mental Health operations budget to $126.1 million General Fund.

MENTAL HEALTH RECEIVERSHIP

Coleman is a class action lawsuit filed in 1990, involving Eighth Amendment violations with respect to the delivery of mental health care to individuals incarcerated within CDCR. In 2009, the *Coleman* Court set a maximum staff vacancy rate of ten percent, and in February 2023, the Court issued an order imposing monetary sanctions on CDCR. These sanctions included monthly fines for staff vacancies in excess of ten percent, beginning in April 2023.

The Court initially ordered fines to be paid to the Court's Registry, but in September 2024, the Court approved the state's request that fines instead be deposited into a Special Deposit Fund (SDF) within the State Treasury until they are expended. The state created the Mental Health Staffing SDF to hold the accumulated fines. While the state deposited $155.2 million into the SDF, the appeals court later adjusted accrued fines. The balance in the SDF, as of November 20, 2025, was $121.6 million.

In April 2025, the Court appointed a Receiver-nominee for a four-month period to develop a plan to implement the court-ordered remedies in the case. On August 27, 2025, the *Coleman* Court issued an order appointing the Mental Health Receiver and stayed future accumulation of staffing fines, effective September 1, 2025. The Court granted the Receiver all powers vested by law in the Secretary of CDCR, as related to the administration, control, management, operation, and financing of the CDCR Mental Health Services Delivery System and provision of mental health services to class members.

At the direction of the Court, the Mental Health Receiver submitted a Receiver Action Plan, which included implementation costs estimated at $41.5 million for the Receiver's office costs and consulting services, employee bonuses, and institutional resource teams. The Court generally approved the Plan, ordered the temporary staffing bonuses be made permanent, and directed the Receiver to expend the balance of the funds in the SDF to implement the Plan according to the priorities identified.

The Budget anticipates spending $33.9 million from the SDF to support staffing costs of the Receiver's office and to continue clinical staff bonuses ordered by the court and in place since August 2024. The Administration plans to continue working with the

Receiver to identify additional resource needs to implement the court-ordered remedies in this case.

PUBLIC SAFETY INVESTMENTS

Public safety is a top priority in California, as demonstrated by the multifaceted criminal justice investments made in recent years to increase the safety of our communities. The state has made substantial investments in strategies focused on positive policing and addressing peace officer misconduct, as well as targeted investments to reduce violence, combat illicit drugs, and support victims.

California has invested approximately $2.1 billion ($1.8 billion General Fund and $300 million special funds) in various public safety efforts since 2021-22—including $194.6 million in 2026-27—in recognition of the importance of keeping Californians safe. This includes spending in the following areas carried out by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, the California Highway Patrol, the Department of Justice, and the Board of State and Community Corrections, among others:

- $636.8 million for community public safety, including $300 million for Nonprofit Security Grants, $85 million for Law Enforcement Mutual Aid, and $39 million to protect children against crimes, including an ongoing General Fund commitment of $7 million for the California Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force and $5 million for child sexual abuse investigations.
- $397.6 million to target organized retail theft, including $255 million in local law enforcement grants, $26 million for vertical prosecution grants, and over $110 million to permanently expand retail theft task forces.
- $445 million to combat gun violence, including over $300 million for the California Violence Intervention and Prevention Grant Program (CalVIP).
- $546.8 million for victim services, including over $100 million for Human Trafficking Victim Assistance, $303 million to backfill federal Victims of Crime Act Supplemental Funding, and $42 million for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons.
- $109.7 million to combat illicit drugs, including $75 million for drug interdiction efforts and $35 million for fentanyl enforcement.

As noted above, the Administration has invested $300 million in support of the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, of which $80 million is included in 2025-26. In addition, the state has received $159.6 million from the federal Nonprofit Security Grant Program since

2020-21, including $15.6 million in Nonprofit Security Grant Program National Security Supplemental funding. Given that state funding ends in 2025-26, the Administration will work with the Legislature on a proposal for the May Revision to protect this important program.

SIGNIFICANT BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

- **CalVIP**—The Budget includes $56.4 million Gun Violence and Prevention and School Safety Fund in 2025-26 and $51.9 million in 2026-27 for CalVIP. Chapter 231, Statutes of 2023 (AB 28) created the Fund, supported by excise taxes applied to firearms and ammunition sales. In administering CalVIP, the Board of State and Community Corrections issues grants to cities, counties, and tribal governments disproportionately impacted by gun violence, as well as community-based organizations. CalVIP funds a variety of evidence-based programs aimed at enhancing public health and safety through support for community-based gun violence reduction efforts to lower the rates of homicides, shootings, and aggravated assaults. Prior to AB 28, funding for CalVIP was dependent on the availability of General Fund. AB 28 provides an ongoing and more stable fund source to permanently support CalVIP.
- **Drug Interdiction Continuation**—The Budget includes $30 million General Fund ($15 million in 2026-27 and $15 million in 2027-28) to further expand the Military Department's existing drug interdiction efforts to prevent drug trafficking by transnational criminal organizations throughout the state, with a particular focus on assisting federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies in combating fentanyl. The 2022 Budget Act included $15 million in 2022-23 and 2023-24 to support this program. The 2024 Budget Act included another $15 million in 2024-25 and 2025-26 to continue this program. This brings the total investment to $90 million for drug interdiction efforts.

PROPOSITION 47 SAVINGS

Proposition 47, passed in 2014, requires misdemeanor rather than felony sentencing for certain property and drug crimes and permits incarcerated persons previously sentenced for these reclassified crimes to petition for resentencing. Proposition 47 invests savings from reduced prison utilization in prevention and supporting community programs; funds are allocated according to the formula specified in the ballot measure, which requires 65 percent be allocated for grants to public agencies to support various recidivism reduction programs (such as mental health and substance

use treatment services), 25 percent for grants to support truancy and dropout prevention programs, and 10 percent for grants for victim services. The Budget estimates net General Fund savings of $81.3 million in 2026-27.

To calculate the state savings for offenders who are no longer sent to state prison, the Department of Finance has historically used a blend of the in-state marginal cost and the contract bed cost, multiplied by the average daily population of avoided offenders. Beginning in 2026-27, Finance will use only the marginal cost because the state no longer uses contract beds. The marginal cost is defined as the annual population-driven costs—such as food, medical care, programming, and vocational training—of incarcerating one additional offender. The marginal cost is currently $20,105.

Proposition 36 is projected to increase the state prison population and therefore decrease savings associated with Proposition 47 in future years. Proposition 36 established a treatment-mandated felony for drug possession that can be charged under specified circumstances. Proposition 47 monies may be used to fund court-ordered treatment programs to address the new treatment-mandated felony offense. Allowable uses may include expanding or enhancing court-ordered substance use disorder and/or mental health treatment, or providing case management and wraparound services that facilitate successful reintegration, including housing, employment support, and job training.

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE GRANT

The California Community Corrections Performance Incentive Act, Chapter 608, Statutes of 2009 (SB 678), was created to provide incentives for counties to reduce the number of felony probationers sent to state prison. Since inception, the program has allocated more than $1.5 billion to counties for their role in reducing prison admissions.

The Budget includes $127.9 million General Fund for the program. In recent years, annual funding was held constant due to the COVID-19 Pandemic's effect on probation populations, law enforcement practices, and court processes. Beginning in 2025-26, Chapter 111, Statutes of 2025 (SB 157) modified the formula to specify a fixed statewide annual allocation of $103.7 million General Fund, which will be reduced if counties exceed their baseline return-to-prison rates. The amount will be increased in a separate, variable component, if counties exceed performance expectations, calculated as an average of 2022 and 2023 performance.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

As the chief law officer of the state, the Attorney General has the responsibility to see that the laws of California are uniformly and adequately enforced. This responsibility is fulfilled through the diverse programs of the Department of Justice (DOJ). The Department provides litigation services on behalf of the people of California; serves as legal counsel to state agencies; provides oversight, enforcement, education, and regulation of California's firearms laws; provides evaluation and analysis of physical evidence; and supports the data needs of California's criminal justice community. The Budget includes total funding of approximately $1.3 billion, including $508 million General Fund, to support the DOJ.

FEDERAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The 2024 Budget Act included $25 million one-time General Fund to defend the state against enforcement and legal actions taken by the federal government, which is available through June 30, 2026. Of that amount, $6 million has been distributed to the DOJ and other state entities for litigation to defend California against federal actions.

Since January 2025, DOJ has filed 52 cases against the federal government to protect Californians' rights and interests, including the protection of federal funding that supports critical programs. This includes funding for California's Medicaid programs, $2 billion in National Institute of Health contracts and grants, hundreds of millions more in public health funding, and $200 million in education stabilization funding, among others.

The 2025 Budget Act included $14.2 million ($12.3 million General Fund and $1.9 million Unfair Competition Law Fund) in 2025-26 and $13.9 million ($12 million General Fund and $1.9 million Unfair Competition Law Fund) in 2026-27 and ongoing, and 44 positions for the DOJ to defend California against federal actions. This is in addition to baseline funding of $2.5 million General Fund within DOJ's budget to defend California against federal actions, which was first authorized in the 2018 Budget Act.

The DOJ is experiencing increased workload to, among other things, defend environmental protections, voting rights, birthright citizenship, reproductive choice, and labor standards, resulting in the need for additional funding beginning in the current year. Therefore, an additional $10 million will be distributed to the DOJ in 2025-26 from the one-time funds appropriated in the 2024 Budget Act. The Budget also includes $10 million new General Fund annually in 2026-27 through 2028-29. Funds previously

authorized on an ongoing basis in the 2025 Budget Act will now be limited-term through 2028-29.

SIGNIFICANT BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

- **Firearms IT Systems Modernization Project**—$11.2 million one-time General Fund in 2026-27 for DOJ to continue to work on the California Department of Technology's Project Approval Lifecycle process in 2026-27.
- **Dealers' Record of Sale Authority Alignment**—$8 million annual General Fund to maintain the current service level for activities funded by the Dealers' Record of Sale Special Account in 2026-27 through 2028-29.
- **Online and App-Based Illegal Gambling Enforcement**—$1.1 million Unfair Competition Law Fund and 3 positions in 2026-27 and ongoing to conduct investigations and litigation against illegal online and app-based gambling operations.

CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) promotes safe, convenient, and efficient transportation of people and goods across the state highway system and provides the highest level of safety, service, and security to the facilities and employees of the State of California. For additional information on CHP investments included in the Budget, see the Transportation Chapter.

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) serves as the state's leadership hub during all major emergencies and disasters. This includes responding, directing, and coordinating local, state, and federal resources, and mutual aid assets across all regions to support the diverse communities across the state. Cal OES also builds disaster resilience by supporting local jurisdictions and communities through planning and preparedness activities, training, and facilitating the immediate response to an emergency through the longer-term recovery phase. During this process, Cal OES serves as the state's overall coordinator and agent to secure federal government resources through the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The Budget includes $3 billion ($483.9 million General Fund) and 1,914 positions for Cal OES.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Disasters in California have become more frequent and complex, often with simultaneous emergencies and disasters occurring across the state. Since 2019, the state has made significant investments in emergency response.

- **Strengthening Cal OES' Emergency Capacity and Capabilities**—$149.3 million ongoing General Fund for the following investments:
  - $16.5 million—Establishing a permanent and dedicated Incident Support Team, a deployable Incident Management Assistance Team, and permanent staff to operate California's State Operations Center to respond to all-hazard events, providing continuity for disaster response efforts.
  - $37.8 million—Increasing permanent resources for California's recovery efforts, including resources to maximize eligible federal disaster cost reimbursements for state and local governments, and to maximize the hazard mitigation program to mitigate the impacts of future disasters on the state and local jurisdictions.
  - $5.1 million—Strengthening the state's regional response capacity and key partnerships with local governments and other local stakeholders to increase disaster resilience capacity.
  - $5.2 million—Expanding the California State Warning Center to better analyze, monitor, coordinate, and inform decisionmakers on critical or emerging incidents and disasters.
  - $46.6 million—Implementing a statewide disaster warehousing system to increase commodity supplies and capacity for an all-hazard event, ensuring appropriate resources are available across the state for all emergencies.
  - $17.4 million—Establishing an Office of Equity and making permanent the Listos grant program to further strengthen connections and build resiliency between California's diverse communities.
  - $20.7 million—Modernizing Cal OES' technology and data capabilities to provide reliable data analytics for data-informed decisions related to the state emergency response and overall recovery strategy.
- **California Earthquake Early Warning System (CEEWS)**—$50.9 million one-time General Fund and $17.1 million General Fund and 3 positions ongoing to enhance the infrastructure of the CEEWS, governed by Cal OES through partnerships with the California Geological Survey, U.S. Geological Survey, University of California at

Berkeley, and the California Institute of Technology. In 2019, through the CEEWS investments, the free MyShake application, a cellphone based alerting tool, was launched and has since been downloaded more than 4.3 million times. Through a partnership initiated by California, an Android alert system has been created that leverages CEEWS to distribute earthquake early warning alerts to Android users. CEEWS also partners with critical sectors, including the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), Metrolink, school districts, hospitals, and fire stations to integrate automated actions to protect lives and property before, during, and after a seismic event.

JUDICIAL BRANCH

The Judicial Branch consists of the Supreme Court, courts of appeal, trial courts, the Habeas Corpus Resource Center, and the Judicial Council. The Judicial Council is responsible for managing the resources of the Judicial Branch. The trial courts are funded with a combination of General Fund, county maintenance-of-effort requirements, fines, fees, and other charges. Other levels of the Judicial Branch receive most of their funding from the General Fund. The Budget includes total funding of $5.3 billion ($3.3 billion General Fund and $2 billion other funds) in 2026-27 for the Judicial Branch, of which $3 billion is provided to support trial court operations.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Reducing Fines and Fees for All Californians

In prior decades, the state substantially increased fines, fees, assessments, and surcharges levied on individuals convicted of criminal offenses to generate funding for specific state and local programs and services. The Judicial Council estimated these fines and fees generated nearly $1 billion in revenue in 2020-21.

Recognizing the financial hardship these increased fines and fees have created for Californians, the Legislature and Administration worked to implement various statutory and budget changes. For example, the 2018 Budget Act included resources to implement an Ability-to-Pay program to allow indigent and low-income individuals to apply online to have their fines and fees from traffic infractions reduced in accordance with their ability to pay. The 2021 Budget Act expanded this program statewide and incorporated both traffic and non-traffic infractions. Furthermore, the 2020 and 2021 Budget Acts included resources and statutory changes to eliminate the ability of state and local agencies to impose certain administrative fees for criminal offenses, such as fees imposed to recover costs related to public defense and probation

supervision and to collect restitution, among others. In continuation of these efforts to provide financial relief for individuals from the imposition of fines and fees, the 2022 Budget Act included statutory changes to reduce civil assessment fees from a maximum of $300 to $100 and included $67 million ongoing General Fund to backfill the resulting loss in revenue for trial courts.

Trial Court Investments to Expand Access to Justice

In recent years, the state has sought to expand access to justice with several key investments. Since 2019, the Administration has committed ongoing spending of $82.3 million General Fund to support the addition of 48 judgeships based on the Judicial Needs Assessments. Additional technology investments have been made to modernize court operations. These investments include the creation of the Judicial Branch Information Security Office to improve cyber security; modernization of the appellate and Supreme Court information technology systems, including updating electronic filing and case management systems to enable timely and accurate data collection; and enhancements to support remote access to courtroom proceedings by providing a publicly accessible audio stream in California trial courts.

The Administration has also made significant investments in the trial courts to support access to justice. Between the 2021 and 2025 Budget Acts, trial court operations have cumulatively received over $1 billion General Fund to promote fiscal equity among the trial courts and improve existing service levels. The Governor's Budget continues the Administration's commitment to expanding access to justice by investing an additional $70 million ongoing General Fund to support trial court operations.

Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE Court)

Chapter 319, Statutes of 2022 (SB 1338), the Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment Act (CARE Act), established a first-in-the-nation framework to empower individuals suffering from untreated schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders. It created CARE Court, a court process to provide individuals with clinically appropriate, community-based and court-ordered CARE Plans consisting of culturally and linguistically competent county mental health and substance use disorder treatment services. In total, the Judicial Branch received $29.5 million General Fund in 2023-24, $26.5 million in 2024-25, and $32.9 million in 2025-26 and ongoing for the CARE Act. In addition, the Budget included $17.4 million ongoing General Fund beginning in 2025-26 to support public defender and legal services organizations who provide legal counsel to CARE participants.

SIGNIFICANT BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

- **State Court Facilities and Construction Fund (SCFCF) Backfill**—$41 million General Fund in 2026-27 and $56 million General Fund in 2027-28 and ongoing to continue to backfill a projected shortfall in the SCFCF and to maintain existing service levels.
- **Orange County Central Justice Center Facility Modification**—$36 million General Fund in 2026-27 and $35 million General Fund in 2027-28 to complete the ongoing facility modification to provide Fire Life Safety upgrades at the Central Justice Center in Orange County.
- **Trial Court Employee Health Benefits**—$21.7 million General Fund in 2026-27 and ongoing for trial court employee health benefit and retirement costs. The state began consistently funding the increased retirement health benefit and retirement costs for the trial courts in 2014-15.
- **Court-Appointed Counsel**—$11 million General Fund in 2026-27 and ongoing to further increase the hourly rate of appointed counsel by $25 at the Supreme Court ($180 per hour) and Courts of Appeal (up to $165 per hour), which provides representation for indigent appellants. This is in addition to the $6.3 million ongoing General Fund in the 2025 Budget Act for the same purpose.
- **Continuation of Courts of Appeal Workload**—$5.2 million Appellate Court Trust Fund in 2026-27 and $4.9 million General Fund in 2027-28 and ongoing to continue to address the courts' existing workload, reduce backlogs, and prevent case delays in appellate districts.
- **Los Angeles Spring Street Courtrooms Relocation**—$4.6 million one-time General Fund in 2026-27 to support the relocation of 17 courtrooms and operations from the Spring Street Courthouse in Los Angeles, which is subject to divestment by the federal government.