

# SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

Bernalillo County

State of New Mexico



## FY 22 Budget Request

### HIGHLIGHTS

- \* SJDC had 39,772 new and reopened cases filed in FY 2020.
- \* The Self Help Center provided services to 12,123 self-represented litigants during FY20: 10,131 via in-person services, 1,748 via telephonic assistance and 244 via email assistance.
- \* The Foreclosure Settlement Program, recognized as an exemplary program by the State Bar of New Mexico, successfully resolved 78% of its cases, helping avoid foreclosures.
- \* The Elderly and Disability Initiative staff increased oversight of guardianship/conservatorship cases, provided robust training for guardians and conservators, performed audits and investigations, and ten-year reviews.
- \* Court interpreters assisted in 2,481 active cases, 193 of those required interpreters who spoke a language other than Spanish.

### GENERAL FUND REQUEST \$26,788,700

The Court is requesting a restoration of \$962.4 in the FY22 base budget in General Fund to support the Judiciary's priorities. This represents an increase of 3.7% from the final FY21 Operating Budget. The Court has imposed a 7.8% vacancy rate to the base request.

#### NEW JUDGE MANDATE \$578.0

During the 2020 Legislative Session, the SJDC received two new Judgeships and was appropriated \$578.0. During the June Special Session, all recurring funding for the judgeships was removed. As the Court is required by statute to fill these Judgeships, the Court is seeking \$578.0 as an increase to the base budget to secure funding for these positions.

#### FORECLOSURE SETTLEMENT PROGRAM \$300.0

The SJDC's Foreclosure Settlement Program helps homeowners negotiate the most favorable terms possible for resolving a foreclosure. After receiving \$300.0 during the 2020 Regular Session, the June Special Session all but eliminated this appropriation. The need for this program is immense. The Court is predicting a surge of foreclosure cases as the stays on evictions and foreclosures during the COVID-19 Pandemic are lifted.

#### INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT \$58.4

Although originally appropriated \$163.1 for the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), the Court is requesting \$58.4 for this program.

#### WIP \$26.0

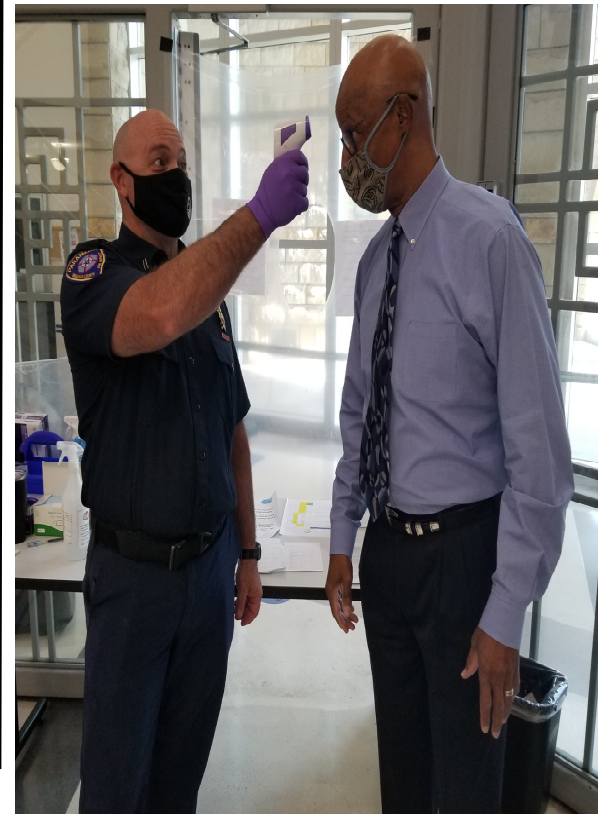
The Court is requesting \$26.0 for the ongoing Judicial WIP step increases.

### FY21 SUPPLEMENTAL REQUEST \$344,000

The Administrative Office of the Courts received a FY21 Special Appropriation of \$500.0 to help support the expenses of the 5 Judgeships that the Judiciary received. The SJDC received \$234.0 from this appropriation. The Court is seeking \$344.0 as a FY21 Supplemental to address the unfunded expenses of the two new Judgeships the Court received.

### FY22 SPECIAL APPROPRIATION

**IT REFRESH \$399,100** The Court is requesting funds to purchase hardware & software to replace and refresh aging desktop,



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## COVID-19 Pandemic Safety Measures

Following reports of the first identified COVID case in New Mexico on March 11, 2020, the Second Judicial District Court promptly established an Emergency Response Team to insure the Court's operations would continue by developing a tiered continuity of operations plan. Among the many achievements and associated costs are:

- \* Mandatory screening of visitors to courthouses and denying access to people displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or who have traveled to a COVID-19 high-risk area.
- \* Providing for enhanced cleaning procedures in the Bernalillo County Courthouse and the John Brown Juvenile Justice Center.
- \* Establishing remote access accounts to support workforce offsite.
- \* Developing processes and standard operating procedures for conducting virtual hearings.
- \* Allowing self-represented litigants to submit case filings to local courts by email and fax.
- \* Permitting attorneys to email or fax pleadings in case types that previously were not eligible for electronic filings.
- \* Resuming Civil, Criminal and Children's Court Trials in mid-July 2020.
- \* Developing an infrastructure to support COVID-safe in-person jury trials. In total, nine courtrooms— seven at the downtown courthouse and two at the Juvenile Justice Center—have been wired for this new trial format. This includes the purchasing of new electronic equipment for trial support under COVID conditions, the creation of innovative applications to allow attorney/client and attorney/attorney communications while observing social distancing, and the installation of plexiglass throughout.
- \* Developing new protocols for selecting and seating juries that accommodated social distancing.
- \* Creating a chat application that allows for confidential bench conferences as well as enables attorneys to have confidential conversations via written messages.
- \* Collaborating with the Bernalillo County Metropolitan Detention Center staff to create a teleconferencing plan that allowed defendants to appear by video.
- \* Partnering with Bernalillo County Fire & Rescue to conduct temperature screenings.
- \* Installing of Electronic Temperature Screening Monitors.
- \* Partnering with Bernalillo County to establish an off-site judicial venue for civil trials.

