



State of Illinois  
Circuit Court of Cook County

Chambers of  
Timothy C. Evans  
Chief Judge

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**To:** Honorable John P. Daley, *Chairman, Finance Committee*

**From:** Honorable Timothy C. Evans, *Chief Judge*  
Circuit Court of Cook County

*T.C.E.*

**CC:** Annette C.M. Guzman, *Budget Director*  
Department of Budget & Management Services

**Date:** November 2, 2021

**Re:** Request for Information from FY2022 Budget Hearing

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The following information is provided in response to questions posed at the Circuit Court's budget hearing held on October 27, 2021.

**I. Request ID #1310-01**

Commissioner Sean Morrison has requested your office to justify each new position by title, and, if the funding for the positions is temporary, how your office will support the continued funding of such positions. Attached to this memo is a list of your new FTEs in the FY22 Executive Budget Recommendation. For each new position, please respond to the questions set forth in the list.

**The Circuit Court's Response:**

The court has attached a summary of the new payroll positions recorded by Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle in her 2022 budget recommendation, including a description and purpose of the positions. While the material describes 61 new positions (32 in the operating budget and 29 temporary positions funded through ARPA), they are largely offset by the loss of 30 operating budget positions.

Please let us know if you have any additional questions. As always, we appreciate your support.

**CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY  
2022 POSITION ADDITIONS**

2022 Budget, prepared 10-25-21

Position Details	Operating Budget	Special Purpose Funds - ARPA	Description, Purpose
<b>Office of the Public Guardian:</b>			
Caseworker III, PG	Grade PG2	1	Child interviewers are critical in OPG's operations as they work in tandem with attorneys to address health, safety, wellness, and service issues impacting child clients living in foster homes, schools, residential facilities, hospitals, group homes, transitional living programs, shelters, prisons, and other placements. From 2018 to 2021, the department has gone from 20 child interviewers to 17, while in the last year abuse/neglect cases have increased by a 1,000 cases. Child interviewers conduct interviews/observations of child clients before important court dates, make recommendations to attorneys regarding appropriate services, track and report systemic issues, and provide court testimony. They investigate abuse/neglect incidents, and along with attorneys are on call after hours to address urgent child safety issues. Caseworker III child interviewers are assigned to conduct complex client interviews. Additionally, they conduct facility observations, client and staff interviews and investigations at assigned individual residential facilities for client safety and systemic issues.
Caseworker III, PG Legal Juvenile	Grade PG2	1	
Caseworker II, PG Home Care	Grade PG 1	1	With its dedicated staff resources, the department is able to keep a third of its clientele under guardianship in the community instead of nursing facilities. The Home Care Department ensures that clients in the community are safe and receive all needed services and supervision. The department helps assess the services and supervision a person will need to remain in the community, recruits and trains care givers, staffs and supervises independent contract and agency home care assignments, prepares and processes payroll and tax documents for contract home care workers, manages ward expenses, reviews invoices and processes payments for home care agency vendors, provides on-call coverage, purchases home health medical supplies, does checks in the community, and works with governmental and private insurance companies when needed to ensure the safety and well-being of department clients. Several of these positions have been lost to budget cuts over the years, through vacancy reductions. As a result, there are only 2.5 people in the Home Care Department to handle all of these responsibilities. This is untenable if the department is to continue to be successful in keeping clients under guardianship safely in the community with the services they need.
Guardian At Litem I - Finance	Grade 18	1	These seven positions are critical attorney positions. Due to the reduction of staff over the years, attorney caseloads had increased by about a third during the four years leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic greatly exacerbated the situation. Since January 2020, the number of abuse and neglect cases in the Juvenile Court increased from 6,071 children to 7,164 children, an increase of more than 18%. This is because families have been isolated at home under stressors correlated with abuse such as worries about jobs, health, and finances. As a result, average caseloads in the Juvenile Division are currently nearly 150 child clients per attorney. This is double the ethical caseload limitations established by non-partisan government, academic, and bar associations and puts the department at risk of malpractice, breaches of statutory and fiduciary duties, and serious injury or death of child clients. The department is in particular need of hiring attorneys with language skills and cultural competencies. Finally, the office is concerned about the ability to staff cases as more children enter the court system in the fall. As has been widely reported in the news media, although filings in the Juvenile Court are up substantially, reports of abuse to DCFS have been down about 50% during the pandemic. This is because many children are not being seen by mandated reporters, in particular teachers and school officials. Experts warn that there is a large group of abused children currently not known to authorities who will be entering the courts as schools reopen.
Guardian At Litem I - Legal, Juvenile	Grade 18	6	
Court Coordinator II, Juvenile	Grade 17	1	Juvenile Division Paralegals support courtroom attorneys with research and drafting legal pleadings; prepare subpoenas and monitor compliance; review and organize discovery; conduct interviews/observations with child clients, caregivers, and agency workers; attend school, hospital and agency staffings; testify in court; make recommendations to attorneys regarding appropriate placements and services, and track and report systemic issues. From 2012 to 2021, the department lost 35% of its paralegal assistance; as staffing was reduced from 17 to only 11 paralegals responsible for providing support to over 7,000 child clients. As attorney caseloads continue to rise there is an increased reliance on paralegals. This position is critical to ensuring the health, safety and well-being of our child clients.
<b>TOTAL, Change per K-3</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>

**Office of the Chief Judge:**

Clerk V, ZOOM desks and rooms	Grade 11	23	The pandemic and consequent implementation of remote ("Zoom") court proceedings revealed that equity and the promise of access to justice require the court to provide self-represented litigants with the technological means to attend to their court business. The court operates nine dedicated Zoom Rooms and one Zoom Help Desk to assist self-represented litigants who come to court locations to appear remotely for their court proceedings. These assignments have been covered temporarily by employees deployed from units that were shut down during the pandemic and it is hoped that they will be returning to their original assignments and will no longer be available for temporary deployment. Employees are required for each of the Zoom Rooms and the Zoom Help Desk to assist the litigants, for a total of 23. With the support from the Illinois Supreme Court for remote operations, remote assistance for self-represented litigants is anticipated to continue indefinitely post-pandemic. The county chose to fund these positions in 2022 through ARPA revenue loss funds, SPF 11286. If the zoom room protocols remain in effect after the funding expires, the court would work with the county to place these positions in a permanent employment status, as the court requested this year. How that will be accomplished depends on the budget situation down the road.
Legal System Analyst, MIS	Grade 22	2	The Research Analyst position for the Office of the Chief Judge supports the court's research and program evaluation needs. The primary role of this position is to manage research and evaluation activities which are designed to support and improve court operations. The Research Analyst's duties include data management, analysis of court performance measures, providing senior court administrators with critical information to monitor court operations, and coordination of interagency and community research partnerships.
SQL DBA Database Admin, MIS	Grade 23	1	Pursuant to a mandate from the County's Bureau of Technology, all of the court's applications are being redeveloped and migrated away from the county's Mainframe and AS/400 servers which are currently contractually hosted by Ensono (formerly Acxiom). As such, the court is in the process of redeveloping its applications to be hosted locally within the Chief Judge's application server and SQL database server environments. The Court does not currently have a skilled SQL Server Database Administrator on staff. This new position which will be responsible for the implementation, configuration, maintenance, and performance of critical SQL Server systems, to ensure the availability and consistent performance of the court's mission critical applications. This is a competitive salary that is commensurate with positions within the Cook County Bureau of Technology.
Admin Asst III, MIS	Grade 16	1	This new position at entry level salary, will perform computer equipment inventory control and auditing. The court manages approximately 5000 active computing devices, including computers, laptops, printers, courtroom presentation equipment, servers and data storage arrays. The position will be responsible for receiving new inventory purchased by the court and for tracking the distribution and decommissioning of all equipment. Additionally, the position will conduct routine audits of equipment to ensure active equipment is at the assigned location and report any missing or damaged devices. The position will also process all decommissioned computer equipment via the county's salvage protocols. Finally, the position will generate inventory reports to comply with the various annual inventory reporting requirements of the Comptroller, Bureau of Technology and Budget Office.
Clerk V, Advice desks	Grade 11	1	This position is reserved for the Guardianship assistant desk reception area. Currently no unit staff are dedicated to answer telephone inquiries.
Admin Asst III, SJC Grant Research Associate, SJC Grant Project Manager, SJC Grant	Grade 16 Grade 18 Grade 20	1 1 1	These three positions will support the MacArthur Foundation's Safety and Justice Challenge work, to put the current grant-funded positions on permanent funding status. At this time, funding for 2022 by the foundation, is uncertain. Working with the President's office, the SJC must continue its efforts to reduce the jail population and reduce racial disparities in the criminal justice system.
<b>TOTAL, Change per K-3</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>23</b>

### Social Service:

Social Caseworker III, DUI	Grade PS3	2	These 18 new positions, would staff a significant expansion of probation services for DUI offenders planned in 2022, managed by the Social Service Department. Presently, pursuant to Circuit Court Rule 11, Central States Institute of Addiction (CSI) is responsible for performing driving under the influence (DUI) evaluations for cases adjudicated in Cook County to assist the court in its sentencing and referral decisions. Additionally, CSI staff are responsible for monitoring thousands of lower risk DUI offenders, namely those assessed as requiring Level 1 or Level 2M substance abuse treatment per the evaluated level. In 2019, prior to the pandemic, CSI prepared 7,542 evaluation reports to the court, monitored 1,701 cases and performed 8,867 drug screenings. CSI currently occupies leased space for this purpose in many court locations. Recently, CSI informed Chief Judge Evans that they will cease providing exclusive evaluation and monitoring services to offenders in Cook County by early next year, due to the rising costs of these services and staffing issues related to the pandemic. Consistent with its mission, the Social Service Department is planning to assume their responsibilities and their current workload, to become the exclusive designated service provider for all Cook County adjudicated DUI cases. Traditionally, the Department has been the sole monitor for all court related misdemeanor DUI cases. Due to a large increase of caseloads in the late 1990s, the Department entered into an agreement with CSI as its designee to take over monitoring of Level 1 and Level 2M evaluated offenders. CSI also provides monitoring services for Level A cases in Districts 1 and 5 as part of the 11.2 Pilot Project. The Department currently monitors higher-risk recurring DUI offenders; but will be adding thousands of evaluations now performed by CSI and approximately 1,400 additional cases for monitoring. This increase in services will require a regional manager, two supervisors, eight caseworkers to perform evaluations, six staff members to monitor the cases, and two clerical staff members to support the workload. The costs of the program will be underwritten at least in part by new related program fees, collected from offenders. The county chose to fund six of these 18 positions in 2022 through ARPA revenue loss funds, SPF 11286. In the coming years, the court will work with the county to place these positions in a permanent employment status, as the court requested this year. How that will be accomplished depends on the budget situation down the road.
Social Caseworker I, DUI	Grade PS1	4	
Stenographer III, DUI	Grade 9	6	
Clerk IV Chief Judge AFSCME, DUI	Grade 11	2	

Administrative Assistant IV, MIS	Grade 18                      1	This position would lead in bringing new CSI data systems on board (as above), fusing the SSD financial systems for program collections and helping with the conversion to the new C5 case management system. They would manage the CSI system database and client tracking system software for client tracking. No current department staff has the expertise or programming experience needed for this work. And with the planned transfer of pretrial operations to the state in the coming years, the department will need an MIS person to help with program reporting and record keeping for DHS reporting purposes on the DEMP program for evaluation and monitoring.
<b>TOTAL, Change per K-3</b>	<b>13                      6</b>	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b><u>32                      29</u></b>	