



# Annual Report

State Fiscal Year 2025



**SOUTH DAKOTA**  
UNIFIED JUDICIAL SYSTEM





State Fiscal Year 2025

## **SOUTH DAKOTA UNIFIED JUDICIAL SYSTEM ANNUAL REPORT**

**Published by the**

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# South Dakota Unified Judicial System

## South Dakota Supreme Court Justices

Justice Patricia J. DeVaney, Third District; Justice Janine M. Kern, First District; Chief Justice Steven R. Jensen, Fourth District; Justice Mark E. Salter, Second District; and Justice Scott P. Myren, Fifth District



### Our Mission

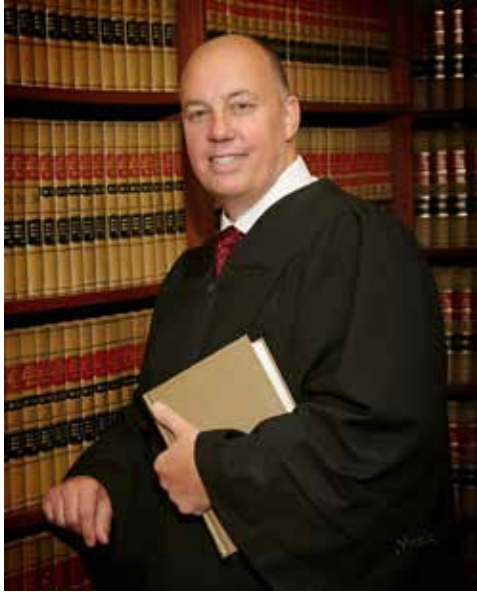
The Unified Judicial System (UJS) is dedicated to providing a fair, impartial, and accessible court system that upholds the rule of law and is worthy of the public's trust and confidence.

### Our Vision

Justice for All.



# Chief Justice Message



Each year when I look back at the work of the South Dakota Unified Judicial System, I am reminded that our courts are more than case numbers and filings—they are places where people come seeking a fair and impartial forum for the resolution of their legal dispute. The graphs and tables included in our annual report not only provide a snapshot of what was accomplished over the past year, but also represent the impact on the lives of individuals, families, businesses and our communities across South Dakota.

This FY2025 Annual Report reflects the work of our Supreme Court, circuit and magistrate courts, and the State Court Administrator's Office between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025. Our judges and staff approach this responsibility with care and a deep sense of duty, and I am proud of their dedication.

I want to express my gratitude to the many individuals across the state who keep our courts running day after day. Their work often happens quietly and without recognition, yet it makes all the difference for those who rely on the courts in times of need.

As we look toward the year ahead, we will keep working to improve access, increase efficiency, and uphold the values of justice that South Dakotans expect and deserve. My hope is that our courts continue to be places where people feel respected, heard and treated fairly.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Steven R. Jensen". The signature is stylized and fluid.

**Steven R. Jensen**

Chief Justice, South Dakota Supreme Court

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# South Dakota Courts | At a Glance

The South Dakota Unified Judicial System (UJS) consists of the Supreme Court, circuit courts and State Court Administrator's Office. The Supreme Court is the state's highest court and final decision maker on South Dakota law. The circuit courts are the state's trial courts where criminal proceedings and civil litigation are handled. The State Court Administrator's Office provides centralized administrative assistance and support services for the South Dakota judiciary.

## Case Filing Highlights from FY2025

SUPREME COURT	
Appeals	<b>310</b>
Intermediate Appeals	<b>20</b>
Original Proceedings	<b>37</b>
Orders, Writs and Judgments	<b>1,235</b>
Bar Applications Submitted	<b>152</b>
Bar Admissions	<b>126</b>

CIRCUIT COURT	
Criminal*	<b>139,510</b>
Civil	<b>63,079</b>
Domestic Relations	<b>7,530</b>
Search Warrants	<b>5,741</b>
Juveniles	<b>4,454</b>
Drug, Alcohol and Mental Health Commitments	<b>4,801</b>
Probate	<b>2,346</b>

*\* Includes municipal ordinances and petty offenses.*

**Total Circuit Court Case Filings 202,589**

# Year in Review | July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025



Seventh Judicial Circuit Presiding Judge Robert Gusinsky administers the oath of office to Judge Scott A. Roetzel (top photo) and Judge Eric Kelderman (bottom photo).



In the center, Second Judicial Circuit Judge Rachel R. Rasmussen and Second Judicial Circuit Presiding Judge Robin J. Houwman help break ground for the new Lincoln County Justice Center in Canton.

**July 9 and 12, 2024** 📷 | Investitures were held for two new judges in Rapid City for the Seventh Judicial Circuit: Scott A. Roetzel and Eric Kelderman. They replaced Judge Craig A. Pfeifle and Judge Jane W. Pfeifle, who both retired from the bench on June 23, 2024.

**July 30, 2024** | The UJS Strategic Planning Committee and a project team with the National Center for State Courts held a kickoff and orientation meeting to begin work on a new UJS strategic plan.

**Aug. 6, 2024** 📷 | Second Judicial Circuit Court staff helped break ground for the new Lincoln County Justice Center in Canton, which is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2026.

**Aug. 20, 2024** | UJS launched a new ePay website for people to pay their court fees, fines, costs and restitution online. The new site provides a more user-friendly interface, making it easier and faster to locate court cases and make a payment.



# Year in Review | July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025



The UJS Strategic Planning Committee met in Pierre on Sept. 9-10, 2025.



Second Circuit Presiding Judge Robin J. Houwman administers Judge Mandi A. Mowery's oath of office in Sioux Falls.



Knudson School of Law Dean Neil Fulton leads a question-and-answer session with the South Dakota Supreme Court Justices.

**Sept. 9-10, 2024** 📹 | The UJS Strategic Planning Committee met to analyze survey results, identify priorities to include in the strategic plan, and discuss an operational plan. Surveys were sent to all UJS judges, employees and justice partners to gather input regarding strategic challenges and opportunities.

**Sept. 18, 2024** | The South Dakota Commission on Indigent Legal Services chose Chris Miles as chief defender for the new Office of Indigent Legal Services.

**Sept. 19, 2024** | UJS oversaw and administered the distribution of \$3 million for indigent legal services costs reimbursed to the state's counties. The funds were distributed to counties on a pro rata basis, ensuring that every county received an equitable share based on their expenditures for indigent defense.

**Sept. 20, 2024** 📹 | Mandi A. Mowery was officially sworn in as a new circuit court judge for the Second Judicial Circuit in Sioux Falls by Presiding Judge Robin J. Houwman.

**Sept. 23, 2024** | Sixth Amendment Center and UJS released a report evaluating trial-level indigent defense representation in adult criminal cases in the state. The report identified challenges with the current model for delivering indigent legal services and recommendations for steps moving forward.

**Oct. 1-2, 2024** 📹 | The South Dakota Supreme Court held term of court at the University of South Dakota Knudson School of Law in Vermillion and met with law students for a question-and-answer session.



# Year in Review | July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025

The Unified Judicial System was one of 120 regional organizations, schools and businesses represented at the 2024 Community Response to Child Abuse Conference.



At a high school career fair in Aberdeen, Court Reporter Kristi Brandt, Chief Court Services Officer Carrie Fey and HR Generalist Jade Milli promote UJS career opportunities.

**Oct. 3-4, 2024** 📷 | More than 500 people attended the 2024 Community Response to Child Abuse Conference in Sioux Falls. Attendees heard from national and regional experts on ways to better understand and respond to child abuse.

**Oct. 9, 2024** 📷 | Fifth Judicial Circuit and Human Resources staff attended the Youth Career Expo held at Northern State University in Aberdeen and spoke with high school students about career opportunities available with the courts.

**Oct. 18, 2024** 📷 | Jeffrey C. Clapper was officially sworn in as a new circuit court judge for the Second Judicial Circuit in Sioux Falls.

**Oct. 25, 2025** | Alison D. Nelson was officially sworn in as a magistrate judge for the Second Judicial Circuit in Sioux Falls. Nelson filled a vacancy after Magistrate Judge Eric Johnson was appointed a circuit court judge for the Second Judicial Circuit.

**Dec. 12, 2024** | The South Dakota Supreme Court announced the adoption of the NextGen bar exam for those seeking admission to practice law in South Dakota beginning in July 2027. The NextGen bar exam will replace the current bar examination and will test a broad range of foundational lawyering skills, utilizing fundamental legal concepts and principles.



Second Judicial Circuit Judge Susan M. Sabers administers Judge Jeffrey C. Clapper's oath of office in Sioux Falls.

# Year in Review | July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025



Third Judicial Circuit Presiding Judge Gregory J. Stoltenburg administers Judge Abigail A. Howard's oath of office.



During the 2025 State of the Judiciary, the Chief Justice spoke about the impactful work of court services. L-R: Jon Brozik, Sixth Circuit; Chuck Frieberg, State Court Administrator's Office; Tim Moon and Ron Freeman, First Circuit; Jessica Miller, Sixth Circuit; Trooper Troy Archambeault; Nickol Penrod, Sixth Circuit; Derrick Nedved and Amie Weglin, Fourth Circuit; and Chief Justice Jensen.

**Jan. 6, 2025** | The South Dakota Supreme Court selected Chief Justice Steven R. Jensen to a second, four-year term as Chief Justice of the state's highest court.

**Jan. 9, 2025** | Magistrate Judge Abigail A. Howard was sworn in as a circuit court judge for the Third Judicial Circuit. She filled a vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Robert L. Spears.

**Jan. 15, 2025** | Chief Justice Steven R. Jensen delivered the 2025 State of the Judiciary at the State Capitol in Pierre. During the message, he shared three examples of the impactful work being done by court services in South Dakota.

**Feb. 12-13, 2025** | The first judges who will serve as mentors in the UJS' pilot Judicial Mentoring Program were trained by the National Center for State Courts in Pierre.

**Feb. 21, 2025** | The South Dakota Supreme Court adopted rules implementing a five-year pilot program providing a public service pathway to bar admission.

**March 3, 2025** | The Third Judicial Circuit welcomed its newest magistrate judge, Gary W. Schumacher. He filled a vacancy created with Judge Abigail Howard's appointment as a circuit court judge.



Judge Sandra Hanson, Judge Natalie Damgaard and Judge Michael Day take part in training for the UJS' pilot Judicial Mentoring Program on Feb. 12-13, 2025.



# Year in Review | July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025



Supreme Court Justices hold a question-and-answer session with students and attend an American government class during the Supreme Court's March Term of Court at Black Hills State University in Spearfish.



As part of National Treatment Court Month, Yankton County Drug & DUI Court participants and team members pick up litter along a section of state highway near Yankton on May 28, 2025.

**March 25-26, 2025** 📷 | The Supreme Court held its March Term of Court at Black Hills State University (BHSU) in Spearfish. Area high school students, BHSU students and the public had the opportunity to ask questions of the Justices during a Q&A following oral arguments. The Justices also met with a BHSU American government class to answer students' questions about the state court process and careers in the legal profession.

**April 15, 2025** | The UJS launched its newly-redesigned website. The new website offers a modernized design, improved navigation and enhanced search capabilities, making it easier for users to access self-help resources, online resources, forms, and information on court programs across the state.

**April 29, 2025** | Nine USD Knudson School of Law students were selected to take part in a new public service pathway to bar admission pilot program.

**May 2025** 📷 | Treatment courts across South Dakota held special events in May and June to celebrate National Treatment Court Month. On any given day, there are more than 400 participants being served by drug, DUI, veterans and mental health courts in South Dakota. In 2024, more than 800 total clients were served by these courts in South Dakota.

# Year in Review | July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025



Second Circuit Veterans Court participants, mentors and team members take part in a special fishing event in Sioux Falls as part of National Treatment Court Month.



Judge Carmen A Means swears in David K. Wheeler as a judge for the Third Judicial Circuit.



Dakota Plains Legal Services' Riley Connor, a staff attorney from Sioux Falls, and Gina Box, a legal secretary from Fort Thompson, travel with the Justice Bus.

**May 28, 2025** 📷 | Second Circuit Veterans Court participants, mentors and team members took part in a special fishing event at Outdoor Campus in Sioux Falls to celebrate National Treatment Court Month.

**June 9, 2025** | Chief Justice Steven R. Jensen appointed Judge Patrick T. Pardy as new presiding judge for the Third Judicial Circuit. Judge Pardy replaced Presiding Judge Gregory J. Stoltenburg, who retired from the bench.

**June 10, 2025** | David K. Wheeler was sworn in as a judge for the Third Judicial Circuit. He replaced Judge Gregory J. Stoltenburg, who retired on Aug. 8, 2025.

**June 11, 2025** | Supreme Court Justice Janine M. Kern announced her retirement from the bench on Dec. 8, 2025. Justice Kern was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2014, and she previously served as a circuit court judge for 18 years. Before serving as a judge, she worked in the Attorney General's office.

**June 12, 2025** 📷 | The Justice Bus was at the Hughes County and Stanley County courthouses. Dakota Plains Legal Services' Justice Bus is South Dakota's first mobile legal aid office. Legal aid attorneys offer free legal services to the communities they visit.

**July 1, 2025** 📷 | Starting July 1, a new mission, vision and strategic plan will serve as a roadmap to guide the UJS in serving the citizens of South Dakota with fairness, integrity and excellence.



# SUPREME COURT

## South Dakota Supreme Court

The South Dakota Supreme Court is the state's highest court and the court of last resort for state appellate actions. The Supreme Court is comprised of the Chief Justice, who is the administrative head of the Unified Judicial System, and four justices who are the final judicial authority on all matters involving the legal and judicial system of South Dakota.

Supreme Court justices are appointed by the Governor from a list of nominees selected by the South Dakota Judicial Qualifications Commission. Justices must be licensed to practice law in South Dakota, and permanent justices must be voting residents of the district from which they are appointed at the time they take office.

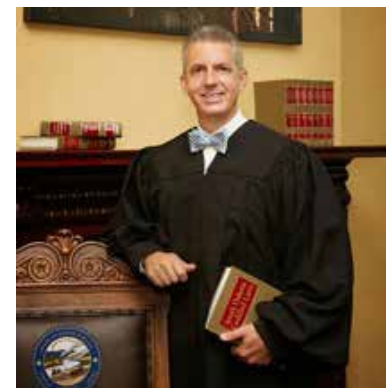
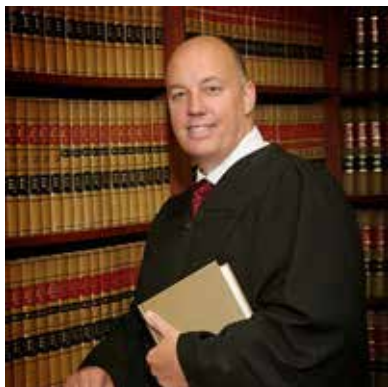
One justice is selected from each of five geographic appointment districts. Justices face a nonpolitical retention election three years after appointment and every eight years after that. The justices select their own chief justice for a four-year term.

### SUPREME COURT DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Original jurisdiction in cases involving interests of the state.
- Issues original and remedial writs.
- Renders advisory opinions to the Governor on issues involving executive power.
- Appellate jurisdiction over circuit court decisions.
- Rule-making authority over court practice and procedure.
- Administrative leadership for the legal and judicial system.
- Controls admissions to and disciplines members of the State Bar.



# Supreme Court Justices



## CHIEF JUSTICE STEVEN R. JENSEN

**Place of Birth:** Wakonda

**Education:** Undergraduate degree Bethel University in St. Paul, Minn., and juris doctor University of South Dakota School of Law

**Joined the Supreme Court:** Appointed in 2017, selected as Chief Justice in 2021 and reselected as Chief Justice in 2025

**Supreme Court District:** Fourth

**Prior Experience:** South Dakota Supreme Court law clerk, private law practice, First Judicial Circuit judge and presiding judge

## JUSTICE JANINE M. KERN

**Place of Birth:** Lake Andes

**Education:** Undergraduate degree Arizona State University and juris doctor University of Minnesota Law School

**Joined the Supreme Court:** Appointed in 2014

**Supreme Court District:** First

**Prior Experience:** South Dakota Attorney General's Office (appellate division, drug prosecution unit, litigation division) and Seventh Judicial Circuit judge

## JUSTICE MARK E. SALTER

**Place of Birth:** Huron

**Education:** Undergraduate degree South Dakota State University and juris doctor University of South Dakota School of Law

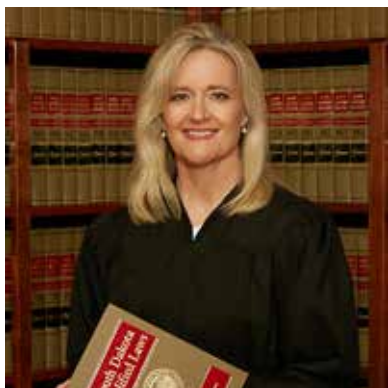
**Joined the Supreme Court:** Appointed in 2018

**Supreme Court District:** Second

**Prior Experience:** Minnesota State District Court law clerk, U.S. Navy and Naval Reserves, private law practice, U.S. Attorney's Office (appellate), Second Judicial Circuit judge



# Supreme Court Justices



## JUSTICE PATRICIA J. DEVANEY

**Place of Birth:** Polo

**Education:** Undergraduate degree University of South Dakota and juris doctor University of Virginia School of Law

**Joined the Supreme Court:** Appointed in 2019

**Supreme Court District:** Third

**Prior Experience:** South Dakota Attorney General's Office (appellate, litigation, administrative matters) and Sixth Judicial Circuit judge

## JUSTICE SCOTT P. MYREN

**Place of Birth:** Mobridge

**Education:** Undergraduate degree University of South Dakota and juris doctor Rutgers University

**Joined the Supreme Court:** Appointed in 2021

**Supreme Court District:** Fifth

**Prior Experience:** Private law practice, South Dakota Supreme Court staff attorney, Office of Administrative Hearings administrative law judge, Sixth Judicial Circuit magistrate judge, Fifth Judicial Circuit judge and presiding judge



# Supreme Court Workload

The South Dakota Supreme Court's workload is shown on the next page. The following categories are used within the Supreme Court.

## Intermediate Appeals

Appeals made during the progress of a case in circuit court. Intermediate appeals are accepted at the discretion of the Supreme Court.

## Notice of Review

Filed by an appellee (party against whom an appeal is taken) seeking review of a judgment or order entered in the same action from which an appeal has been taken. A notice of review is a separate filing but not a separate disposition since it is disposed of as part of the original appeal.

## Certificates of Probable Cause

Required before an appeal can be brought in a habeas corpus case.

## Summary Dispositions

Appeals that have been summarily affirmed or reversed on established grounds set forth in SDCL 15-26A-87.1. In these proceedings the Court, on its own motion, may affirm or reverse the judgment or order from which the appeal is taken. The Court must be unanimous in its decision to render a summary disposition, and the decision is set out in an order or memorandum opinion. The term “expedited appeal” is sometimes used because it usually takes less time to process appeals under this rule.

## Pending Cases

Cases which have been filed with the Court but in which no decision has been entered.

## Administrative, Judicial, Legal Research, Law Library and Bar Admissions

Part of the workload within the Supreme Court.





# Supreme Court Caseload

	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025
<b>Filings</b>					
Appeals	242	240	255	280	310
Intermediate Appeals	36	40	32	24	20
Original Proceedings	34	44	43	45	37
Notice of Review	6	7	17	15	14
Certificates of Probable Cause	12	9	10	13	6
Reinstatements	0	0	0	0	0
Rehearings Granted	0	0	0	0	0
<b>COMBINED FILINGS</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>387</b>
<b>Dispositions</b>					
Appeals/Original Proceedings	80/89	78/83	73/84	79/87	80/83
Orders of Dismissal/Dispositional Remands	98	119	120	119	127
Denial of Intermediate Appeals	22	26	30	21	14
Original Proceedings (by Order)	20	27	33	32	38
Dispositive Remand	0	0	0	0	0
Summary Dispositions	80	77	76	88	85
<b>COMBINED DISPOSITIONS</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>347</b>
<b>Pending Cases</b>					
Submitted and Pending	51	50	51	54	36
Ready for Submission	22	29	45	22	39
Not Ready for Calendar	89	82	94	106	119
Other (in Suspense)	5	3	4	2	3
<b>TOTAL PENDING CASES AT YEAR END</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>197</b>

# Supreme Court Caseload

	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025
<b>Administrative</b>					
Hearings on Rules and Related Matters	3	3	4	3	3
Internal Procedure Rules Adopted or Amended	3	1	3	5	2
Supreme Court Rules Adopted or Amended	9	16	22	5	27
Administrative Conference	24	25	25	24	22
<b>Judicial</b>					
Orders, Writs and Judgments Entered	1,200	1,220	1,215	1,248	1,235
Bar Admissions (includes reciprocity)	95	121	107	108	114
Bar Admissions (pursuant to SDCL 16-18-2)	10	4	4	8	12
Cases for Oral Arguments	41	35	39	42	37
Cases Submitted on Briefs Only	112	106	102	131	105
Case Conference Days	24	23	24	23	24
<b>Legal Research</b>					
Appeals Screened	330	340	357	377	387
Cases that Briefs Were Received In	185	189	176	195	185
Per Curiams Assigned	29	27	30	29	26
<b>Bar Admissions</b>					
Applications Submitted	136	230	150	161	152

# Judicial Qualifications Commission

The authority for creation of the Judicial Qualifications Commission is granted by the South Dakota Constitution.

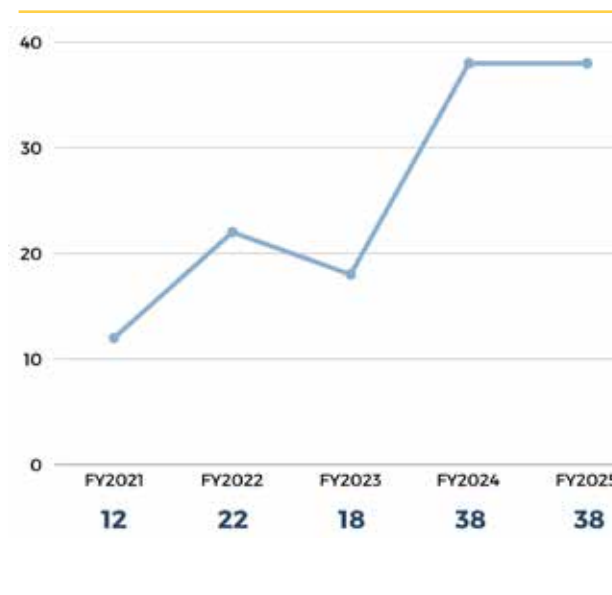
The seven-member commission is comprised of two circuit court judges, elected by the judicial conference; three members of the bar practicing law but no more than two of whom may be of the same political party and who must be appointed by a majority vote of the state bar commissioners; and two citizens, who are appointed by the Governor and who are not of the same political party.

The term of office for a commission member is four years. No person may serve more than two terms as a member of the commission.

## COMMISSION DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Receive and investigate complaints against justices or judges.
- Conduct confidential hearings to determine whether complaints are justified.
- Recommend censure, removal or retirement of a judge to the Supreme Court.
- Investigate applicants for vacancies on the Supreme Court or circuit court bench.
- Nominate two or more of the most qualified applicants to the Governor.

Written  
Complaints  
Received



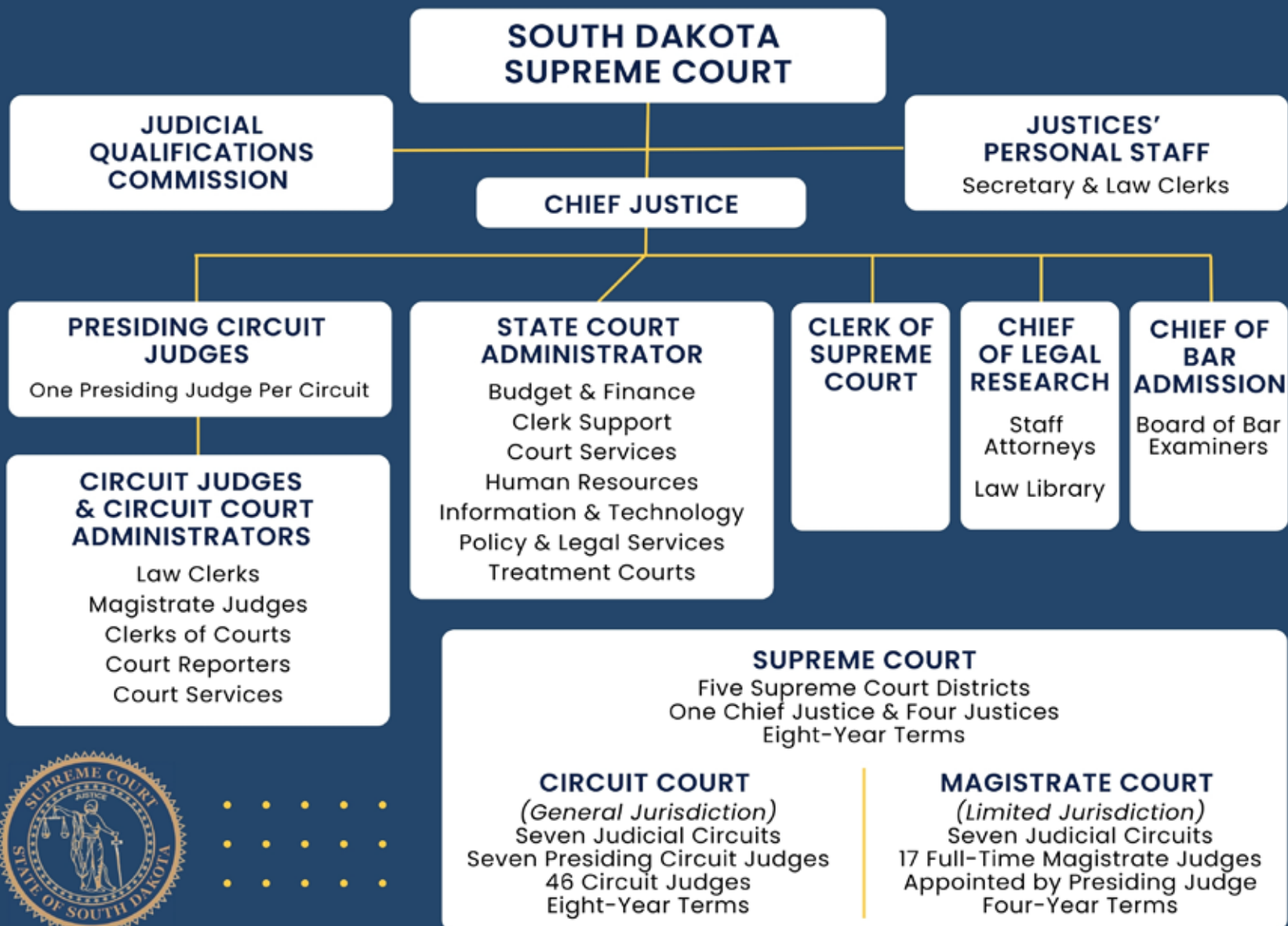
Judicial  
Vacancies in  
FY2025

**6** Circuit Court Judicial Vacancies

**52** Applicants Interviewed for Judicial Vacancies



# SOUTH DAKOTA UNIFIED JUDICIAL SYSTEM



# South Dakota Courts | Staffing and Budget

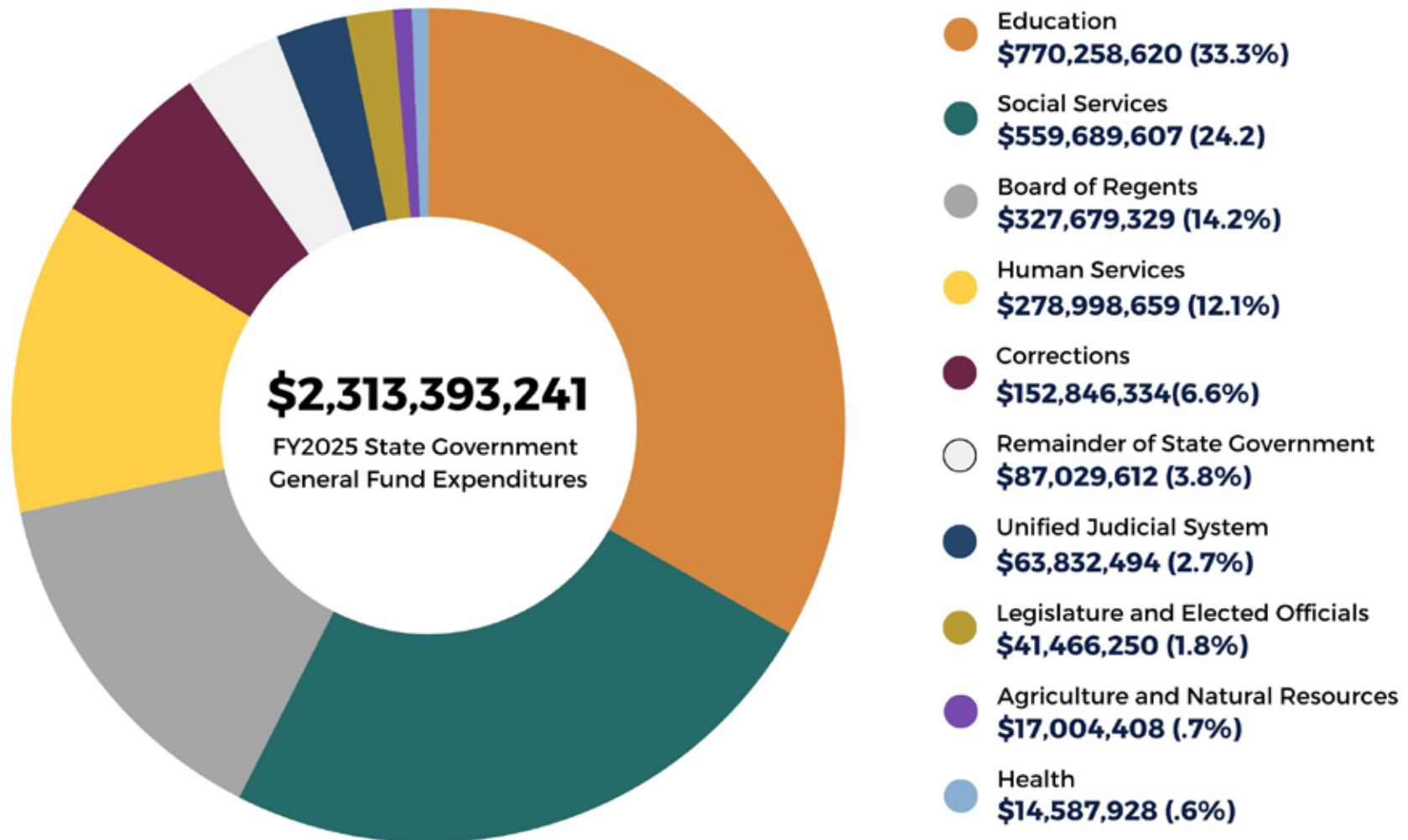
FY2025 Staffing (FTEs)	
Supreme Court Justices	5
Circuit Judges	46
Magistrate Judges	17
Supreme Court	16
Clerk of Courts Offices	201
Circuit Administration	33
Official Court Reporters	40
Computer Assisted Court Recorders	9
Court Services (Probation)	174
Treatment Courts	14
State Court Administration	53
<b>Total UJS Staff</b>	<b>608</b>

EXPENDITURES BY PROGRAM		
Circuit Court	\$21,797,492	29.8%
Court Services and Treatment Courts	\$19,635,932	26.9%
Clerk of Courts	\$15,182,539	20.8%
Information and Technology	\$6,282,525	8.6%
State Court Administrator's Office	\$4,542,450	6.2%
Supreme Court	\$4,324,705	5.9%
Community-Based Services	\$703,549	1.0%
Training	\$598,707	0.8%
Judicial Qualifications Commission	\$44,999	Less Than 0.1%
EXPENDITURES BY FUND SOURCE		
General Funds	\$62,827,765	85.9%
Court Automation Fund	\$8,980,635	12.3%
Law Enforcement Officer Training Fund	\$532,120	0.7%
Child Support Referees Fund	\$411,291	0.6%
Federal Funds	\$288,093	0.4%
Drug Screening Fund	\$72,994	0.1%

**\$73,112,898** FY2025 Budget

# South Dakota Courts | Portion of State Budget

**\$63,832,494 (2.7%)** UJS Share of FY2025 State Government General Fund Expenditures  
(Includes Equal Access to our Courts, Indigent Legal Services, and encumbrances.)





# Justice in the Balance | Courts Work for South Dakotans

There is much more to the work of the courts than the occasional high-profile case that attracts public attention. The bulk of work involves everyday issues that affect South Dakotans.



## EVERYDAY ISSUES

In FY2025, South Dakota's courts handled:

<b>2,443</b>	Divorce and annulment cases
<b>1,129</b>	Child support modification proceedings and Uniform Interstate Family Support Act actions
<b>246</b>	Drug/alcohol committals
<b>4,555</b>	Mental illness cases
<b>430</b>	Adoption and termination of parental rights
<b>3,958</b>	Protection orders

**To assist these families, the UJS provides self-represented litigants with UJS-approved forms, including divorce and parenting time implementation and enforcement forms.**

## ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILDREN

South Dakota courts play a life-altering role for abused and neglected children.

They decide whether to:

- Remove a child from a parent
- Place a child in foster care
- Reunite a child and parent or terminate parental rights
- Allow adoption of a child

There is no greater responsibility of the judiciary than determining the best interest of a South Dakota child.

In FY2025, South Dakota courts presided over:

**531** New juvenile abuse and neglect case filings.



**954** Children involved in the new case filings.

# Justice in the Balance | Courts Work for South Dakotans



## JUVENILE JUSTICE

South Dakota's court services officers (CSOs), staff and judges continuously work with youth and their families to:

- Ensure community safety
- Hold young people accountable for their actions, including paying restitution to victims
- Influence behavioral changes
- Provide resources to assist families

In FY2025, South Dakota courts worked with the following youth to address their conduct:

**644** Youth supervised on formal probation

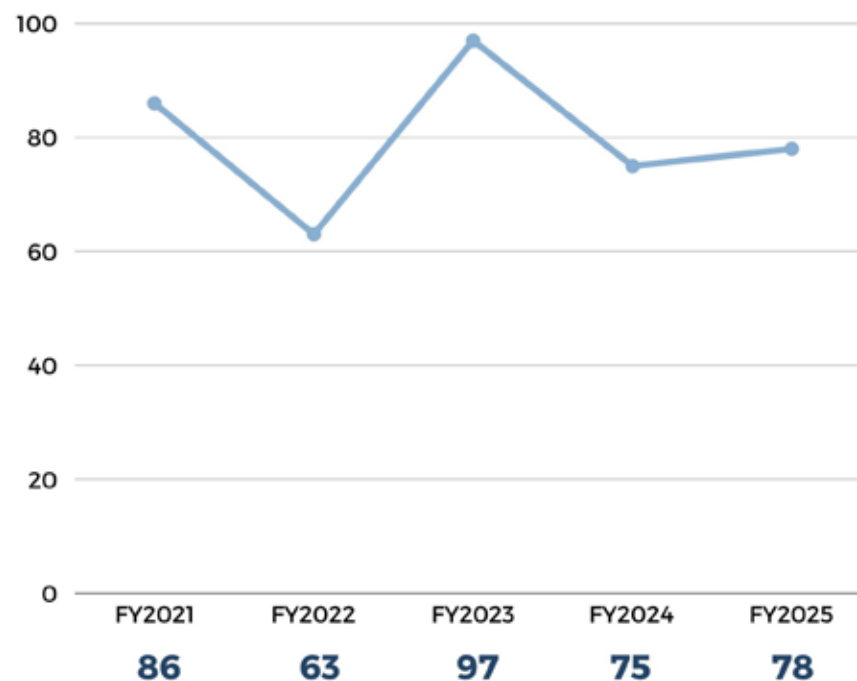
**163** Youth receiving informal supervision (diversion cases)

**80** Youth case service monitoring \*

In total, South Dakota courts handled **814** juvenile citations, **2,489** juvenile delinquencies, **600** child in need of supervision (CHINS) cases, and **20** CHINS and delinquencies.

*\*Case service monitoring is used when the judge does not order formal probation supervision and wants any conditions monitored or any other type of supervision that is not considered formal supervision.*

## Youth Committed to Department of Corrections



# Justice in the Balance | Statewide Caseloads

## CIVIL JUSTICE



South Dakotans from every walk of life, whether in their private or business relationships, rely on the courts to resolve their civil legal problems. Providing a forum for the effective resolution of these disputes is an essential part of the courts' mission. During FY2025, circuit courts handled:

<b>18,872</b>	Small Claims Cases
<b>12,612</b>	Civil Litigation Cases
<b>2,346</b>	Probate Cases
<b>936</b>	Guardianship and Trust Cases

Civil cases can take anywhere from months to years before they are resolved, leading to an overlap in cases from year to year.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE



Criminal cases dominate court time and resources. Judges and court staff spend more time on criminal cases than on any other type of case. Clerk of courts offices are responsible for case processing and ensuring a sufficient pool of jurors are available for trials. During FY2025, circuit courts heard:

<b>12,107</b>	Felonies
<b>19,829</b>	Class I Misdemeanors
<b>24,044</b>	Contested Class 2 Misdemeanors (includes municipal ordinances and petty offenses)
<b>83,530</b>	Non-Contested Class 2 Misdemeanors (includes municipal ordinances and petty offenses)

Court services officers formally supervised **5,805** cases in felony matters, **202** cases on misdemeanor matters, plus informally supervised another **123** cases via case service monitoring.

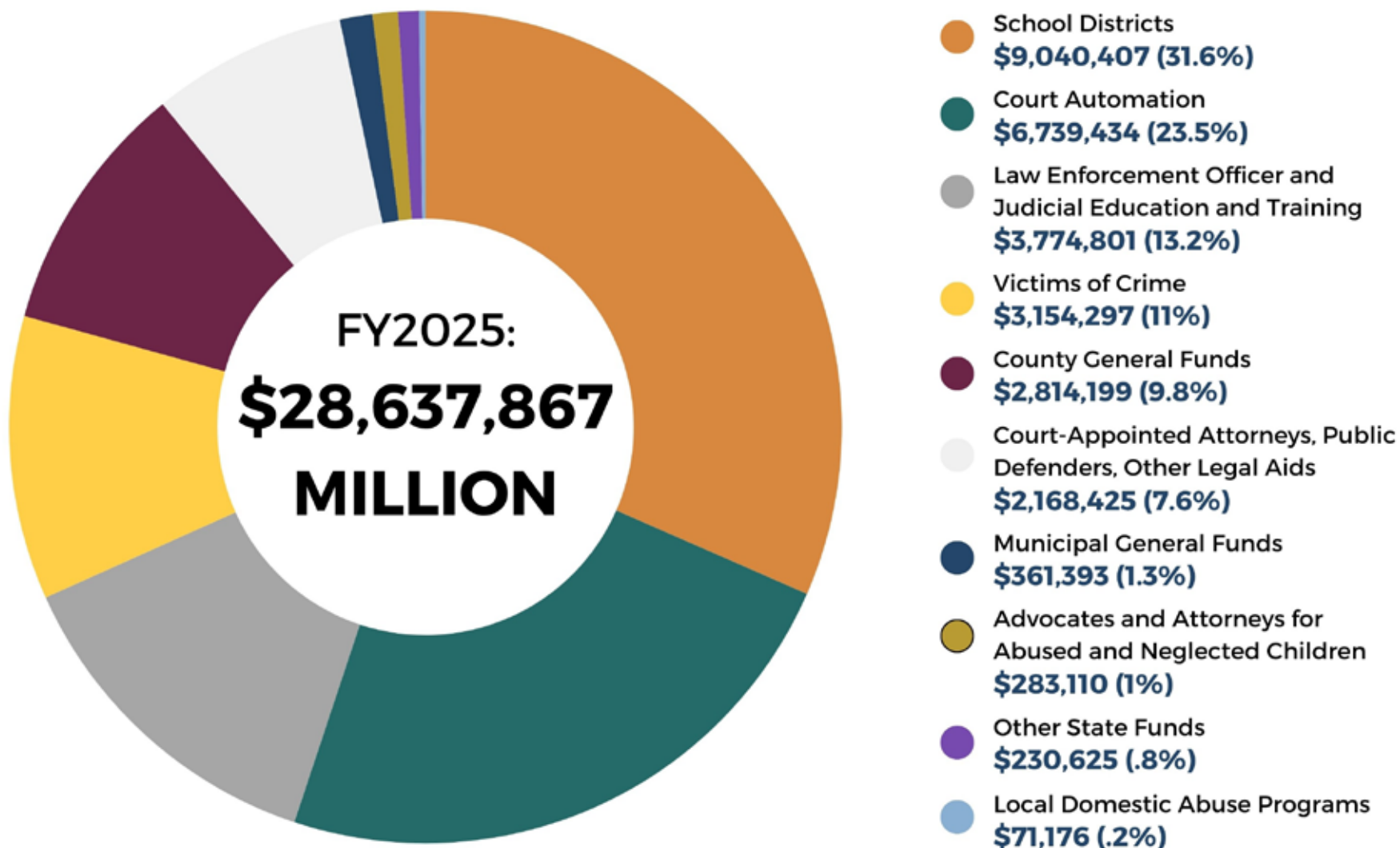
Employers, landlords, media and the public rely on South Dakota's clerk of courts offices for accurate information about criminal defendants, sentencing histories and money owed on judgments. During FY2025, the court system performed:

**350,833** Record Searches | **5,741** Search Warrants



# Justice in the Balance | Collection of Money

It is the responsibility of the court system to take in and distribute fines, fees, penalties and costs owed to victims, cities, counties, school districts and the state.



# Strategic Planning

## UJS Unveils New Mission, Vision and Strategic Plan to Guide State Court System



Starting July 1, 2025, a new mission, vision and strategic plan is serving as a roadmap to guide the Unified Judicial System (UJS) in serving the citizens of South Dakota with fairness, integrity and excellence.

UJS began work on the new strategic plan in July 2024, with a collaborative process involving input from justices, judges and court staff. A UJS Strategic Planning Committee was formed and worked with a project team from the National Center for State Courts. The goal was to identify where UJS will go as a court system and the priorities on which we will focus through 2028.

Surveys were sent to all UJS judges, employees and justice partners to gather input regarding strategic challenges and opportunities. The Strategic Planning Committee met to analyze the survey results and identified six strategic pillars to shape UJS' priorities. Six subcommittees were formed to finalize each strategic priority, description and goals. The Strategic

Planning Committee finalized the subcommittees' work on the six strategic priorities (*see next page*), and the South Dakota Supreme Court reviewed and approved the strategic plan.

"This plan reflects our ongoing commitment to providing a judicial system that not only upholds the rule of law but also earns the trust and confidence of every person who walks through our courthouse doors," said Chief Justice Steven R. Jensen. "It reaffirms our mission to deliver justice that is impartial, accessible and grounded in the highest ethical standards."

**Mission:** The Unified Judicial System (UJS) is dedicated to providing a fair, impartial, and accessible court system that upholds the rule of law and is worthy of the public's trust and confidence.

**Vision:** Justice for All.

"This strategic plan is both a promise and a call to action. It is a promise that we, as stewards of justice, will continue striving to meet the highest standards of service and integrity. And it is a call to action for every member of the UJS to work together to bring this vision to life," Chief Justice Jensen said. "I am confident that, with this plan as our guide, we will meet the challenges ahead and build an even stronger judicial system for the people of South Dakota."

The project was supported by grant funding from the State Justice Institute.

# Strategic Planning

## 6 STRATEGIC PILLARS

### 1. Enhancing Access to Justice for Court Users

Enhancing access to justice by eliminating barriers and ensuring all court users can access court programs and services.

### 2. Building Public Trust and Confidence

Building trust and confidence in the courts through transparency, communication, education and community engagement.

### 3. Effective Court Operations and Services

Delivering transparent services responsive to the needs of court users that are based on data-driven decisions to ensure efficient operations.

### 4. Improving Courthouse Security, Emergency Preparedness, and Personal Safety

Enhancing the safety of all who visit, conduct business and work in court facilities.

### 5. Embracing and Enhancing Technology

Leveraging technology and technological innovations to improve court operations and court performance.

### 6. Fostering a Strong Workforce

Attracting, developing and retaining an engaged, productive and healthy workforce.



# Judicial Mentoring Program

## UJS Develops Pilot Judicial Mentoring Program with Assistance from National Center for State Courts



Judge Jeffrey Connolly, Judge Rachel Rasmussen and Judicial Branch Educator Sarah Linn practice their peer-to-peer foundational coaching and mentoring skills.

Judges hold a tremendous responsibility to both the institution and public they serve. The Unified Judicial System (UJS) and the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) worked to develop a pilot Judicial Mentoring Program for new judges in South Dakota.

NCSC created and provided a high-quality training focused on teaching peer-to-peer foundational coaching and mentoring skills. The first judges to serve as mentors in the UJS' pilot Judicial Mentoring Program were trained by NCSC in Pierre on Feb. 12-13, 2025.

Five judges attended the initial training: Judge Jeffrey Connolly, Seventh Judicial Circuit; Judge Natalie Damgaard, Second Judicial Circuit; Judge Michael Day, Fourth Judicial Circuit; Judge Sandra Hanson, Second Judicial Circuit; and Judge Rachel Rasmussen, Second Judicial Circuit.

The UJS Judicial Mentoring Program is a strategic initiative designed to foster the professional growth, development and resilience of newly-appointed judges. The program will serve as a bridge between experienced judiciary members and those seeking to enter or who have recently joined the judicial ranks. By integrating structured mentorship with a robust coaching framework, the program aims to promote high standards of judicial performance, ethical leadership and courtroom excellence.

The five judge mentors were paired with a mentee and will work closely with them for a 12-month period, providing consistent support, guidance and feedback. Three additional judges have also been trained to serve as mentors: Judge James A. Power, Second Judicial Circuit; Judge Robert Gusinsky, Seventh Judicial Circuit; and Magistrate Judge Sarah E. Morrison, Seventh Judicial Circuit.

# Redesigned UJS Website

## UJS Launches New Website to Enhance Access, Usability



<https://ujs.sd.gov>

The Unified Judicial System (UJS) launched a newly-redesigned website on April 15, 2025. This upgraded platform is part of UJS' ongoing commitment to improving transparency, accessibility and user experience for South Dakotans seeking information and services related to the state's courts.

The new website offers a modernized design, improved navigation and enhanced search capabilities, making it easier for users to access self-help resources, online resources, forms and information on court programs across the state. Whether individuals are seeking information about representing yourself in court, searching for court records, filing a small claims case or learning about treatment courts, the site provides streamlined access across devices—from desktops to smartphones.

“We recognize that for many people, the website is their first interaction with the court system,” said Supreme Court Chief Justice Steven R. Jensen. “This redesign reflects our commitment to ensuring that all South Dakotans—regardless of their technical background—can easily access the information and services they need.”

Key features of the new website include:

- Mobile-responsive design for use on smartphones and tablets.
- Improved search functionality to quickly find forms, court rules and case information.
- Integrated self-help resources to assist individuals without legal representation.
- Simplified navigation menus organized by user needs, such as attorneys, jurors, self-help, media, and programs and services.
- Updated accessibility features that align with the latest web accessibility standards.

# Courthouse Security Grant Program



Security upgrades were made to doors at the Roberts County Courthouse in Sisseton.

The South Dakota Unified Judicial System (UJS) Courthouse Security Grant Program allows counties to address courthouse security measures to improve the safety and security of the public, litigants, witnesses, attorneys and courthouse staff. Grants provide a 75% UJS match for approved projects, with counties responsible for the remaining 25% of the costs.

- Tier-One Grants: UJS match up to \$10,000
- Tier-Two Grants: UJS match more than \$10,000

A courthouse security committee must be in place to be eligible for tier-two grants. Grant applications must identify projects and equipment that are essential to enhance security measures at the courthouse location.



## \$2,999,916 in grants

Nearly \$3 million in Courthouse Security Grants have been awarded for projects since July 1, 2022. Of this amount, \$1,253,305 in grants was awarded during FY2025.



## 60 site assessments

Sixty site assessments have been completed since July 1, 2023. During FY2025, 28 site assessments were completed, of which six were a second assessment of a courthouse location.



## 53 security committees

Fifty-three court security committees have been formed across South Dakota, with many of the committees meeting regularly the past three years.



## 66 threats/incidents

Sixty-six new threats or incidents were reported by UJS judges and employees during FY2025, with 49 ongoing incidents.



# Indigent Legal Services

## Statewide Office Hires Attorneys, Begins Handling Appellate Cases

In 2024, the Legislature passed legislation creating the Commission on Indigent Legal Services and the Office of Indigent Legal Services tasked with expanding the efficiency and efficacy of indigent criminal defense across South Dakota.

In September 2024, the Commission hired Chris Miles as chief defender for the new Office of Indigent Legal Services. Miles had been employed with the Minnehaha County Public Defender Office since 2015. He had served as a senior deputy public defender and as a senior trial attorney. In that role, he supervised attorneys handling adult criminal cases, juvenile cases, and child abuse and neglect proceedings. Miles also had a particular focus on appellate practice before the South Dakota Supreme Court.

The Office of Indigent Legal Services currently handles criminal appeals, habeas corpus cases appeals, and abuse and neglect appeals—mirroring the state's Attorney General's appellate work. The initial focus for Chief Defender Miles and his office was to establish protocols for handling appeals, hiring attorneys and support personnel to litigate those appeals, and to take the burden of those cases which were on county governments.

Under Chief Defender Miles' direction, the office currently employs three attorneys and a paralegal. The core staff work from a Sioux Falls office, and one attorney is stationed in Rapid City. The Office is interviewing candidates to fill its final attorney position. As of the June 30, 2025, the office was managing 18 appointed cases from the Second Judicial Circuit and Seventh Judicial Circuit. The office will begin accepting statewide appointments on July 1, 2025.

## Statewide Evaluation Conducted of Trial Court Indigent Defense

To assist the Commission on Indigent Legal Services in its work, the Unified Judicial System (UJS) contracted with the Sixth Amendment Center to conduct a nine-month statewide evaluation of indigent defense services in South Dakota trial courts.

The Sixth Amendment Center conducted the evaluation from October 2023 to June 2024. UJS selected seven counties (one county in each judicial circuit) as a representative sample of the state's population size, geographic location and methods of providing indigent defense services. The counties selected were: Beadle, Davison, Fall River, Hughes, Meade, Minnehaha and Roberts.

Issued in September 2024, the Sixth Amendment Center's evaluation report identified several concerns with the current indigent legal services delivery model including funding, processes for advising and appointing counsel as well as attorney oversight, workloads, compensation and training.

One outcome from the report was the creation of a UJS work group tasked with providing guidance to the circuit judges and magistrate judges on determining what constitutes indigency by providing information and best practices on what to consider concerning a person's assets and liabilities, as well as comparing general information related to a person's ability to pay. The UJS work group is also developing a reference document and draft scripts for advising defendants of their rights when they are facing criminal prosecution. This will be complimented by training on best practices to ensure that individuals understand their rights when facing potential criminal penalties.

# Education and Community Engagement

The Unified Judicial System (UJS) works to build public trust and confidence in the courts through transparency, communication, education and community engagement. Every year, UJS staff take part in various outreach efforts such as courthouse school visits, mock trials, civics education and career development.



Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) students from Jefferson High School in Sioux Falls visited the Minnehaha County Courthouse on Feb. 25, 2025. The students observed initial appearances of 76 out-of-custody defendants before Magistrate Judge Jonathan Leddige and a change of plea/sentencing hearing and modification revocation hearing before Judge Douglas P. Barnett. After the hearings, Judge Barnett held a Q&A session with the students.

UJS employees visited with students about the work they do for the state court system at career fair in Huron on April 30, 2025.



Magistrate Judge Kasey Sorensen led a mock trial for third graders in Vermillion, with assistance from the Clay County State's Attorney's Office and Sheriff's Office. The mock trial involved characters from the movie "The Sandlot," with the kids playing the jurors.

# South Dakota Bar Admissions

## South Dakota Adopts NextGen Bar Exam Beginning in July 2027

The South Dakota Supreme Court on Dec. 12, 2024, adopted the NextGen bar exam for those seeking admission to practice law in South Dakota beginning in July 2027. The NextGen bar exam is being developed by the National Conference of Bar Examiners.

NextGen will replace the current bar examination and will test a broad range of foundational lawyering skills, utilizing a focused set of clearly identified fundamental legal concepts and principles needed in today's practice of law. Designed to balance the skills and knowledge needed in litigation and transactional legal practice, the exam will reflect many of the key changes that law schools are making, building on the successes of clinical legal education programs, alternative dispute resolution programs, and legal writing and analysis programs.

Supreme Court  
Chief Justice  
Steven R.  
Jensen swore  
in the newest  
members of  
the South  
Dakota State  
Bar at the  
State Capitol in  
Pierre on Sept.  
27, 2024.



## New Pilot Program Provides Public Service Pathway to Bar Admission

The South Dakota Supreme Court on Feb. 21, 2025, adopted rules implementing a five-year pilot program providing a public service pathway to bar admission. Nine University of South Dakota Knudson School of Law students were selected to take part in the first year of the pilot program.

The initiative creates an alternative route to bar licensure in the state by combining legal education, practical experience, and a public service commitment without requiring the traditional bar exam. Law school students selected for the program must complete a minimum of two years of full-time public service employment upon admission to practice law in the state.

The host public service entities will offer a variety of experiences and opportunities for program participants to demonstrate competence in the law. Attorneys with the host entities will supervise, mentor and assist each participant.

Program participants will be required to submit a portfolio of work product during the program. The Board of Bar Examiners will evaluate the work product and perform a character and fitness review of each participant before making a recommendation regarding a participant's admission to practice as an attorney in South Dakota.

The pilot program is administered through the cooperation of the USD Knudson School of Law and the South Dakota Board of Bar Examiners. The program is open to students at the USD Knudson School of Law and limited to a maximum of 10 students that meet specific criteria in each law school class.



# Rural Attorney Recruitment Program

The Rural Attorney Recruitment Program provides qualifying attorneys an incentive payment in return for five continuous years of practice in an eligible rural county (population of 10,000 or less) or municipality (population of 3,500 or less). Attorneys must enter into a contract with the UJS, State Bar, and the eligible county or municipality. Program participants receive five annual incentive payments of \$12,513.60 per year (equivalent to 90% of one year's resident law school tuition and fees)—a total of \$62,568 over five years. The program was established in 2013.

**36** Attorneys have participated in the program.

**11** Actively Practicing in Rural Communities

**1** Contracted to Begin Practicing in Rural Community Upon Licensing

**19** Graduates from the Program

**6** Contracts Terminated Due to Different Job Opportunities

**14** Graduates have stayed in their communities.



UJS Staff Attorney Carrie Srstka speaks about the Rural Attorney Recruitment Program with students at the USD Knudson School of Law in Vermillion on Oct. 1, 2024.



# Circuit Courts

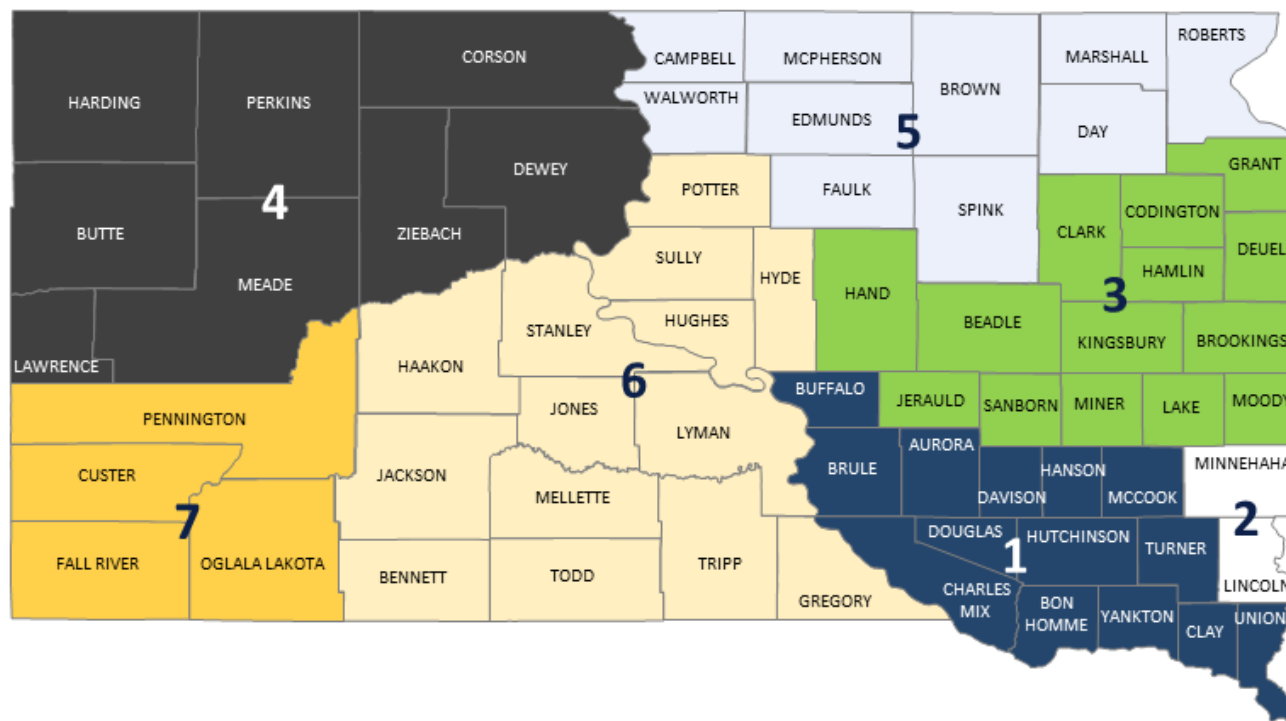
Circuit courts are the state's trial courts of general jurisdiction through which the bulk of criminal proceedings and civil litigation are processed. South Dakota has seven judicial circuits, 46 circuit judges and 17 magistrate judges. Circuit court judges are elected by the voters within the circuit where they serve. The judges must be voting residents of their circuit at the time they take office. In the event of a vacancy, the Governor appoints a replacement from a list of nominees selected by the Judicial Qualifications Commission.

**7** Presiding Judges | **46** Circuit Court Judges | **7** Circuits

## South Dakota Judicial Circuits

### CIRCUIT COURT DUTIES

- Original jurisdiction in all civil and criminal actions.
- Exclusive jurisdiction in felony trials, arraignments and all types of civil actions except areas of concurrent jurisdiction shared with magistrate courts.
- Appellate jurisdiction over magistrate court decisions.
- Appellate jurisdiction over final decisions, rulings or actions of administrative agencies.



# Miles Traveled by Circuit Court Judges

South Dakota is an expansive state at 77,116 square miles. As they conduct the Court's business, circuit court judges must travel to the counties that they serve. South Dakota circuit court judges traveled a total of **174,906 miles** in FY2025. To put this into perspective, this is **seven times around the world**.

<b>41,779</b>	First Circuit	<b>16,673</b>	Fifth Circuit
<b>12,833</b>	Second Circuit	<b>38,248</b>	Sixth Circuit
<b>37,949</b>	Third Circuit	<b>8,118</b>	Seventh Circuit
<b>19,306</b>	Fourth Circuit	<b>174,906</b>	<b>STATEWIDE TOTAL</b>

# Judicial Circuits | Presiding Judges and FY2025 Caseloads



## FOURTH CIRCUIT

**Judge Michael W. Day**

Criminal Filings: 11,185

Civil Filings: 4,622

Population: 84,181



## FIFTH CIRCUIT

**Judge Gregory C. Magera**

Criminal Filings: 12,295

Civil Filings: 4,656

Population: 79,423



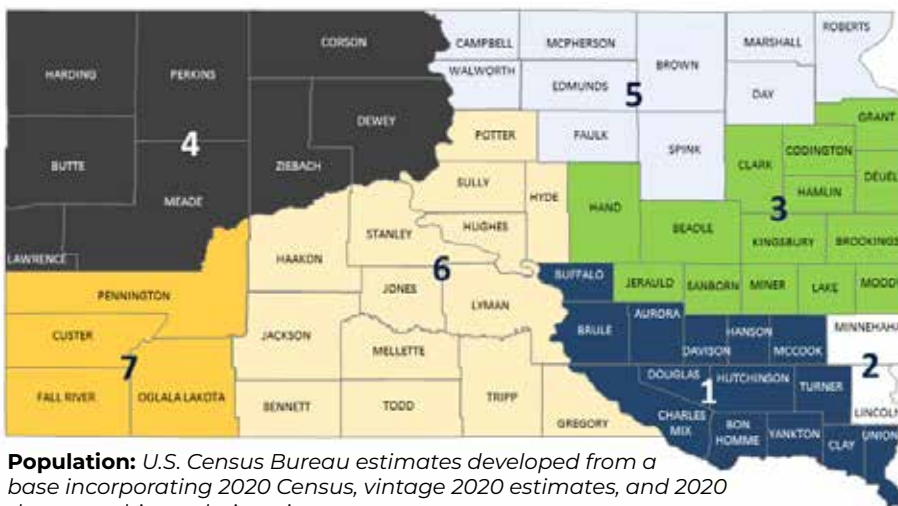
## THIRD CIRCUIT

**Judge Patrick T. Pardy**

Criminal Filings: 19,192

Civil Filings: 9,143

Population: 137,784



**Population:** U.S. Census Bureau estimates developed from a base incorporating 2020 Census, vintage 2020 estimates, and 2020 demographic analysis estimates.



## SECOND CIRCUIT

**Judge Robin J. Houwman**

Criminal Filings: 47,808

Civil Filings: 24,243

Population: 274,958



## SEVENTH CIRCUIT

**Judge Robert Gusinsky**

Criminal Filings: 21,042

Civil Filings: 9,213

Population: 144,356



## SIXTH CIRCUIT

**Judge Christina L. Klinger**

Criminal Filings: 8,059

Civil Filings: 2,764

Population: 58,982



## FIRST CIRCUIT

**Judge Cheryle Gering**

Criminal Filings: 19,929

Civil Filings: 8,438

Population: 130,140

# Magistrate Courts

Magistrate courts assist the circuit courts in disposing of misdemeanor criminal cases and minor civil actions. These courts have limited jurisdiction but make the judicial system more accessible to the public by providing a means of direct court contact for the average citizen. The jurisdiction of the magistrate court varies depending on whether a magistrate judge or a clerk magistrate presides. Clerk magistrates are not attorneys but are clerks who receive specialized training. They provide functions that need to be handled expeditiously. Both magistrate judges and clerk magistrates are appointed by the presiding judge and approved by the Supreme Court.

**17** Full-Time Magistrate Judges | **7** Circuits

## MAGISTRATE JUDGES

Committing magistrates for all courts

Magistrate judges conduct:

- Preliminary hearings for all criminal prosecutions
- Trials of criminal misdemeanors
- Trials of civil actions if the debt, damage, claim or value of the property does not exceed \$12,000
- Small claims proceedings if the debt, damage, claim or value of the property involved does not exceed \$12,000

## CLERK MAGISTRATES

Specially trained

Concurrent jurisdiction with magistrate courts to:

- Receive depositions
- Issue warrants
- Conduct certain preliminary hearings
- Set bail
- Appoint counsel
- Accept pleas for Class 2 misdemeanors
- Conduct hearings for petty offenses
- Render judgments for uncontested small claims
- Perform marriages





# Bench Personnel by Judicial Circuit (as of June 30, 2025)

## FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

**Presiding Judge: Cheryle W. Gering** *(appointed 2011)*

**Circuit Judges:**

Bruce V. Anderson *(appointed 2006)*  
 Tami A. Bern *(appointed 2017)*  
 Chris S. Giles *(appointed 2017)*  
 David D. Knoff *(appointed 2018)*  
 Patrick T. Smith *(appointed 2012)*

**Magistrate Judges:**

Donna L. Bucher                      Kasey J. Sorensen

## SECOND JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

**Presiding Judge: Robin Jacobson Houwman** *(appointed 2009)*

**Circuit Judges:**

Douglas P. Barnett *(elected 2023)*  
 Jeffrey C. Clapper *(appointed 2024)*  
 Natalie D. Damgaard *(appointed 2016)*  
 Sandra Hanson Hogle *(appointed 2018)*  
 Douglas E. Hoffman *(appointed 2007)*  
 Eric C. Johnson *(appointed 2024)*  
 Jennifer D. Mammenga *(appointed 2021)*  
 Mandi A. Mowery *(appointed 2024)*  
 John R. Pekas *(elected 2015)*  
 James A. Power *(appointed 2018)*  
 Rachel R. Rasmussen *(appointed 2019)*  
 Susan M. Sabers *(appointed 2013)*  
 Jon C. Sogn *(appointed 2015)*

**Magistrate Judges:**

Jonathan R. Leddige                      Andrew T. Robertson  
 Alison D. Nelson                      Wade W. Warntjes  
 Sara T. Pokela

## THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

**Presiding Judge: Patrick T. Pardy** *(appointed 2015)*

**Circuit Judges:**

Dawn M Aman-Elshere *(appointed 2017)*  
 Abigail A. Howard *(appointed 2024)*  
 Carmen A. Means *(appointed 2015)*  
 Kent A. Shelton *(appointed 2018)*  
 David K. Wheeler *(appointed 2025)*

**Magistrate Judges:**

N. Bob Pesall                      Gary W. Schumacher

## FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

**Presiding Judge: Michael W. Day** *(appointed 2013)*

**Circuit Judges:**

Michelle K. Comer *(elected 2015)*  
 John H. Fitzgerald *(elected 2023)*  
 Eric J. Strawn *(appointed 2017)*

**Magistrate Judges:**

Chad R. Callahan                      Francly E Foral

## FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

**Presiding Judge: Gregory C. Magera** *(appointed 2021)*

**Circuit Judges:**

Julia Dvorak *(appointed 2024)*  
 Marshall C. Lovrien *(elected 2023)*  
 Richard A. Sommers *(appointed 2014)*

**Magistrate Judge:**

Cullen P. McNeece

## SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

**Presiding Judge: Christina L. Klinger** *(appointed 2019)*

**Circuit Judges:**

M. Bridget Mayer *(appointed 2019)*  
 Margo D. Northrup *(appointed 2019)*  
 Bobbi J. Rank *(appointed 2016)*

**Magistrate Judge:**

Tara L. Adamski

## SEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

**Presiding Judge: Robert Gusinsky** *(appointed 2013)*

**Circuit Judges:**

Matthew M. Brown *(appointed 2015)*  
 Jeffrey R. Connolly *(appointed 2017)*  
 Joshua K. Hendrickson *(appointed 2019)*  
 Eric Kelderman *(appointed 2024)*  
 Heidi L. Linngren *(elected 2015)*  
 Scott A. Roetzel *(appointed 2024)*  
 Stacy L. Vinberg-Wickre *(appointed 2021)*

**Magistrate Judges:**

Scott M. Bogue                      Sarah E. Morrison  
 Todd J. Hyronimus                      Janki W. Sharma

# Statewide Case Workload: FY2025 by Circuit

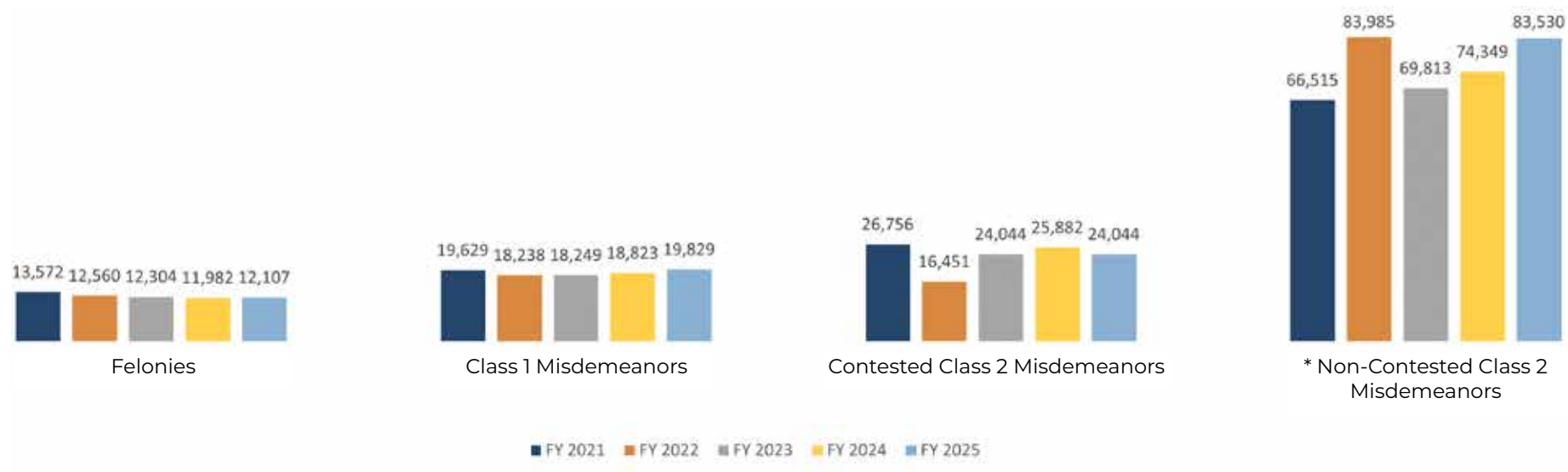
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Seventh	Statewide
Class 2 Misdemeanor Non-Contested Filings	14,085	23,680	13,049	7,157	8,504	6,052	11,003	83,530
Class 2 Misdemeanor Contested Filings	1,939	12,898	2,097	1,086	1,068	620	4,336	24,044
Class 1 Misdemeanor Filings	2,504	6,346	2,794	1,955	1,681	873	3,676	19,829
Felony Filings	1,401	4,884	1,252	987	1,042	514	2,027	12,107
<b>Total Criminal Filings</b>	<b>19,929</b>	<b>47,808</b>	<b>19,192</b>	<b>11,185</b>	<b>12,295</b>	<b>8,059</b>	<b>21,042</b>	<b>139,510</b>
Divorce & Annulment Filings	324	824	303	239	174	112	467	2,443
Protection Order Filings	402	1,414	506	299	182	157	998	3,958
Modification Proceedings/UIFSA Filings	114	334	108	62	104	45	362	1,129
Juvenile Dependency & Neglect Filings	44	231	31	19	36	26	144	531
Juvenile Delinquency & CHINS Filings	264	1,452	381	164	243	121	484	3,109
Juvenile Citations	78	240	187	94	74	95	46	814
Adoptions & Termination of Parental Rights	40	135	55	39	35	23	103	430
Guardianships & Trusts	107	423	105	52	72	40	137	936
Miscellaneous	7	12	10	2	0	3	18	52
Probate (Informal) Filings	334	416	352	183	268	160	367	2,080
Probate (Formal) Filings	40	39	33	40	35	17	62	266
Mental Illness/Drug & Alcohol Commitment Filings	1,019	2,976	288	83	232	78	125	4,801
Civil Filings	2,258	7,407	2,350	1,275	1,292	777	2,434	17,793
Small Claims Filings	2,465	6,828	3,541	1,221	1,291	810	2,716	18,872
Search Warrants	928	1,475	873	841	601	286	737	5,741
Administrative Appeals & Expungements	14	37	20	9	17	14	13	124
<b>Total Civil Filings</b>	<b>8,438</b>	<b>24,243</b>	<b>9,143</b>	<b>4,622</b>	<b>4,656</b>	<b>2,764</b>	<b>9,213</b>	<b>63,079</b>
<b>Total Criminal and Civil Filings</b>	<b>28,367</b>	<b>72,051</b>	<b>28,335</b>	<b>15,807</b>	<b>16,951</b>	<b>10,823</b>	<b>30,255</b>	<b>202,589</b>

# Statewide Case Workload: Comparison by Year

	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025
Class 2 Misdemeanor Non-Contested Filings	66,515	83,958	69,813	74,349	83,530
Class 2 Misdemeanor Contested Filings	26,756	16,451	24,044	25,882	24,044
Class 1 Misdemeanor Filings	19,629	18,238	18,249	18,823	19,829
Felony Filings	13,572	12,560	12,304	11,982	12,107
<b>Total Criminal Filings</b>	<b>126,472</b>	<b>131,207</b>	<b>124,410</b>	<b>131,036</b>	<b>139,510</b>
Divorce & Annulment Filings	4,056	3,729	2,542	2,638	2,443
Protection Order Filings	4,072	4,205	3,987	4,018	3,958
Modification Proceedings/UIFSA Filings	5,365	4,432	1,076	1,153	1,129
Juvenile Dependency & Neglect Filings	602	525	532	541	531
Juvenile Delinquency & CHINS Filings	3,756	3,213	3,487	3,538	3,109
Juvenile Citations	1,183	1,088	1,157	995	814
Adoptions/Guardianships/Trusts/Termination Parental Rights	1,420	1,337	1,337		
Adoptions & Termination of Parental Rights				409	430
Guardianships & Trusts				881	936
Miscellaneous				35	52
Probate (Informal) Filings	2,333	2,439	2,247	2,029	2,080
Probate (Formal) Filings	246	313	272	234	266
Mental Illness/Drug & Alcohol Commitment Filings	4,759	4,373	4,570	4,496	4,801
Civil Filings	13,021	11,786	11,888	13,820	17,793
Small Claims Filings	25,938	20,425	18,244	18,409	18,872
Search Warrants	4,646	5,108	5,325	5,828	5,741
Administrative Appeals & Expungements	216	199	167	121	124
<b>Total Civil Filings</b>	<b>71,613</b>	<b>63,172</b>	<b>56,831</b>	<b>59,145</b>	<b>63,079</b>
<b>Total Criminal and Civil Filings</b>	<b>198,085</b>	<b>194,379</b>	<b>181,241</b>	<b>190,181</b>	<b>202,589</b>

# Criminal Caseload Five-Year Comparison

## Criminal Caseload

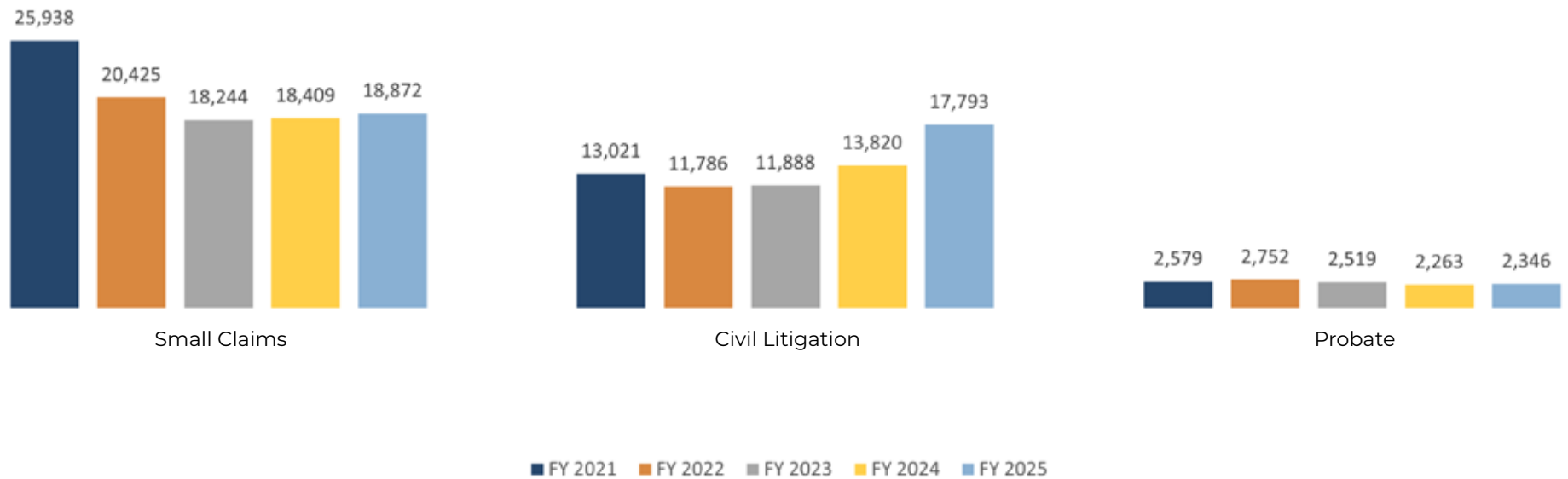


*\* Includes municipal ordinances and petty offenses.*



# Civil Caseload Five-Year Comparison

## Civil Caseload



# Court and Jury Trials

**FY2025**

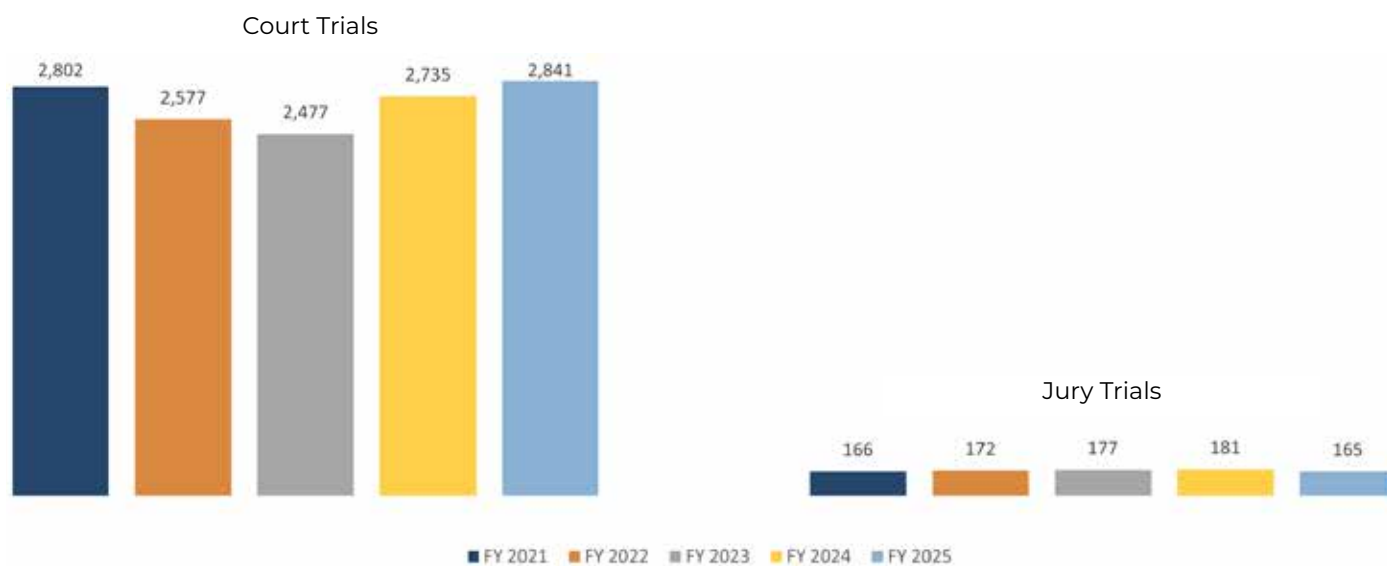
	<b>Court Trials</b>	<b>Jury Trials</b>	<b>Total Trials</b>
First Circuit	186	14	200
Second Circuit	1,578	64	1,642
Third Circuit	290	11	301
Fourth Circuit	171	9	180
Fifth Circuit	162	13	175
Sixth Circuit	86	10	96
Seventh Circuit	368	44	412
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>2,841</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>3,006</b>

	<b>Criminal</b>	<b>Civil</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Court Trials</b>	464	2,377	2,841
<b>Jury Trials</b>	124	41	165

# Court and Jury Trials

## Statewide Five-Year Comparison

	Court Trials	Jury Trials	Total Trials
FY2021	2,802	166	2,968
FY2022	2,577	172	2,749
FY2023	2,477	177	2,654
FY2024	2,735	181	2,916
FY2025	2,841	165	3,006

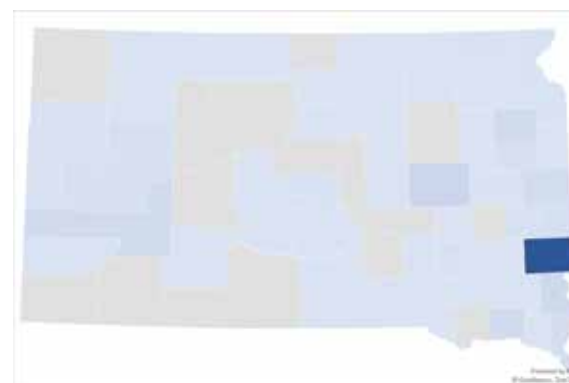


# Language Access in the Courts

If someone has limited English proficiency, interpretive and translation services are provided at no charge. In FY2025, interpreters were used in the courtroom 6,728 times. Sixty-four percent of the requests came from Minnehaha County in the Second Judicial Circuit.

While there has been a steady increase in the number of interpreters each year, part of this increase can be attributed to enhanced data collecting measures implemented by the UJS in FY2024.

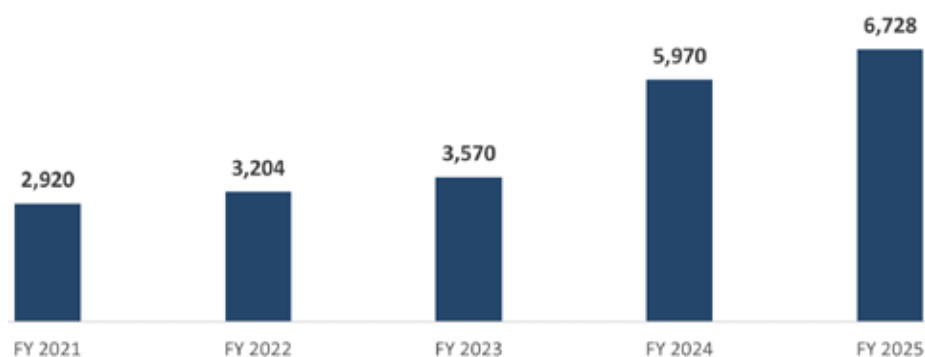
More than 51 different spoken languages were requested in FY2025. Spanish remains the most requested language.



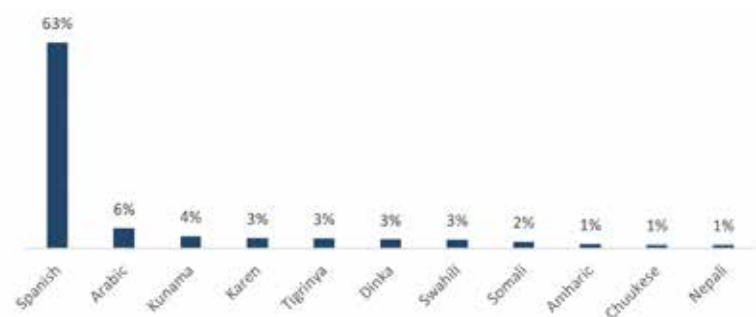
**64%**  
of interpreter  
requests  
came from  
Minnehaha  
County.

**6,728** Interpreter Requests in FY2025 | More Than **51** Different Spoken Languages Requested

Interpreter Requests



Top 10 Languages Requested  
FY2025





# State Court Administrator's Office

Under supervision of the Chief Justice, who is the administrative head of the Unified Judicial System, State Court Administrator Greg Sattizahn is the non-judicial officer who implements the rules and policies of the Supreme Court as they apply to the operations and administration of the courts.



The State Court Administrator serves as the liaison between the judicial branch and the other branches of state and local government.

To ensure efficient and responsive operation, the State Court Administrator's Office (SCAO) provides centralized administrative assistance and support services to the entire UJS. The office also provides support to various committees in the UJS, media information and legislative direction during session.



## Budget and Finance Division

The Budget and Finance Division assists the Unified Judicial System with fiscal questions and budgets. The Division manages travel regulations and processes travel reimbursements for employees. The Division also assists clerk of courts staff with end-of-month processing and financial questions.



## Clerk Support Division

The Clerk Support Division provides statewide oversight, direction and training to clerk of courts staff. The Division reviews legislative changes impacting clerks of courts and develops necessary procedure changes accordingly. Staff process record searches for large group entities such as landlords and assist merge and search centers. Staff also maintain and update the clerk of courts procedural manual and forms.



## Court Services Division

The Court Services Division provides statewide oversight, direction and training to court services staff. The Division interprets legislative changes impacting court services and creates and interprets statewide probation services-related policies and protocols. Staff maintain and update the court services manual, provide guidance and direction on interstate compact issues for both adult and juvenile programs, and provide guidance on diversion programs.

# State Court Administrator's Office



## Human Resources Division

The Human Resources Division oversees human resources for the Unified Judicial System. The Division's roles include:

- Answering paycheck and benefit questions.
- Staff training and development.
- Assisting the circuit courts and the State Court Administrator's Office with security and emergency preparedness.
- Assisting applicants in the recruitment process.
- Maintaining and implementing UJS personnel rules, policies and procedures.
- Assisting UJS employees and supervisors with employment law issues.
- Managing employee compensation and classification structure.
- Assisting with worker's compensation claims.



## Information & Technology Division

The Information and Technology Division oversees IT training and the Unified Judicial System Help Desk, network services and development. The Division purchases, manages and supports computer hardware, software, security, data retention and networking needs. Staff also manage security and disaster standards for UJS systems.

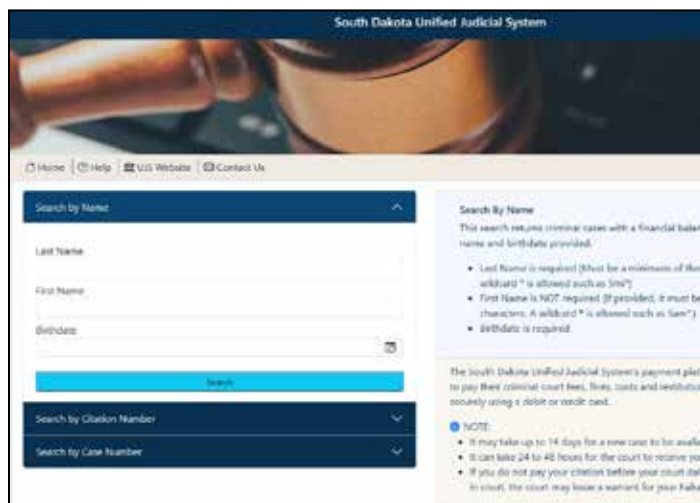


## Treatment Courts Division

The Treatment Courts Division is responsible for overseeing treatment courts statewide to include monitoring, oversight, training and data collection in compliance with Adult Treatment Court Best Practice Standards. Staff create partnerships and provide representation with outside agencies on the treatment courts team. The Division identifies and coordinates training and technical assistance needs for all treatment courts team members. Staff also compile and interpret statewide data and statistics.

# UJS ePay Website

## New Website to Pay Court Fees, Fines, Costs



<https://UJSepay.sd.gov>

The Unified Judicial System (UJS) launched a new ePay website on Aug. 20, 2024, for people to pay their court fees, fines, costs and restitution online.

UJS designed the new payment website to provide a more user-friendly interface, making it easier and faster for individuals to locate their court cases and make a payment. The new payment portal allows users to search for criminal and traffic cases with outstanding financial balances by simply entering their last name and date of birth. One of the key features of this system is the ability to perform wildcard searches, where users can input just a portion of their last name (a minimum of three characters). This is especially useful in situations where the exact spelling of a last name is uncertain, such as with hyphenated or double last names.

With the previous payment system, people had to know either their ticket citation number or court case number to find their balance due and make an online payment. The new payment site will continue to allow people to search by citation or case number if they so choose.

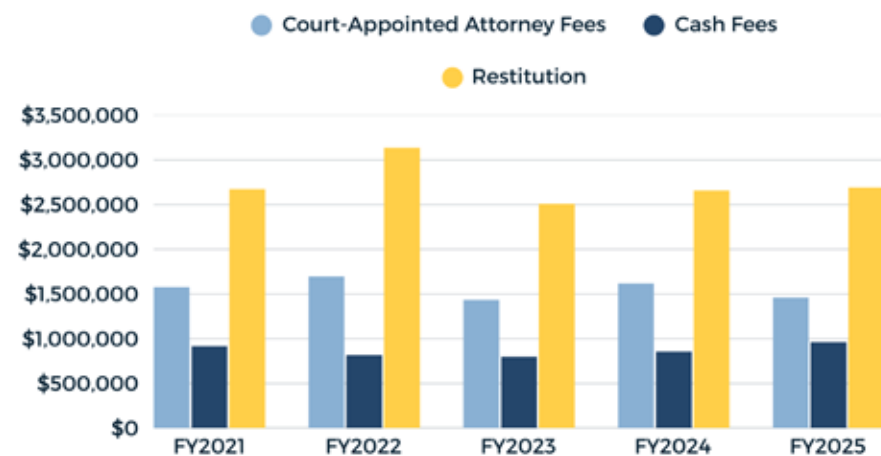
Search results will display a person's case number, county where the case was filed, balance due, file date, and financial due date or payment plan if the person is on a payment plan. The system will show if a person can make a payment online, if they need to contact the Clerk of Courts office, or if there is an active warrant on the case. The system will allow people to make a minimum payment of \$25 (unless the balance owed is less than \$25), the full amount due, or any amount between the \$25 minimum and full balance.

New court cases may not be available for online payments for up to 14 days. Also, it can take 24 to 48 hours for the court to receive a payment after it is submitted online.

# Unified Judicial System Receipts

Clerk of courts offices take in fines, fees, penalties and costs owed to victims, cities, counties, school districts and the state. For definitions of receipt categories, see the Appendix.

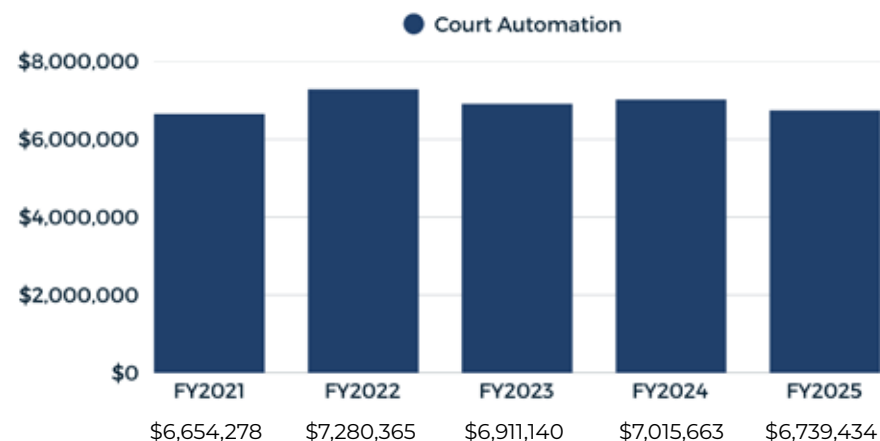
## Court-Appointed Attorney Fees, Cash Fees and Restitution Receipts



Court-Appointed Attorney Fees	\$1,577,627	\$1,697,950	\$1,434,452	\$1,619,880	\$1,460,650
Cash Fees	\$918,260	\$818,207	\$799,101	\$855,384	\$962,644
Restitution	\$2,673,607	\$3,135,535	\$2,508,538	\$2,657,808	\$2,689,922

Court automation is a surcharge assessed on all criminal prosecutions and civil actions to fund court automation costs.

## Court Automation Receipts





# Unified Judicial System Disbursements

## State Disbursements

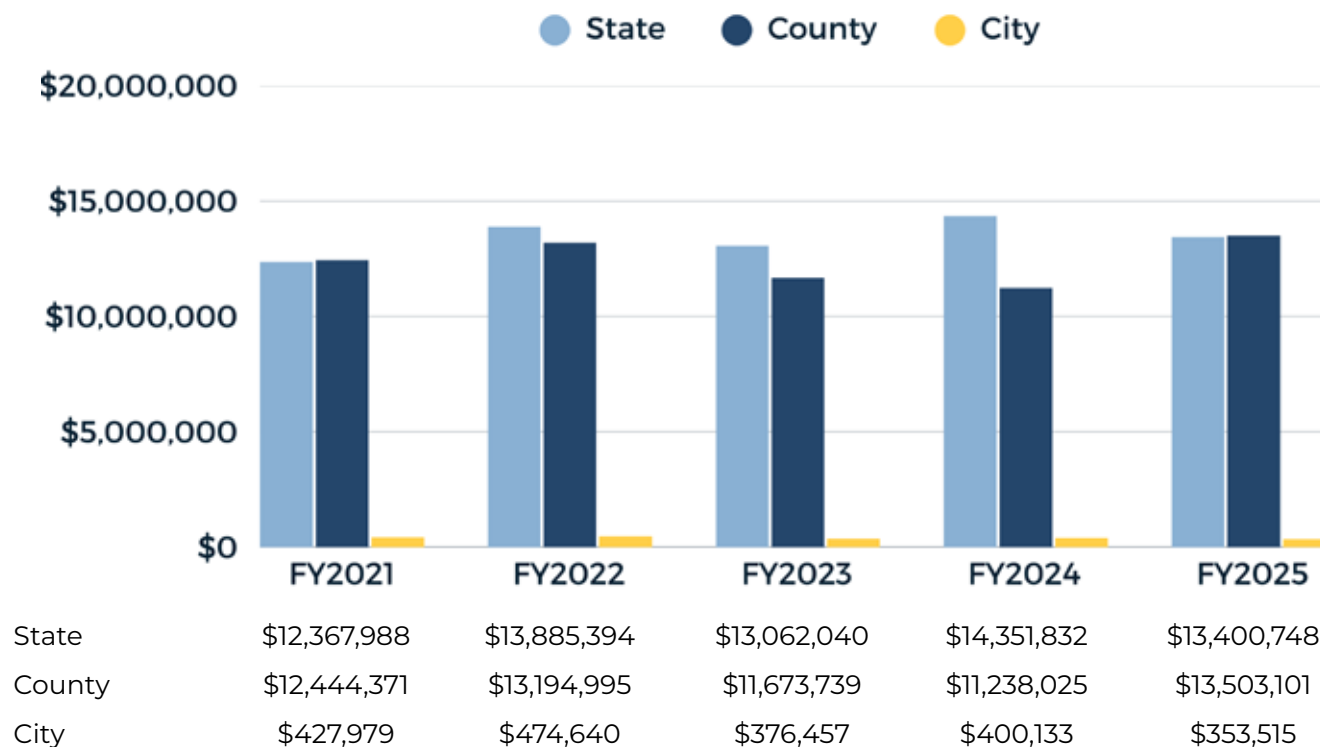
Disbursements to the state include liquidated costs and 35% of city fines.

## County Disbursements

Disbursements to counties include state fines—including funds returned to school districts in accordance with Article VIII, § 3 of the South Dakota Constitution—costs, forfeitures and various fees for civil filings.

## City Disbursements

Disbursements to cities are primarily city fines collected by the court system. The amount remitted to the cities is 65% of the total city fines, forfeitures and penalties and 100% of city costs. The remaining 35% is remitted to the state general fund.



# Probation Services

**120** Court Services Officers | **696** Juvenile Cases Under Supervision | **6,911** Adult Cases Under Supervision

\* Numbers as of June 30, 2025

## Standard Probation Supervision Costs (Personal, Operating, Community-Based Services)

### Total Cases Under Supervision: 7,607

#### FY2025 Expenditures (actual)

Personal Services:	\$15,499,169
Operating Services:	\$599,383
Community-Based Services:	\$436,399
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$16,534,951</b>

Cost of Court Services Officer per Hour: \$66.24

- **247 Juvenile Social Histories** (11 hours each):  
\$728.64 per social history = \$179,974.08 total
- **2,673 Adult Felony Pre-Sentence Investigations** (11 hours each):  
\$728.64 per investigation = \$1,947,654.72 total
- **24 Misdemeanor Pre-Sentence Investigations** (3 hours each):  
\$198.72 per investigation = \$4,769.28 total

**Total Cost of Prepared Reports: \$2,132,398**

**FY2025 Cost for Supervision: \$14,402,553**

## Standard Probation Supervision Average Daily Cost

JUVENILE	
Intensive Probation	\$26.49
High Supervision Probationer (2.89 hours per month)	\$8.83
Medium Supervision Probationer (2.45 hours per month)	\$7.49
Low Supervision Probationer (.91 hours per month)	\$2.78
Administrative Supervision Probationer (.32 hours per month)	\$.97
Informal Diversion Case (.36 hours per month)	\$1.10
Case Service Monitoring Case (.23 hours per month)	\$.70
ADULT	
Intensive Probation	\$21.10
High Supervision Probationer (1.81 hours per month)	\$5.53
Medium Supervision Probationer (1.27 hours per month)	\$3.88
Low Supervision Probationer (.60 hours per month)	\$1.83
Administrative Supervision Probationer (.08 hours per month)	\$.24
Case Service Monitoring Case (.08 hours per month)	\$.24
<b>AVERAGE DAILY COST SUPERVISION ALL CATEGORIES</b>	<b>\$6.24</b>

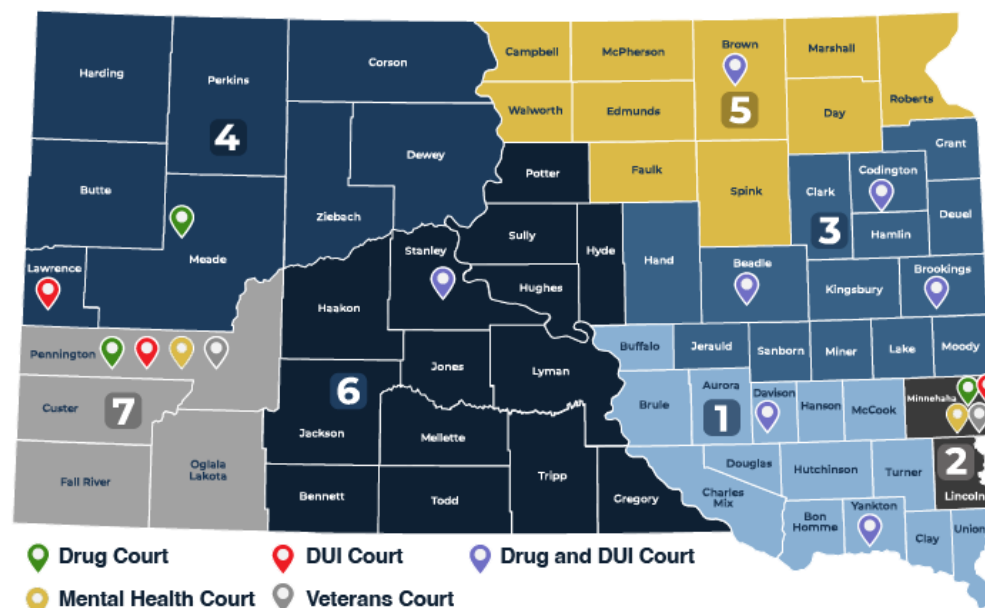
# Treatment Courts

## Changing Lives, Improving Communities

Treatment courts provide an innovative approach to rehabilitating those substantially impacted by a substance use disorder or mental health disorder who are likely to continue to commit crimes without intervention. These courts have proven that a combination of supervision, treatment and support can lead people with substance use and/or mental health disorders into lives of stability, wellness and recovery.

This is a public health approach to justice reform in which treatment providers partner with probation, defense, prosecution, law enforcement and the judge to ensure individuals before the courts receive personalized and evidence-based treatment, ongoing support and recovery services.

Treatment courts include drug court, DUI court, veterans court and mental health court. There are 17 treatment courts operating in South Dakota.



Numbers from inception of treatment courts in South Dakota through June 30, 2025.

\* Recidivism measured at three years post graduation and includes convictions.

# Treatment Courts

## New Collaboration Brings Narcan, Street Medicine, Peer Support Services to Treatment Courts

In a move to strengthen recovery outcomes and save lives, an initiative has been launched to embed street medicine services, harm reduction supplies and peer support into the fabric of South Dakota's treatment court system. This collaboration marks a critical shift toward meeting treatment court participants where they are—both medically and emotionally.

The program now includes the routine implementation of Narcan (naloxone), a life-saving medication that rapidly reverses opioid overdoses, as well as access to addiction medications, harm reduction tools, and on-the-street medical care provided by compassionate providers who understand the complexities of recovery.

“Our treatment court participants face incredible challenges,” said Dr. Melissa Dittberner, executive director of Midwest Street Medicine and a faculty member at the University of South Dakota (USD) in Vermillion. “We are better when we work together—bridging health care, harm reduction and justice systems to meet people exactly where they are and support them with dignity. This partnership allows us to walk alongside individuals throughout their recovery journey.”

The new project is part of a \$2 million Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant secured by USD's Department of Addiction Counseling & Prevention. The goal is to expand substance use disorder treatment and recovery support for Second Circuit Drug Court participants.



Midwest Street Medicine volunteers performing street medicine services rounds on May 8, 2025, in Sioux Falls.

The initiative has significantly increased access to medical services, expanded availability of peer specialists, and ensures participants are connected to essential resources during one of the most vulnerable phases of their lives. This innovative model not only reduces barriers to care but also strengthens public safety, improves participant outcomes, and aligns with national best practices for diversion and support-based justice.



# Appendix

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## Judicial Qualifications Commission: Complaints Received and Dispositions

	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025
Written Complaints Received <sup>1</sup>	12	22	18	38	38
Complaints Disposed of <sup>2</sup>	10	15	18	37	31
<b>Type of Cases</b>					
Prisoner Complaints (includes Habeas Corpus)	0	1	0	1	1
Divorce/Child Custody/Child Support Issues	5	5	4	5	5
Protection Order Cases	0	1	3	4	8
Civil Trial Issues (includes decisions)	0	5	1	12	2
Criminal Trial Issues (includes sentencing)	5	3	8	15	16
Personal Conduct	0	3	0	0	0
Small Claims	2	2	1	0	2
Guardianship/Conservatorship	0	0	1	0	2
Other	0	2	0	1	2
<b>Nature of Claims in Complaints</b>					
Inappropriate Conduct/Abuse of Position	2	7	4	4	4
On Bench Abuse of Authority	1	4	1	9	4
Lack of Demeanor/Decorum	0	1	0	1	0
Bias/Appearance of Bias	2	5	5	10	18
Unhappy with Result	7	5	8	14	12
<b>Commission Dispositions</b>					
1. Dismissal due to:					
a. Insufficient Evidence to Proceed (unsigned complaint and/or complainant uncooperative)	0	2	1	0	0
b. Lack of Jurisdiction <sup>3</sup>	0	0	0	0	0
c. Resigned Due to JQC Investigation	0	0	0	0	0
d. Unsubstantiated	0	0	0	0	0
e. No Violation Found	9	15	17	37	30

## Judicial Qualifications Commission: Complaints Received and Dispositions

	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025
2. Private Reprimand	1	0	0	0	0
3. Deferred Disciplinary Agreement	0	0	0	0	1
4. Public Censure	0	0	0	0	0
5. Recommendation for Suspension	0	0	0	0	0
6. Recommendation for Removal/Retirement	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Judicial Qualifications Commission Applicants</b>					
Judicial Vacancies	4	1	0	4	6
Applicant Interviews	27	0	0	33	52

<sup>1</sup>Written Complaints Received, Type of Cases and Nature of Claims in Complaints reflect complaints received in that fiscal year.

<sup>2</sup>Complaints Disposed of and Commission Dispositions reflect some complaints received in that fiscal year but not disposed of until the following fiscal year and some complaints that were both received and disposed of in this fiscal year.

<sup>3</sup>JQC does not have the authority to direct a judge to take legal action or to review a case for judicial error, mistake or other legal grounds. Those functions are for the State Supreme Court. Therefore, allegations stemming from a judge's ruling or exercise of discretion do not provide a basis (jurisdiction) for JQC action.

## Receipt Category Definitions

**Adult Compact Fees:** A fee of \$50 charged to all South Dakota supervised felony and applicable misdemeanor cases/clients who request a transfer of their probation supervision to another state.

**Alimony Payments:** An allowance for support made under court order to a legally separated or divorced person by the former provider. Monies received are receipted and disbursed to the person as provided by the court order.

**Cash Fees:** Fees charged for filing various civil actions. This money is paid into the county general fund.

**Child Support:** Payments ordered by the court from one party in a divorce action to the other party as financial support for the children involved. Child support payments are processed through the South Dakota Department of Social Services.

**Civil Pass Through:** Payments ordered by the court from one party to be paid to the court for the benefit of another or a third party in a civil action.

**Child Support Modification Fees:** A \$50 fee for any petition or motion to modify a child support order. This fee is deposited into the "equal access to our courts" fund to be awarded as grant funds to legal services entities.

**City/County Fines/Penalties:** Fines/penalties collected for city/county ordinance violations. City/county fines/penalties are paid into the city/county general fund (65%) and state general fund (35%) for services provided by the Unified Judicial System.

**City/County Costs:** Costs levied in conjunction with city/county fines as reimbursement to the city/county for an identifiable amount spent by the city/county in prosecuting a case. These funds are paid into the city/county general fund.

**City/County Forfeitures:** Forfeitures of bail bonds posted for violations of city/county ordinances. These funds are paid into the city/county general fund (65%) and state general fund (35%).

**Collection Agency Pass Through:** Payments received from a party that is passed through the courts to the Obligation Recovery Center.

**Court-Appointed Attorney Fees:** Costs recovered from defendants to reimburse the county general fund for payment of the defendant's court-appointed attorney. The money is paid to the county treasury.

**Digital Forensic Fund:** A fee not to exceed \$95 assessed to any defendant convicted of a felony or misdemeanor to reimburse the cost of any digital forensic examination performed on any personal electronic device designed for and capable of wireless communication or electronic data retrieval, including a cellular telephone, tablet, laptop, computer, or two-way messaging device). Fees collected are deposited in the Internet Crimes Investigation Fund.

**Divorce Fees:** A fee of \$95 charged for filing a divorce action. Half of the fee is deposited in the county domestic abuse program fund and the remaining half in the county general fund.

**Domestic Abuse Surcharge:** A fee of \$25 assessed to any defendant convicted of a crime involving domestic violence or domestic abuse. Costs are remitted to the county to deposit into the county domestic violence program fund.

**Draw Down Accounts:** Deposit accounts created by law firms, businesses and other individuals to pay for filing fees, small claims fees, postage, record searches and other miscellaneous charges.

**Drug Control Fee:** Fees paid to the Attorney General to be deposited in the Drug Control Fund for the purpose of assisting local law enforcement agencies in drug control and drug offender apprehension efforts.

**Drug Testing and Monitoring Fees:** Fees charged to probationers to cover the cost of drug testing or monitoring while on probation.

**DUI Costs (32-12-48):** If a defendant is convicted driving under the influence, at the conclusion of the period of revocation ordered by the court and if future proof is filed with the Department of Public Safety



## Receipt Category Definitions

as required by chapter 32-35, the defendant may submit an application for a driver's license, accompanied by a fee of \$75 if revocation of the license was for a conviction under § 32-23-2, \$125 if revocation of the license was for a conviction under § 32-23-3, or \$175 if revocation of the license was for a conviction under § 32-23-4, 32-23-4.6, or 32-23-4.7.

**Interest-Bearing Trust Funds:** Interest-bearing money deposited with a clerk pending a decision regarding ownership.

**Law Library Fee:** A fee of \$2 or \$5 charged in addition to the civil case filing fee and used to support the county law library.

**Liquidated Costs** (23-3-53: Collection by clerk of courts-Transmittal to State Treasurer-Disposition): After a determination by the court of the amount due, the clerk of courts shall collect the amount due and transmit monthly to the State Treasurer. The State Treasurer shall place \$37 of the \$50 fee into the Law Enforcement Officers Training Fund, \$7.50 of the \$50 fee into the Court-Appointed Attorney and Public Defender Payment Fund, \$2 of the \$50 fee into the Court-Appointed Special Advocates Fund, \$2.50 of the \$50 fee into the 911 Telecommunicator Training Fund, and \$1 of the \$50 fee into the Abused and Neglected Child Defense Fund.

**Marriage Fees:** Fees collected for processing marriage license applications. These funds are paid into the state general fund.

**Modification Petitions and Motions Fees** (except Title 28 benefits): A fee of \$50 for child support modification filings. These funds are paid into the state general fund.

**NSF Check Charges:** A fee of \$40 charged to a person who issues to the state or a political subdivision a check or other draft that is not honored by the person's bank.

**Other-Overpayments:** Collections that do not fit any of the foregoing categories.

**Passport Fees** (16-2-27.1. Fees collected for processing U.S. passport applications): These funds are paid into the state general fund.

**Petty Offense Judgment:** A judgment of \$25 assessed for minor state violations designated as petty offenses. The money is deposited in the county treasury.

**Postage-Small Claims:** Postage fees charged for processing small claims actions.

**Posted Bonds:** Bonds are posted in conjunction with a criminal case. This money is either forfeited, used to pay subsequent fines and costs, or returned to the defendant or depositor. Undertakings are posted in civil cases and appeals. Non-interest trusts are posted until the legal owner is determined or located. Court appointed attorney fees are posted as pre-payment for future CAAF costs incurred.

**Restitution:** Money which the court collects from a defendant to reimburse the victim for monetary loss caused by the crime. The money is paid to the victim.

**State Costs:** Money which the court collects from a defendant to reimburse the victim for monetary loss caused by the crime. The money is paid to the victim.

**State Fines/Penalties:** Fines/penalties collected for violation of state laws. These fines and penalties are paid to the county treasury for eventual transfer to the school district of the county in which the violation occurred.

**State Forfeitures:** Forfeitures of bonds posted for violations of state law. This money is paid into the county general fund.

**Surcharge-Court Automation Fund** (16-2-39): A fee on all criminal prosecutions and civil actions to fund court automation costs. The following is the court automation fee schedule (updated June 30, 2015):

- **Civil Actions, Probate Proceedings or Other Judicial Proceedings:** \$40
- **Small Claims:**
  - amount in controversy is less than \$4,000: \$6
  - amount in controversy \$4,000 to \$12,00: \$8
- **Felony Criminal Cases:** \$61.50
- **Class 1 Misdemeanors:** \$41.50
- **Class 2 Misdemeanors (violation of state law):** \$23.50
- **Violations of County or Municipal Ordinances:** \$17.50
- **Violations of Administrative Rules with Criminal Penalties:** \$17.50
- **Appeals, Original Actions or Other Actions Filed with Supreme Court:** \$50

## Receipt Category Definitions

**Electronic Filing Fees:** A fee of \$1 per page (\$10 minimum) for incoming fax filings. A fee of \$1 per page (\$5 minimum) for outgoing electronic transmission of any opinion, record or paper from an active or inactive file in the clerk's custody.

**Record Searches** (16-2-29.5): A fee of \$20 for each name search of court records if the search is requested by a person who is not a party named in a state or federal action. \$15 of the \$20 fee goes to the court automation fund, and \$5 goes to the law enforcement officers training fund. A fee of \$5 for each name search of court records if the search is being conducted in conjunction with a state or federal court action and the person making the records search request so certifies.

**Web Judgment Searches:** A fee of \$4 for each name or date search for civil judgments and \$1 per judgment card.

**Non-Resident Attorney Admissions:** A \$100 portion of the \$200 admission fee is paid to the Supreme Court, and the remaining \$100 is paid to the State Bar.

**Surcharge-Victims Compensation Fund:** A fee of \$5 assessed in any criminal action for a violation of state law or county or municipal ordinance, in addition to any other liquidated cost, penalty, assessment, surcharge or fine provided by law; it shall be levied a crime victims compensation surcharge on each Class 2 misdemeanor, Class 1 misdemeanor or felony conviction.

*\* Most receipts collected according to SDCL 16-2-29, unless otherwise noted.*

## Statewide: Cash Receipts and Disbursements

RECEIPTS	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025
Adult Compact Fees	\$18,273	\$16,250	\$13,805	\$16,470	\$17,588
Alimony	\$12	\$774	\$0	\$1,074	\$0
Cash Fees	\$918,260	\$818,207	\$799,101	\$855,384	\$962,644
Child Support	\$20,471	\$7,720	\$17,900	\$35,411	\$22,550
City Costs	\$6,285	\$7,489	\$9,575	\$8,649	\$9,380
City Fines	\$651,165	\$618,808	\$561,307	\$559,189	\$537,973
City Forfeitures	\$0	\$408	\$0	\$49	\$98
City Penalties	\$3,241	\$2,341	\$1,205	\$3,700	\$3,487
Civil Pass Through	\$1,916	\$3,695	\$86,025	\$186,364	\$5,204
Civil Penalties	\$5,673	\$4,212	\$2,655	\$1,855	\$4,800
Collections Agency Pass Through	\$19,964	\$18,638	\$12,890	\$14,278	\$11,357
County Costs	\$624,329	\$659,103	\$2,316	\$1,173	\$69
County Fines	\$6,702	\$9,190	\$6,273	\$10,107	\$7,399
County Forfeitures	\$2,450	\$500	\$0	\$1,500	\$19,850
County Penalties	\$571	\$1,158	\$3,125	\$208	\$779
Court-Appointed Attorney Fees *	\$1,577,627	\$1,697,950	\$1,434,452	\$1,619,880	\$1,460,650
Court Costs	\$0	\$0	\$594,078	\$647,234	\$749,637
Digital Forensic Fund					\$285
Divorce Fees	\$122,800	\$117,600	\$115,770	\$121,300	\$108,331
Domestic Abuse Surcharge	\$16,600	\$15,873	\$18,781	\$16,856	\$17,010
Drawdown Accounts	\$6,340,119	\$7,400,086	\$6,744,383	\$6,736,025	\$6,157,312
Drug Control Fee	\$103,183	\$96,162	\$79,341	\$91,633	\$85,795
Drug Test Fees and Monitoring Fees	\$5,593	\$10,952	\$8,309	\$11,698	\$10,853
DUI Cost	\$185,603	\$205,232	\$192,575	\$204,579	\$211,315
Interest-Bearing Trust Funds	\$552	\$37,385	\$352	\$127,325	\$243,798
Law Library Fees	\$135,310	\$122,983	\$132,329	\$132,522	\$184,654
Liquidated Costs	\$4,115,047	\$4,413,186	\$4,023,239	\$4,419,008	\$4,718,502
Marriage Fees	\$6,940	\$8,760	\$8,770	\$8,740	\$11,100
Child Support Modification Fees	\$107,126	\$102,725	\$98,064	\$104,290	\$102,505
NSF Check Charges	\$2,510	\$2,143	\$1,745	\$2,739	\$2,123
Other - Overpayments	\$33,610	\$38,093	\$19,975	\$25,341	\$50,462
Passport Fees	\$9,415	\$14,175	\$19,225	\$7,105	\$0
Petty Offense	\$249,302	\$340,450	\$296,406	\$296,825	\$300,386
Postage (Small Claims)	\$239,615	\$198,890	\$207,478	\$211,205	\$242,638
Posted Bonds	\$12,545,786	\$12,443,134	\$14,478,176	\$12,510,787	\$13,343,103

## Statewide: Cash Receipts and Disbursements

RECEIPTS	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025
Restitution	\$2,673,607	\$3,135,535	\$2,508,538	\$2,657,808	\$2,689,922
Search Fee - Law Enforcement Officer Training Fund	\$1,194,775	\$1,383,315	\$1,331,613	\$1,266,163	\$1,077,593
Sioux Falls Police Department Drug Fee	\$23,192	\$22,585	\$18,579	\$20,591	\$17,781
State Costs	\$84,902	\$77,257	\$99,169	\$52,231	\$42,358
State Fines	\$7,289,914	\$7,633,263	\$6,886,185	\$7,550,181	\$8,092,480
State Forfeitures	\$358,755	\$540,612	\$459,372	\$524,008	\$290,468
State Penalties	\$1,014,578	\$918,748	\$640,252	\$878,362	\$947,928
Surcharge - Court Automation	\$6,654,278	\$7,280,365	\$6,911,140	\$7,015,663	\$6,739,434
Surcharge - Victims Compensation	\$415,087	\$435,464	\$394,936	\$434,769	\$464,374
Trust Fund	\$721,057	\$25,475	\$2,433,425	\$383,585	\$38,959
<b>STATEWIDE TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>\$48,506,195</b>	<b>\$50,886,888</b>	<b>\$51,672,833</b>	<b>\$49,773,862</b>	<b>\$50,004,933</b>
DISBURSEMENTS	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025
Alimony	\$12	\$762	\$12	\$1,074	\$0
Bond Refunds (Converted Bonds, Odyssey)	\$7,733,397	\$7,137,457	\$11,819,978	\$9,876,807	\$10,452,456
Child Support	\$20,471	\$7,720	\$17,900	\$35,411	\$21,550
Civil Pass Through	\$2,559	\$3,695	\$86,025	\$186,364	\$4,026
Collection Agency Pass Through	\$22,589	\$17,624	\$14,072	\$11,912	\$12,567
Drawdown Accounts	\$6,273,708	\$7,329,095	\$6,716,554	\$6,617,839	\$6,020,120
Interest-Bearing Trust Funds	\$1,039,407	\$37,383	\$0	\$0	\$127,278
Overpayments	\$36,461	\$34,723	\$16,673	\$26,354	\$47,687
Remitted to Sioux Falls Police Department	\$22,478	\$23,126	\$18,633	\$20,378	\$18,647
Remitted to Attorney General (Drug Fund)	\$105,643	\$97,425	\$77,447	\$64,644	\$90,922
Remitted to City	\$427,979	\$474,640	\$376,457	\$400,133	\$353,515
Remitted to County	\$12,444,371	\$13,194,995	\$11,673,739	\$11,238,025	\$13,503,101
Remitted to State	\$12,367,988	\$13,885,394	\$13,062,040	\$14,351,832	\$13,400,748
Restitution	\$2,557,526	\$3,047,879	\$2,595,642	\$3,275,439	\$2,659,139
Small Claims Postage	\$240,673	\$201,998	\$190,344	\$482,222	\$240,470
Trust Fund	\$609,665	\$65,652	\$64,073	\$384,253	\$114,449
<b>TOTAL DISBURSED</b>	<b>\$43,904,926</b>	<b>\$45,559,568</b>	<b>\$46,729,588</b>	<b>\$46,972,686</b>	<b>\$47,066,676</b>

\* Court-appointed attorney fees include only those amounts collected by UJS and do not include payments made directly to county auditors or treasurers, city collection agents, or sums recovered by counties pursuant to a statutory lien.



## Court-Appointed Attorney Cases: Misdemeanor 1 and Felony Dispositions

First Circuit Counties	Appointment Cases
Aurora	25
Bon Homme	91
Brule	182
Buffalo	1
Charles Mix	394
Clay	217
Davison	681
Douglas	16
Hanson	48
Hutchinson	37
McCook	100
Turner	63
Union	363
Yankton	865
<b>First Circuit Total</b>	<b>3,083</b>

Second Circuit Counties	Appointment Cases
Lincoln	1,509
Minnehaha	8,846
<b>Second Circuit Total</b>	<b>10,355</b>

Third Circuit Counties	Appointment Cases
Beadle	247
Brookings	524
Clark	33
Codington	1,167
Deuel	26
Grant	69
Hamlin	49
Hand	31
Jerauld	5
Kingsbury	31
Lake	169
Miner	9
Moody	175
Sanborn	18
<b>Third Circuit Total</b>	<b>2,553</b>

Fourth Circuit Counties	Appointment Cases
Butte	287
Corson	44
Dewey	20
Harding	5
Lawrence	771
Meade	785
Perkins	28
Ziebach	6
<b>Fourth Circuit Total</b>	<b>1,946</b>

\* Appointments include public defender cases. Data for misdemeanor 1 and felony dispositions is by disposition date.

## Court-Appointed Attorney Cases: Misdemeanor 1 and Felony Dispositions

Fifth Circuit Counties	Appointment Cases
Brown	1,046
Campbell	10
Day	78
Edmunds	29
Faulk	10
Marshall	21
McPherson	7
Roberts	615
Spink	78
Walworth	196
<b>Fifth Circuit Total</b>	<b>2,012</b>

Sixth Circuit Counties	Appointment Cases
Bennett	155
Gregory	31
Haakon	14
Hughes	557
Hyde	3
Jackson	57
Jones	24
Lyman	69
Mellette	49
Potter	14
Stanley	89
Sully	4
Todd	3
Tripp	120
<b>Sixth Circuit Total</b>	<b>1,189</b>

Seventh Circuit Counties	Appointment Cases
Custer	89
Fall River	235
Oglala Lakota	5
Pennington	5,208
<b>Seventh Circuit Total</b>	<b>5,537</b>
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>26,675</b>

\* Appointments include public defender cases. Data for misdemeanor 1 and felony dispositions is by disposition date.

## Court-Appointed Attorney Cases: **Abuse and Neglect Cases**

First Circuit Counties	Total Abuse and Neglect Cases Filed	Number of Children Involved in Cases Filed	Number of Attorneys Involved in Court-Appointed and Public Defender Cases
Aurora	0	0	0
Bon Homme	0	0	0
Brule	1	1	3
Buffalo	0	0	0
Charles Mix	10	17	30
Clay	7	9	18
Davison	7	14	16
Douglas	2	8	7
Hanson	0	0	0
Hutchinson	0	0	0
McCook	1	2	0
Turner	3	6	8
Union	5	9	10
Yankton	8	10	19
<b>First Circuit Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>111</b>

Second Circuit Counties	Total Abuse and Neglect Cases Filed	Number of Children Involved in Cases Filed	Number of Attorneys Involved in Court-Appointed and Public Defender Cases
Lincoln	18	36	47
Minnehaha	213	388	329
<b>Second Circuit Total</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>376</b>

## Court-Appointed Attorney Cases: **Abuse and Neglect Cases**

Third Circuit Counties	Total Abuse and Neglect Cases Filed	Number of Children Involved in Cases Filed	Number of Attorneys Involved in Court-Appointed and Public Defender Cases
Beadle	1	2	3
Brookings	5	12	25
Clark	1	5	2
Codington	16	38	34
Deuel	0	0	0
Grant	1	4	0
Hamlin	4	7	8
Hand	0	0	0
Jerauld	0	0	0
Kingsbury	1	2	3
Lake	2	2	7
Miner	0	0	0
Moody	0	0	0
Sanborn	0	0	0
<b>Third Circuit Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>82</b>

Fourth Circuit Counties	Total Abuse and Neglect Cases Filed	Number of Children Involved in Cases Filed	Number of Attorneys Involved in Court-Appointed and Public Defender Cases
Butte	2	3	6
Corson	0	0	0
Dewey	0	0	0
Harding	0	0	0
Lawrence	5	5	6
Meade	12	20	25
Perkins	0	0	0
Ziebach	0	0	0
<b>Fourth Circuit Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>37</b>

## Court-Appointed Attorney Cases: **Abuse and Neglect Cases**

Fifth Circuit Counties	Total Abuse and Neglect Cases Filed	Number of Children Involved in Cases Filed	Number of Attorneys Involved in Court-Appointed and Public Defender Cases
Brown	23	36	53
Campbell	0	0	0
Day	0	0	0
Edmunds	0	0	0
Faulk	0	0	0
Marshall	0	0	0
McPherson	0	0	0
Roberts	2	2	2
Spink	1	1	2
Walworth	10	17	28
<b>Fifth Circuit Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>85</b>

Sixth Circuit Counties	Total Abuse and Neglect Cases Filed	Number of Children Involved in Cases Filed	Number of Attorneys Involved in Court-Appointed and Public Defender Cases
Bennett	1	1	2
Gregory	0	0	0
Haakon	0	0	0
Hughes	17	38	54
Hyde	0	0	0
Jackson	1	1	2
Jones	0	0	0
Lyman	0	0	0
Mellette	0	0	0
Potter	1	3	3
Stanley	3	4	2
Sully	0	0	0
Todd	0	0	0
Tripp	3	5	9
<b>Sixth Circuit Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>72</b>



## Court-Appointed Attorney Cases: **Abuse and Neglect Cases**

Seventh Circuit Counties	Total Abuse and Neglect Cases Filed	Number of Children Involved in Cases Filed	Number of Attorneys Involved in Court-Appointed and Public Defender Cases
Custer	1	3	4
Fall River	5	14	18
Oglala Lakota	0	0	0
Pennington	138	229	319
<b>Seventh Circuit Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>341</b>
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>954</b>	<b>1,104</b>

*\* Data for abuse and neglect cases is by file date.*

## Court-Appointed Attorney Cases: **Juvenile Delinquency and CHINS Cases**

First Circuit Counties	Total Juvenile Cases	Court-Appointment and Public Defender Juvenile Cases
Aurora	3	0
Bon Homme	2	0
Brule	13	2
Buffalo	9	1
Charles Mix	54	34
Clay	21	11
Davison	47	29
Douglas	0	0
Hanson	2	2
Hutchinson	16	3
McCook	11	3
Turner	4	4
Union	22	8
Yankton	61	28
<b>First Circuit Total</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>125</b>

Second Circuit Counties	Total Juvenile Cases	Court-Appointment and Public Defender Juvenile Cases
Lincoln	213	78
Minnehaha	1,239	645
<b>Second Circuit Total</b>	<b>1,452</b>	<b>723</b>

## Court-Appointed Attorney Cases: **Juvenile Delinquency and CHINS Cases**

Third Circuit Counties	Total Juvenile Cases	Court-Appointment and Public Defender Juvenile Cases
Beadle	74	34
Brookings	52	22
Clark	1	0
Codington	190	84
Deuel	5	2
Grant	7	1
Hamlin	6	2
Hand	4	3
Jerauld	0	0
Kingsbury	6	0
Lake	8	4
Miner	1	0
Moody	20	3
Sanborn	7	2
<b>Third Circuit Total</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>157</b>

Fourth Circuit Counties	Total Juvenile Cases	Court-Appointment and Public Defender Juvenile Cases
Butte	58	30
Corson	0	0
Dewey	5	2
Harding	0	0
Lawrence	41	23
Meade	57	27
Perkins	3	1
Ziebach	0	0
<b>Fourth Circuit Total</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>83</b>

## Court-Appointed Attorney Cases: **Juvenile Delinquency and CHINS Cases**

<b>Fifth Circuit Counties</b>	<b>Total Juvenile Cases</b>	<b>Court-Appointment and Public Defender Juvenile Cases</b>
Brown	120	53
Campbell	0	0
Day	6	3
Edmunds	3	0
Faulk	0	0
Marshall	4	0
McPherson	1	0
Roberts	84	41
Spink	12	8
Walworth	15	5
<b>Fifth Circuit Total</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>110</b>

<b>Sixth Circuit Counties</b>	<b>Total Juvenile Cases</b>	<b>Court-Appointment and Public Defender Juvenile Cases</b>
Bennett	13	7
Gregory	8	3
Haakon	0	0
Hughes	70	49
Hyde	1	1
Jackson	2	2
Jones	0	0
Lyman	12	5
Mellette	9	1
Potter	5	1
Stanley	1	1
Sully	0	0
Todd	0	0
Tripp	14	11
<b>Sixth Circuit Total</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>81</b>

## Court-Appointed Attorney Cases: **Juvenile Delinquency and CHINS Cases**

Seventh Circuit Counties	Total Juvenile Cases	Court-Appointment and Public Defender Juvenile Cases
Custer	1	0
Fall River	24	6
Oglala Lakota	0	0
Pennington	459	312
<b>Seventh Circuit Total</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>318</b>
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>3,126</b>	<b>1,597</b>

*\* Data for juvenile cases is by file date.*



## Court Services Activities

	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025
<b>JUVENILE SERVICES</b>					
Pre-hearing Social Case Studies	223	199	342	255	247
Informal Diversion Services Added	287	330	265	205	163
Placed on Probation During Fiscal Year	1,039	1,054	1,219	1,309	1,121
Active Probation Cases at End of Fiscal Year	572	600	772	822	644
<b>CASE SERVICES MONITORING</b>					
Placed in Program During Fiscal Year	66	73	175	193	196
Active Cases at End of Fiscal Year	18	48	95	51	80
Interstate Compact Cases-In	8	17	7	13	25
Interstate Compact Cases-Out	22	16	18	17	10
<b>INTENSIVE PROBATION</b>					
Placed In Program During Fiscal Year	73	78	84	80	80
Transferred In	0	0	0	0	0
Transferred Out	0	0	0	0	0
JIPP Unavailable	1	10	0	1	2
Successfully Completed Program	53	31	29	43	48
Failed Program and sent to DOC	20	15	27	17	16
Failed Program (Other)	22	19	18	24	30
Active Cases at End of Fiscal Year	59	63	73	68	52
<b>ADULT SERVICES: MISDEMEANOR</b>					
Pre-Sentence Investigation Reports	20	18	18	33	24
Placed on Probation During Fiscal Year	154	170	157	229	164
On Probation at End of Fiscal Year	311	299	287	297	202
<b>ADULT SERVICES: FELONY</b>					
Pre-Sentence Investigation Reports	3,101	3,001	2,980	2,902	2,673
Placed on Probation During Fiscal Year	3,055	3,363	3,499	3,477	3,404
On Probation at End of Fiscal Year	5,819	6,034	6,304	6,031	5,805
<b>CASE SERVICES MONITORING PROGRAM (Felony &amp; Misdemeanor)</b>					
Placed in Program During Fiscal Year	55	4	18	48	47
Active Cases at End of Fiscal Year	148	84	106	128	123
<b>ADULT INTERSTATE COMPACT CASELOAD (Felony &amp; Misdemeanor)</b>					
Total Placed on Probation - In & Out	223	253	232	213	258
On Probation at End of Fiscal Year	932	913	839	771	904



State Fiscal Year 2025  
**SOUTH DAKOTA UNIFIED JUDICIAL SYSTEM ANNUAL REPORT**

**Compiled by the**  
State Court Administrator's Office  
500 E. Capitol Ave.  
Pierre, SD 57501-5070  
<https://ujs.sd.gov>

The South Dakota Unified Judicial System FY2025 Annual Report is only available online.  
Questions or comments regarding this report should be directed to the State Court Administrator's Office at 605-773-3474.