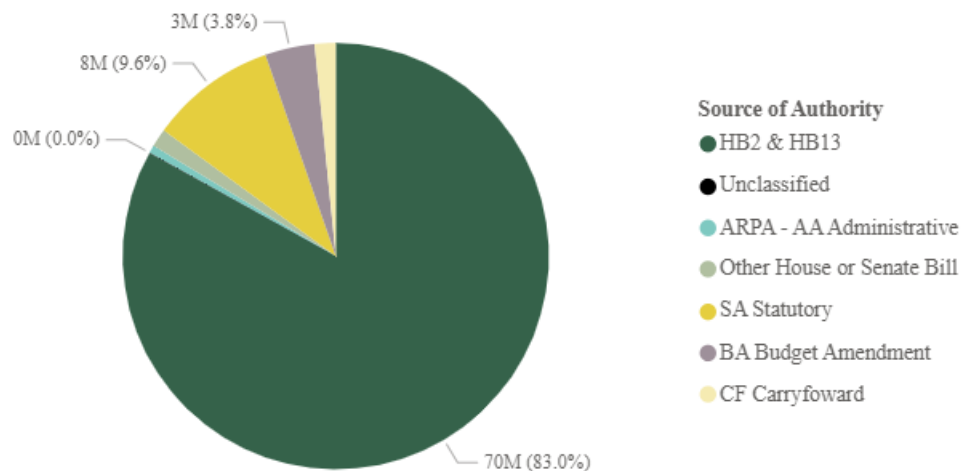


# JUDICIAL BRANCH

## TOTAL APPROPRIATION AUTHORITY

The total appropriation authority for the Judicial Branch is shown in the pie chart below. HB 2 and HB 13 provide 83.0% of the total authority for this agency. All types of appropriation authority for this agency are described below, including total budget and the percent expended by source of authority.

**Total Modified Budget by Source of Authority**



Source of Authority	Modified Budget	Expenditure Budget	% Expended	
HB2 & HB13	69,898,379	22,010,078	31.5%	
BA Budget Amendment	3,166,062	211,156	6.7%	
CF Carryforward	1,344,045			
Other House or Senate Bill	1,160,327	180,505	15.6%	
SA Statutory	8,076,072	723,401	9.0%	
Unclassified	23,803			
ARPA	498,983	132,778	26.6%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>84,167,671</b>	<b>23,257,918</b>	<b>27.6%</b>	

## Statutory Appropriations

Statutory appropriations in the Judicial Branch come from the Youth Court Intervention and Prevention state special revenue account and totaled approximately \$8.1 million in FY 2026, roughly 9.6% of the Branch's total authority. Roughly \$4.4 million comes from the FY 2024 surplus and \$3.7 million from the FY 2025 surplus.

This fund receives unexpended general fund appropriations, which can then be statutorily appropriated by the Branch for two fiscal years to establish or expand community prevention and intervention programs for youth, provide alternative funding for out-of-home placements, and provide matching funds for federal youth intervention and prevention programs. After two fiscal years, any unused authority is transferred back to the general fund. These statutory appropriations are 9.0% expended through November 30, 2025.

Comparing the current fund balance to prior years, disbursements from the fund were about \$4.4 million in FY 2024 and FY 2025. The FY 2025 transfer into the Youth Court Intervention and Prevention fund was slightly less than normal, at \$3.7 million instead of the \$4.4 million transferred annually in FY 2000 – FY 2024.

### **Budget Amendments**

The Judicial Branch FY 2026 budget contains \$3.2 million in budget amendment federal authority with \$211,000 (6.7%) expended through November 30, 2025. About \$809,000 of this authority is within Supreme Court Operations, with the \$2.4 million remainder in District Court Operations. Roughly \$518,000 of federal authority is associated with a telemedicine grant to provide services to drug court participants, particularly those in the 23 counties without an adult drug court. The telemedicine funding expires in September 2026. Roughly \$291,000 comes from a State Justice Institute Grant dedicated to staff training. The remaining funding is associated with a series of federal grants to fund drug treatment and Driving Under the Influence (DUI) courts across the state.

### **Other Bills**

The Judicial Branch has approximately \$1.2 million of appropriation authority awarded through HB 10 (2023 Session) for Long-Range Information Technology Projects. This funding included \$670,000 for a courtroom remote appearance system, with \$154,000 expended through November 30, 2025. HB 10 (2023 Session) also authorized \$490,000 for security at court buildings. So far, \$26,000 has been spent.

The Judicial Branch was also provided \$1.5 million in appropriation authority through HB 10 (2025 Session) for an upgrade to the electronic filing system. This authority has not yet been established, but will likely be included in the next fiscal report. This project is in the initial phases and is discussed in further detail below.

### ***COVID-19 Authority***

The Judicial Branch has slightly less than \$500,000 in COVID-19 related authority in FY 2026, which has been 26.6% expended through November 30, 2025. The authority from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) is for the Simplify Family Law Resolution, which was intended to help clear the backlog in family cases in districts where criminal cases were prioritized during the pandemic. The ARPA authority is authorized through December 31, 2026.

### **Carryforward Authority**

The Judicial Branch has carryforward authority of approximately \$1.3 million, or roughly 1.6% of total authority. No expenditures have been made within the carryforward authority for FY 2026 through November 30, 2025.

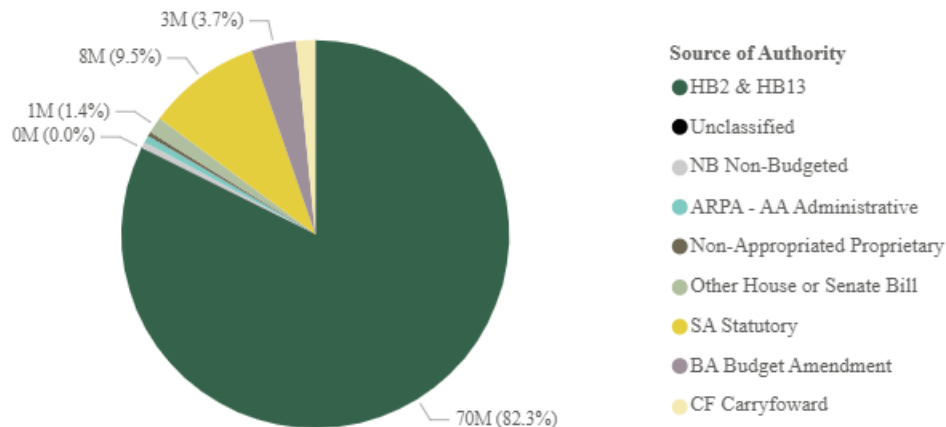
### **Unclassified**

The Judicial Branch has unclassified appropriation authority of \$24,000 because of lower workers' compensation premiums. Per 39-71-403(1)(b)(iv), MCA, when workers' compensation premiums are lower than the previous year, state agencies shall reduce personal services appropriations by the amount of the premium reduction. The reductions are included in the accounting system as unclassified authority that will not be spent by the agency.

## EXPENDITURE AUTHORITY

The total expenditure authority for the agency is shown in the following pie chart. Total expenditure authority includes non-budgeted proprietary funding and non-budgeted expenditures, such as transfers or indirect costs that are not included in the previous pie chart because the expenditures are not appropriated.

**Modified Budget & Expended Budget by Source of Authority**



Source of Authority	Modified Budget	Expended Budget	% Expended	
HB2 & HB13	69,898,379	22,010,078	31.5%	
BA Budget Amendment	3,166,062	211,156	6.7%	
CF Carryforward	1,344,045			
NB Non-Budgeted	441,552	40,593	9.2%	
Non-Appropriated Proprietary	285,261	101,099	35.4%	
Other House or Senate Bill	1,160,327	180,505	15.6%	
SA Statutory	8,076,072	723,401	9.0%	
Unclassified	23,803			
ARPA	498,983	132,778	26.6%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>84,894,484</b>	<b>23,399,610</b>	<b>27.6%</b>	

### Non-Budgeted Proprietary Fund Authority

The Judicial Branch has \$285,000 of FY 2026 authority in proprietary funds related to online search functions within the Law Library. This funding is 35.4% expended as of November 30, 2025.

### Non-Budgeted Fund Authority

The Judicial Branch also has FY 2026 authority of \$442,000 from non-budgeted funds, including donations and private grants, with roughly 9.2% being expended through November 30, 2025. Included in this authority is a private donation of \$232,000 from the Montana Opioid Abatement Trust to establish an adult treatment court in Judicial District 11 (Flathead). Most of the expenditures for FY 2026 have occurred in the opioid abatement grant fund in Judicial District 13 (Billings).

## HB 2 BUDGET MODIFICATIONS

The following chart shows the HB 2 budget as passed by the legislature, including the pay plan, and the HB 2 modified budget from July 1, 2025 through November 30, 2025. Net modifications to the budget include operating plan changes from one expenditure account to another, program transfers, reorganizations, and agency transfers of authority.

### Legislative Budget Compared to Modified Budget - HB 2 Only

Agency Name	HB 2 Budget	Modified Budget	Net Modifications
▣ Judiciary	69,922,182	69,898,379	-23,803
▣ 01 SUPREME COURT OPERATIONS	26,541,148	26,535,539	-5,609
▣ 03 LAW LIBRARY	1,007,830	1,007,627	-203
▣ 04 DISTRICT COURT OPERATIONS	38,445,195	38,428,957	-16,238
▣ 05 WATER COURT	3,304,074	3,302,581	-1,493
▣ 06 CLERK OF COURT	623,935	623,675	-260
<b>Total</b>	<b>69,922,182</b>	<b>69,898,379</b>	<b>-23,803</b>

Expenditure Type	HB 2 Budget	Modified Budget	Net Modifications
▣ 61000 Personal Services	49,771,221	49,747,418	-23,803
▣ 62000 Operating Expenses	12,501,000	12,501,000	
▣ 63000 Equipment & Intangible Assets	255,505	255,505	
▣ 66000 Grants	715,000	715,000	
▣ 67000 Benefits & Claims	6,228,321	6,228,321	
▣ 69000 Debt Service	451,135	451,135	
<b>Total</b>	<b>69,922,182</b>	<b>69,898,379</b>	<b>-23,803</b>

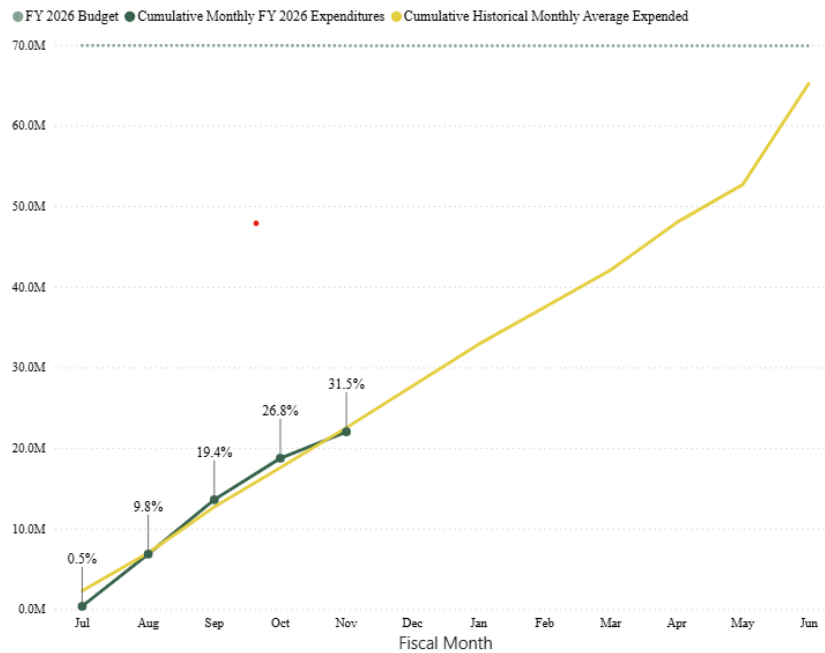
Fund Type	HB 2 Budget	Modified Budget	Net Modifications
▣ 01 General	65,144,535	65,121,601	-22,934
▣ 02 State/Other Spec Rev	4,397,922	4,397,071	-851
▣ 03 Fed/Other Spec Rev	379,725	379,707	-18
<b>Total</b>	<b>69,922,182</b>	<b>69,898,379</b>	<b>-23,803</b>

The Judicial Branch made small modifications to their budget of \$24,000 related to workers' compensation premiums. Per 39-71-403(1)(b)(iv), MCA, when workers' compensation premiums are lower than the previous year, state agencies shall reduce personal services appropriations by the amount of the premium reduction. The reductions are included in the accounting system as unclassified authority that will not be spent by the agency.

## HB 2 APPROPRIATION AUTHORITY

The following chart shows the appropriated budget for the agency compared to expenditures through November 30, 2025.

**Monthly Expenditures Compared to Historical Average**



Program Name	Modified Budget	Expended Budget	% Expended
01 SUPREME COURT OPERATIONS	26,535,539	8,362,115	31.5%
03 LAW LIBRARY	1,007,627	361,040	35.8%
04 DISTRICT COURT OPERATIONS	38,428,957	12,159,621	31.6%
05 WATER COURT	3,302,581	901,308	27.3%
06 CLERK OF COURT	623,675	225,994	36.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>69,898,379</b>	<b>22,010,078</b>	<b>31.5%</b>

Expenditure Type	Modified Budget	Expended Budget	% Expended
Personal Services	49,747,418	16,505,226	33.2%
Operating Expenses	12,501,000	4,565,497	36.5%
Equipment & Intangible Assets	255,505	39,837	15.6%
Grants	715,000	86,580	12.1%
Benefits & Claims	6,228,321	603,057	9.7%
Debt Service	451,135	209,881	46.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>69,898,379</b>	<b>22,010,078</b>	<b>31.5%</b>

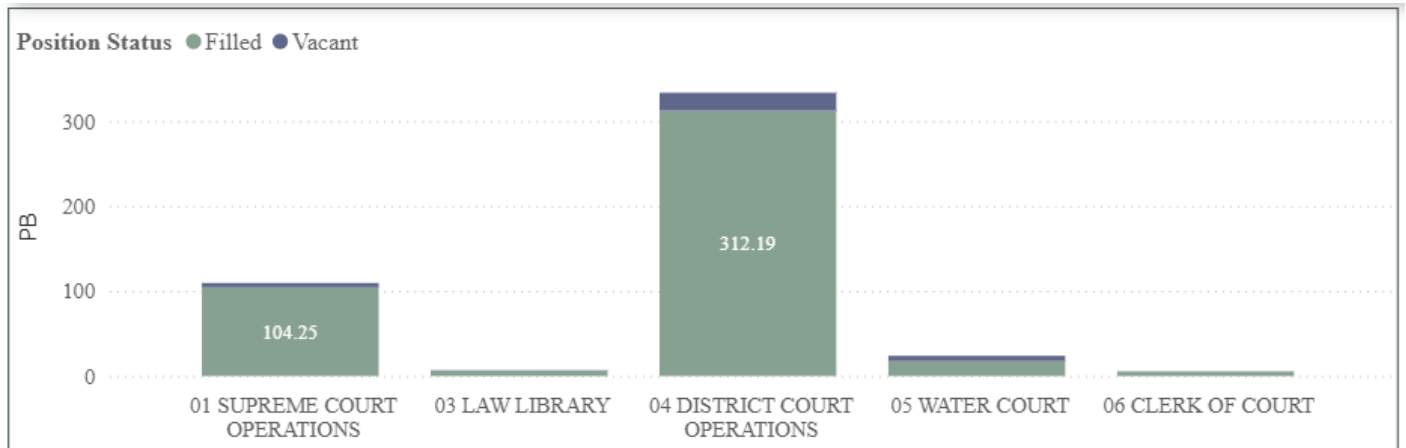
Fund Type	Modified Budget	Expended Budget	% Expended
01 General	65,121,601	20,985,972	32.2%
02 State/Other Spec Rev	4,397,071	936,939	21.3%
03 Fed/Other Spec Rev	379,707	87,168	23.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>69,898,379</b>	<b>22,010,078</b>	<b>31.5%</b>

The Judicial Branch has expended 31.5% of its total authority through November 30, 2025, slightly below its Olympic five-year average of 32.2%. The personal services budget is 33.2% expended, while the operating expenses are 36.5% expended.

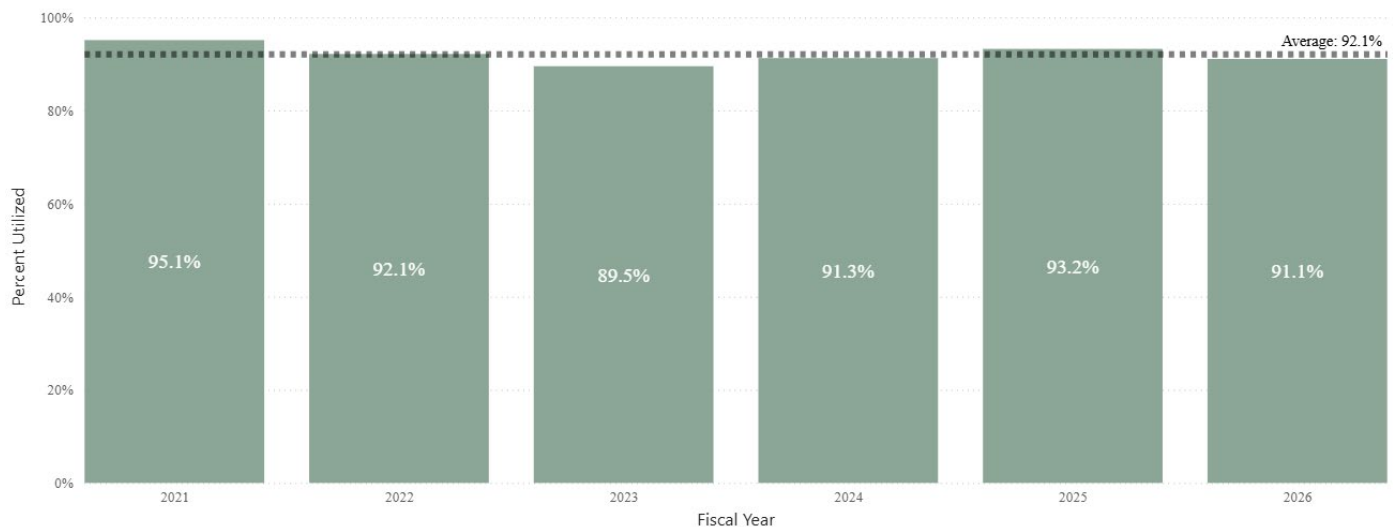
The Judicial Branch had one line item in HB 2. The Judicial Branch was provided biennial one-time-only state special revenue of \$400,000 for water court digitization projects, which has not yet been expended.

## Personal Services

Appropriations for personal services in the Judicial Branch total \$49.7 million and are 33.2% expended through November 30, 2025. The following chart and information reflect the filled and vacant HB 2 positions budgeted (PB) within the agency as of November 1, 2025. At this point in time, the department had 478.89 HB 2 PB with 33.45 PB (7.0%) vacant. Of the total, there are 477.89 regular HB 2 PB and 1.00 modified HB 2 PB. Including only PB that are non-elected, there are 416.89 PB with 33.45 PB (8.0%) vacant. The charts below include all HB 2 PB, including elected, non-elected, modified, and regular.



The chart below shows the hourly utilization percentage for the Judicial Branch for each fiscal year when compared to the available hours. Thus far, the department has utilized 91.1% of the hours budgeted for July to December in FY 2026. Since July 1, 2025, 30.00 PB have left state employment, with four retirements and five transfers to a different state agency. All of the turnover has occurred in non-elected positions.



The chart below shows the nonelected, HB 2, vacant PB in each division, the number of months each position has been vacant and the midpoint hourly pay rate. Of the 33.45 PB that are vacant, probation officers and law clerks are the most common position.

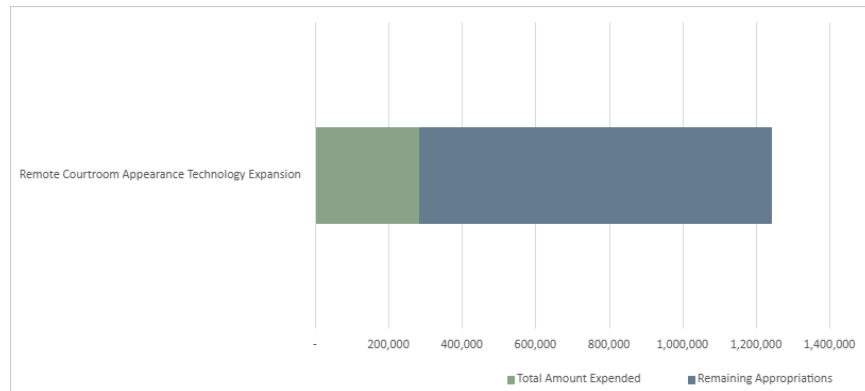
### Vacant Positions Report

	PB	Median Months Vacant	Market Midpoint (Hourly)
⊖ <b>21100 JUDICIARY</b>	<b>33.45</b>	<b>5.31</b>	<b>29.76</b>
⊖ <b>01 SUPREME COURT OPERATIONS</b>	<b>5.25</b>	<b>5.70</b>	<b>33.23</b>
Accnting/Fiscal Policy Analyst	1.00	19.97	36.56
InfoTech Support Spec I	0.75	8.39	30.96
Regional YC Financial Speciali	1.00	16.52	28.31
Self Help Law Facilitator	0.50	3.02	23.89
Treatment Court Coordinator	2.00	2.48	35.50
⊖ <b>03 LAW LIBRARY</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>10.03</b>	<b>19.99</b>
Office Assistant III	0.75	10.03	19.99
⊖ <b>04 DISTRICT COURT OPERATIONS</b>	<b>21.20</b>	<b>6.43</b>	<b>29.76</b>
DeputyJuvenileProbationOff I	9.00	11.93	29.76
DeputyJuvenileProbationOff II	1.00	6.43	35.50
Judicial Admin Assistant I	1.00	6.97	26.68
Law Clerk I	5.00	4.98	30.62
Office Assistant III	0.20	45.90	19.99
Official Court Rpt-Steno	1.00	30.75	26.96
Probation Program Assistant	2.00	2.98	23.62
Senior Law Clerk	1.00	2.52	38.52
Standing Master	1.00	14.92	56.30
⊖ <b>05 WATER COURT</b>	<b>6.25</b>	<b>2.98</b>	<b>56.30</b>
Deputy Water Court Clerk	1.25	11.20	18.89
Senior Water Master	4.00	2.98	56.30
Water Master	1.00	13.77	56.30
<b>Total</b>	<b>33.45</b>	<b>5.31</b>	<b>29.76</b>

## OTHER ISSUES

### Information Technology Project Expenditures

The Judicial Branch has three information technology projects, with one in the execution phase. The Judicial Branch is 30% complete with 22.9% expended on the remote courtroom appearance technology expansion project, which has a budget of \$1.2 million. This project is expected to be completed by December 2027.



The remaining two projects are still in the initial stages.

- The 2023 Legislature approved funding of \$489,000 in HB 10 for courthouse security. This funding is 5.3% expended
- The 2025 Legislature approved funding of \$1.5 million in HB 10 for the refresh of the court electronic filing system. This project is in the discovery phase, which involves initial discussions with the vendor, and has a projected completion date of June 2029