

Circuit Court Real Property Records Improvement Fund

Fiscal Year 2025



Administrative Office of the Courts

December 2025

In 1991, the General Assembly enacted legislation creating the Circuit Court Real Property Records Improvement Fund (the Fund) in response to the deteriorating conditions and the state of operations in the land records departments of the Clerk of the Circuit Court offices throughout the State. The legislation established a non-lapsing fund through the assessment of a \$5 surcharge on recordable land records instruments. The Fund's original sunset provision was lifted in 1995 and was subsequently extended on three occasions. In 2003, the surcharge was increased from \$5 to \$20. In 2005, the General Assembly mandated that all General Fund expenditures related to land records operations and support, as well as the salaries of over 256 employees, would no longer be supported by the General Fund but rather would be appropriated from the Fund. The Judiciary and the Land Records Improvement Fund Oversight Committee (LRIFOC), which was created in 1995 to serve an advisory body to the State Court Administrator, have steadfastly argued that the clerks' salaries and operational costs more appropriately should be funded through the General Fund. The LRIFOC comprises one representative each from the Maryland Land Title Association, the Maryland State Bar Association, the Maryland State Archives, the Conference of Circuit Court Clerks, and the Administrative Office of the Courts.

In November 2007, during the Special Session, the General Assembly passed a Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act (HB 1/SB 1, Chapter 2). This Act repealed the sunset provision, made the \$20 surcharge permanent, and expanded the scope of the Fund to include all the Judiciary's major information technology development projects for Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010.

In the 2010 Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act, the General Assembly removed the sunset provision for support of the Judiciary's major information technology projects and made permanent that expenditures for all major information technology projects of the Maryland Judiciary would be paid through the Fund. Moreover, all interest on the Fund's balance was diverted to the General Fund.

In 2011, through a Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act, the General Assembly increased the Fund's surcharge to \$40, effective July 1, 2011. This was done to address a structural deficit and to sustain the Fund through Fiscal 2015 while anticipating a real estate market recovery. In 2015, the General Assembly extended the sunset provision through Fiscal 2020. In 2020, once again through a Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act, the General Assembly made permanent the entire \$40 surcharge, thus removing the sunset.

One of the major information technology projects directly related to improving the efficient processing of land records instruments is the Maryland e-Recording initiative. e-Recording links local and state agencies through a secure web portal, moving documents through county finance offices, clerks' offices, and the Maryland State Archives, and assists the State Department of Assessments and Taxation with updates regarding recorded land instruments.

The overall purpose of the e-Recording initiative was, and continues to be, to reduce processing times; increase productivity in clerks' offices, title companies, and financial institutions; ensure security; and improve the tracking and accuracy of data, all in accordance with local, state, and federal laws. The e-Recording initiative eliminates a significant level of paper processing, travel,

and in-person filings at numerous county and State offices by automating previously time-consuming business processes. The system has improved collaboration among the various stakeholder groups as they work to effectively e-Record documents.

Each of the 24 Circuit Courts and 20 county finance offices have implemented e-Recording. Several towns such as Church Hill, Rock Hall, and two county SDAT offices are scheduled to train on how to use Simplifile then they will join the process. The Allegany Tax office is currently underway. In Fiscal 2025, 70 percent of all recordings in the Land Records departments of the Circuit Courts were electronically recorded. Additionally, an upward trend continues with 14 jurisdictions having more than 60 percent of their documents e-Recorded; 10 of those jurisdictions were over 70 percent. Overall, 20 jurisdictions are e-Recording over 50 percent of their documents. Progress also continues as far as adding document types that can be accepted by the system. Government Instruments are being added upon request and Non-Resident Withholdings are currently being tested.

In addition to funding the Judiciary's major information technology projects and operational costs for land records departments in the circuit courts, the Fund also supports maintenance of mdlandrec.net, which is the public retrieval system for statewide recorded land records. In March 2025, a "paywall" was proposed for mdlandrec.net. The proposal generated concerns from the Judiciary and strong resistance from the real estate industry due to the potential increase in business' operational costs, reduced access to vital public records, and increased in-person courthouse demand for access. The proposal was put on hold pending further review. A new and improved release of mdlandrec.net (version 5) went live in November 2025. A new name and instruction videos are being provided by the Archives.

Also, at the request of the Archives, a project to accept plat documentation in digital form has been started. The work on the project to send a digital reproduction of a PLAT to the Maryland State Archives via an electronic interface continues. A PLAT, in this context, refers to a physical drawing or blueprint depicting a piece of land. This initiative aims to enhance the efficiency of the process, ultimately improving public service by optimizing the handling of land-related documentation. This project aims to implement a process to send digital PLAT documents from the Judiciary's land recording system (ELROI) for stamping and indexing before submission to Maryland Archives. The work on this project was piloted in Prince George's and Carroll counties including involvement with SDAT and Planning and Zoning. Montgomery County is being implemented, as well. The project will expand through other counties as issues are resolved and schedules are developed.

Additionally, a project establish a Real Property Notification mechanism is underway. The primary objective of this proposed system is to establish an alert mechanism that notifies registered members of the public about any unauthorized alterations to their mortgage titles and deeds. By successfully implementing this system, it will mitigate instances of mortgage title fraud while increasing public awareness regarding unauthorized modifications to their valuable property. The goal is to prevent unauthorized changes to land record instruments without the legal owner's approval. A vendor has been selected and the project kickoff meeting will be toward the end of calendar 2025.

During the 2015 session, the General Assembly enacted legislation authorizing the State Court Administrator to assess a surcharge on cases filed in the appellate courts and civil cases filed in the circuit courts. The legislation also authorized the Chief Judge of the District Court to assess a surcharge on civil cases filed in that Court. The surcharges are deposited into the Fund and are used to cover costs related to e-filing hosting services for the statewide case management system, system modifications to enhance electronic filing capabilities, and other expenses specific to the jurisdictional rollout of electronic filing capabilities statewide. The e-filing surcharges generated approximately \$5.2 million in Fiscal 2025, as shown in **Chart 2** of this report. These revenues have averaged \$4.5 million annually over the last five years (Fiscal 2021 – Fiscal 2025).

Active and Future Projects

Below are descriptions of major information technology projects currently established or considered for future years. A chart of projected expenses over the next five years follows the descriptions.

Guardianship System

Currently, management of guardianship cases is primarily a manual process, which potentially allows for inconsistencies and errors. The purpose of the new system is to automate the guardianship management process within the courts. The new system will be a centralized, statewide system for court-appointed guardians and the courts. The system will automate key functions for guardians, allowing guardians to file their reports online and upload supporting documentation. The courts will have the tools necessary to monitor guardianship cases and ensure these cases are being administered properly. The new system is expected to streamline the process, reduce the paperwork burden, and reduce the annual reporting delinquency rates. The system will automate key functions for guardians and court staff, help courts better manage and monitor assets under court guardianship, and allow for statewide data collection and reporting.

Development continues and the team has recurring daily review to refine requirements and plans. The Judicial Information Systems (JIS) development team evaluated and obtained training on a low-code and no-code development platform that will be used for the Guardianship solution. The team did experience a retirement of a key software engineer. Microsoft support is leveraged to mitigate platform knowledge gaps. Integration efforts with the case management system continue. Current state demos of the system have been presented to key stakeholders. Application delivery is expected to be in the fourth quarter of calendar 2025.

SMART System Replacement

The Office of Problem-Solving Courts (OPSC) within the Administrative Office of the Courts is responsible for assisting Maryland's 73 treatment courts in development, maintenance, and advancement of a collaborative therapeutic system. The OPSC is responsible for setting and enforcing programmatic guidelines, creating a statewide management information system, and targeting new and expanding populations for problem-solving courts. To support this purpose, an information system (SMART) was developed many years ago and has reached its end of life. This initiative is to modernize the system to support the Maryland treatment courts and partners. The new AIMS system went live in 2024 to replace the functionality of the old system; however, this project remains active pending definition and development of the interfaces to and from the case management system.

Enterprise Financial/HR System

This project has been scaled back significantly at this time due to the passage of House Bill 709 of 2023. This legislation directs the Comptroller's Office to modernize the state's financial systems, and an assessment of the data exchanges between the Judiciary and the State and the timing of the State's changes needs to be performed. Therefore, an effort to replace the Judiciary's Human Resources and Financial Systems may be premature.

However, the replacement of the Judiciary's Education management system is further along. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was published and evaluated, and demos for the replacement system are being scheduled. This project remains open to support interfaces and interactions between the established systems and the new learning management system once it is selected.

Case Management Optimization

During the Maryland Electronic Courts (MDEC) project implementation, many functional and process requests were suggested which could not be adopted for a variety of reasons. Now that full implementation is complete, these enhancements will be evaluated and prioritized for development and implementation. The purpose is to improve the integration and functional effectiveness of the case management system. Several projects have been identified and initiated to expand functionality and enhance data exchanges with justice partners. Projects include Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) technology, artificial intelligence (AI) tools for redaction and automating workflow processes, and digital evidence technology.

The ODR project will allow litigants to better negotiate disputes outside of court proceedings, freeing up court resources and providing the public with a more transparent and less contentious experience. The first three case types identified for the ODR system are: minor traffic cases with a plea of guilty with an explanation, small claims, and child access cases. The ODR software is anticipated to go live with the pilot use case in December 2025, with additional use cases following in 2026. The pilot use case will allow individuals to make an online plea of guilty with an explanation for a traffic offense, without having to appear in court. The ODR software also incorporates scheduling for all parties involved, including interpreters, and in some uses it will involve the revenue collection system. “Off ramps” to traditional court proceedings must be available if the issue cannot be resolved using ODR.

A redaction platform is available to court users. The redaction platform was programmed to support the redaction of cannabis references due to the expansion of expungement for cannabis actions. A case with cannabis charges may be partially expunged to remove any reference to the cannabis offense while the remaining charges remain public. The redaction tool can locate these references and present them to a clerk for review and redaction. Additionally, the redaction platform is now used for recent legislation which requires the redaction of minor victim names by request. Personally identifiable information (PII) can also be removed. Further use of the software for robotic process automation is in the evaluation phase.

A contract has been signed for a digital evidence tool to help ensure the courts maintain a complete court record that properly protects sensitive information. MDEC does not have the functionality to maintain audio and video files that may be submitted as evidence. This new digital evidence platform will allow for the filing, acceptance, maintenance of custody, and display of electronic evidence. Court personnel are being recruited for an implementation workgroup and the project schedule is being built.

Additionally, a new portal for attorney, case party, and public access to case records is anticipated to go live in January 2026. This will replace a vendor product and allow the Judiciary to better control the options and content of the service.

Case Search Rewrite Version 2.0

Case Search provides electronic access to publicly accessible case information for Maryland’s appellate and trial court case records. Case Search was introduced in 2006 to more efficiently address information requests commonly received by clerks’ offices in the trial court. Secure Case Search was introduced later and provides secure login access to detailed case information, such as case-related comments, and is available only to authorized parties (generally justice

partners), based on what is permissible, pursuant to rules and statutes. Currently, the Case Search system does not provide access to case documents, does not charge a fee for access, and does not provide a facility IT infrastructure for satisfying bulk data requests. Case Search Rewrite Version 2.0 is an initiative to redesign the Case Search platform to provide the ability to provide, and limit as required, access at a more granular level and to provide for greater system flexibility. This initiative addresses the broader issue of remote access to electronic case records, including who has access, the types of information being accessed, and how long electronic records should remain online and available for access. The updated version was deployed in February 2024. No funding is planned for Fiscal 2026 to 2030.

Attorney Information System (AIS) Enhancements

With the release of Phase IV of AIS in July 2019, Maryland attorneys now follow a consolidated compliance cycle that aligns requirements for *pro bono* and IOLTA reporting with the fiscal year assessment payment requirements mandated by the Client Protection Fund of the Bar of Maryland. Multiple initiatives are underway to enhance the user experience for attorneys as well as agency partners. These initiatives include modernizing the login process, implementing a new online payment system, enhancing usability for *pro bono* and IOLTA reporting, and enabling online payments for the Supreme Court of Maryland. Other functionality under consideration includes integrating with MDEC and the proposed upgraded e-Bar system to store and display Bar documents required for the validation of attorney status. No further funding is planned for Fiscal 2026 to 2030.

Court Revenue Assessment (formerly Cashiering Upgrade)

This project was initiated to replace the current Revenue Collection System (RCS), which is reaching its end-of-life; however, it was determined at the start of the project that a comprehensive review of all court revenue systems is necessary. Therefore, the project scope was modified to include a complete court revenue assessment, which includes an evaluation of system requirements and current industry technology. The project incorporates new processes and capabilities and provides the opportunity to develop a more streamlined statewide system. Online payment processing throughout the Judiciary will also be evaluated to support the ever-expanding need for remote courthouse functions. Judiciary-wide interest and involvement helped identify over 400 requirements for the replacement system. An RFP to solicit solutions was published. Evaluations of the proposals and selection of a solution was made during the third quarter of calendar 2023. The project kick-off was in December 2023, go-live began in Anne Arundel County in January 2025, and additional locations will be added through January 2026.

Case Notification

Following a successful text notification pilot in 2019, the Judiciary will extend the capability to send text notifications regarding case hearings. The target audience for the pilot project was defendants in criminal cases originating in the District Court. This initiative examines the expansion to other case types and events, as well as other parties involved in the case. Using lessons learned from the pilot and recognizing the limitations of the application supporting the pilot, the new solution will address the policies, procedures, and processes necessary to facilitate expansion of the initiative and provide support to the same. A cloud-based software-as-a-service platform was selected to support the expansion of the court notification program and all future enhancements more effectively.

Phase II of Case Notification went live in December 2021. Phase II included a “Text Messaging Dashboard” and expanded the criminal defendant registration process for notifications to include District Court and circuit court clerks. The scope of defendants for Phase II was limited to defendants in District and circuit court criminal and incarcerable traffic cases.

The aggregator and shortcode supplier vendor has been replaced with the new vendor, and more than 80 “agencies,” or types of messages, have been configured. These message types include District Court locations, circuit court locations, the Supreme Court, and the Appellate Court. Additional message types include eBar, the Attorney Information System, Judicial Information Systems, the Administrative Office of the Courts, courtroom participants, juries, Zoom meetings, and multiple specialty courts. Criminal case hearing notifications are being sent via the public justice access webservice.

Getting reliable cell phone numbers from the case parties is a challenge, and there are only a small percentage of cell phone numbers currently collected and sometimes they are inaccurate. When a person arrives at a court location, they may opt for a text notification of when they need to be present in the court room.

Data Analytics

This project is to incrementally develop a central repository or data warehouse to capture and consolidate Judiciary data from multiple source databases. The project will deliver a dedicated platform for analysis of large amounts of historical Judiciary data to support business decisions. Data analytics utilizes tools to draw more information from the raw data that is collected. This project will also examine the need for and provision of a mechanism for satisfying judicial records bulk data requests, eliminating the need for individualized data compilations. This project supports the Judiciary’s vision to improve public data dashboards; provide subscription-based access to dashboards and reports, with notifications when updated data is available; provide comprehensive data extracts to the public; develop a centralized data source for public access applications; and ensure simplified public access to historical case information. To tackle the requirements of a data warehouse and improve the current data fulfillment processes, a standardized questionnaire and tracking process has been implemented for Public Information Act (PIA) requests. This serves to clarify a request up front, streamline the processes, and provide improved tracking and fulfillment of the request. This effort also helps to define what public data marts or data sets could be made available for self-service requests, once a data warehouse is operational.

The Judiciary issued an RFP and engaged a consultant with expertise in large data warehouses; data marts; extract, translate, and load (ETL) processes; and retrieval processes. The consultant assisted with defining the data warehouse requirements based on the Judiciary’s vision. The consultancy project kicked off in January 2023 and involved assessing the current technical environment; identifying current and future reporting needs and the processes surrounding these business functions; developing conceptual and logical models for the future data warehouse; identifying requirements for the data warehouse architecture, data reporting and analytics; and identifying access and security considerations and implementation strategies. The consultancy project concluded in calendar 2024.

A pilot data warehouse build phase kicked off in calendar 2024, using existing toolsets available through the Microsoft Azure licensing model. The first two use cases for the data warehouse went live in May 2025. The use cases replaced the existing Data Dashboard on mdcourts.gov, which was

managed by a third-party vendor, with data and visualizations produced in-house. The updated Data Dashboard provides improved visualizations and better explanations of what the data represents. Additionally, a number of subscription-based data sets are now being produced with data from the warehouse.

The next phase of the data warehouse is in progress. This phase will focus on building a consistent data model that will allow for better ad hoc reporting to be done directly by business users rather than technical staff; developing standardized or generic transformations to streamline data processing; replicating key case management system reports to enhance analytical accessibility; developing dashboards to monitor high priority performance metrics; streamlining the data request process for faster and more accurate data extracts; and enabling case flow and reporting of case time standards to support annual performance analysis.

Digital Evidence

Digital evidence includes information on computers, audio files, video recordings, and digital images. Technologies, including law enforcement body-worn cameras and smartphones, are capturing an increasing volume of evidence. The Judiciary evaluated the need to receive, evaluate, and integrate digital evidence into the normal flow of court proceedings. In addition, guidelines, policies, and rules governing the submission of digital evidence and the use of electronic devices in courtrooms will continue to be examined. The Digital Evidence Work Group outlined the various issues the work group was to address. After examining different types of systems, the workgroup concluded that a cloud-based Digital Evidence System is the only viable option. The work group then issued a Request for Information (RFI) through the procurement process. Based on responses to the RFI, the workgroup developed a Request for Proposals in October 2024. Submissions from vendors were received in November 2024, and a contract was signed for a digital evidence tool to help ensure the courts maintain complete records that properly protect sensitive information. Currently, MDEC does not maintain audio and video files that may be submitted as evidence. This new digital evidence platform will allow for the filing, acceptance, maintenance of custody, and display of electronic evidence. An implementation workgroup has been identified and the project schedule is being built.

Enterprise Content / Records Management

Document management systems address how documents are obtained and maintained. Content and records management focuses on near- and long-term storage of documents and other types of information. While case records and processes are addressed as part of the MDEC project, there are many supporting processes that still create, use, and manage paper and information. Support functions such as human resources, finance, and administrative operations, as well as non-case processes in the courthouse, need to be examined for areas of improvement. Implementation of electronic records management system capabilities will help non-case-based processes to improve court operations and facilitate compliance with court rules, statutes, and retention schedules. This project has many facets and will examine and assess the current records management systems and processes across all Judiciary locations; establish a statewide records management strategy; develop relevant policies; and implement key recommendations, including records management software capabilities.

One initiative in this phase is the identification and application of redaction software solutions. The functionality of redaction solutions includes the ability to automatically redact designated keywords and patterns in both structured and unstructured documents, as well as images. An additional function

of the redaction solution is an artificial intelligence/machine learning capability that identifies suggested candidates for redaction and automates the processes to complete the redaction process from court records. This technology effort is further discussed under the heading of “Case Management Optimization.”

Another potential initiative being evaluated is the standardization and possible centralization of court audio recording systems. Currently, each jurisdiction is responsible for providing its own respective court recording system. The evaluation focuses on the effectiveness, efficiency, and financial analysis of a standard system.

Information Security Enhancements

Information security remains a top priority because of multi-level threats to the Judiciary’s information system resources, from the perspective of cybersecurity and data threats. To continue to improve and enhance information security for the Judiciary, several multi-year initiatives are being implemented to help protect the Judiciary’s information systems resources and data.

The Judiciary continues to build upon its relationship with a managed service provider and leverages the managed security services offered. The services implemented to improve the information security posture include End-Point Detection and Response; Firewall Log Reviews; Penetration Tests; Managed Intrusion Detection, Vulnerability Scans, Malicious Domain Blocking, and a 24x7x365 Security Operating Center.

Also, the following initiatives are in progress or under review:

- An added layer of email security is being implemented to proactively identify and eliminate malicious content in emails. This will enhance the protection of the Judiciary’s network infrastructure and further reduce exposure to cyber threats.
- Multifactor authentication techniques will enhance externally facing applications to align with the Judicial Information Systems Information Security Policy.
- A biennial cybersecurity risk assessment of current information security controls and practices will use the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cybersecurity Framework (CSF 2.0) control categories. The objective is to identify strategic opportunities to strengthen the Judiciary’s overall security posture.
- A risk management application will identify, assess, monitor, manage, track and control risks to the organization.
- Expanded log collection and system performance monitoring will enhance advanced threat detection, proactive threat hunting, and incident investigations.

Mobile Information (formerly Mobile Courthouse)

With the implementation of the MDEC project and associated initiatives to implement an electronic court processing environment, newer and more powerful remote computing technologies will continue to be introduced to provide virtual interactions with the Judiciary. These technologies include the introduction of specific, customized applications for a participant to obtain notification of events in a case remotely, access information from related justice agencies and partners specific to an individual’s case or needs, introduce automated risk assessment tools to expedite the processing of minor infractions, and other technologies to increase remote interaction. This initiative is intended to enhance court services, expand remote capabilities, and improve access to justice efforts.

Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) is the next major initiative in this area. ODR is discussed under the heading of “Case Management Optimization.”

In another initiative, the Virtual Courts Platform will consider expansion of the Judiciary’s existing remote hearing capabilities to create tighter integrations with MDEC and simplify the remote hearing process for court staff and the public. The platform will initially focus on traffic cases; however, additional case types may be included as the platform matures.

Network Redesign & Modernization

The network redesign initiative is focused on modernizing the Judiciary’s wide area network (WAN). The initiative has two goals: increase service availability and enhance inbound and outbound network security. The redesign will focus on installing dedicated internet connections at every site. This, in conjunction with the Judiciary’s hybrid cloud initiative, will allow sites to continue operations in the event of a network outage at the Judiciary’s data center. These dedicated internet connections will also enhance wireless offerings at each of the courthouses, allowing for higher bandwidth limits for those with business before the court. The redesign will also further the Judiciary’s path toward a zero-trust security model. Courthouse network attached devices will be positioned closer to the network security perimeter, and direct connections to services will be secured proxy sessions via connection points hosted outside of the Judiciary’s data centers and cloud hosted services.

The new public wireless network was completed in November 2023. A new design is being investigated that would redefine the wide area network. Small projects will be used to modernize portions of the network without having accomplish the goal with a “big bang” approach. The refreshing of network communications equipment throughout the Judiciary in 2025 and 2026 supports this goal.

Infrastructure Modernization

Modern information systems must have a current, reliable infrastructure to deliver the necessary capability and performance to support applications, data, and customers. Investment and periodic, recurring re-investment are necessary to ensure that the performance of end-user applications is adequate, that data is backed up and recoverable, and that modern tools are implemented to manage the enterprise infrastructure. Scheduling of infrastructure improvements is dependent on the component and begins with an analysis to determine any performance gaps. Through this initiative, various components are analyzed and a plan is devised, along with associated expenditures, to enhance or replace identified deficiencies. Infrastructure has many components, including data centers and the necessary equipment to power and cool them; wide area network circuits; network equipment and cable plant servers and their respective operating systems; data storage, servers, and backup mechanisms; and utility software and applications and their related peripherals.

The Judiciary has put in place a converged, integrated infrastructure that allows for the flexible deployment of virtual servers and resources. Highly scalable and redundant backup and recovery solutions have been put in place, which will allow the Judiciary to recover quickly from small outages or large-scale disasters. Technology for modern data center network security has made considerable progress and is being leveraged to ensure the security of Judiciary data. In addition, the Judiciary continues to implement several hybrid cloud solutions for database and image archive

workloads. Efforts are continually underway to identify and implement solutions to enhance disaster recovery and custom application deployment and delivery environments.

Artificial Intelligence

Judicial Information Systems is also exploring the feasibility of using generative AI for enhanced customer service capabilities for internal and external customers. The primary goal of this effort would be to reduce first-level and after-hours calls for support, as well as enhanced usage of information hosted on internal resources that may be difficult to locate. Possible uses would be for human resources information, technical support, and general information on rules, statutes, and MDEC guides. In addition, JIS is considering standardizing the audio recording systems used by courts across the state. This initiative aims to create a unified technical architecture, ensuring consistent support and interoperability with other systems, such as MDEC. This will enhance disaster recovery and continuity of operations, with built-in backup and redundancy measures maintained uniformly statewide.

An additional use of the AI capability may be to automate repeatable tasks, such as processing of returned mail by the District Court Traffic Processing Center.

Chart 1 reflects projected expenditures for Major IT projects currently funded through the Circuit Court Real Property Improvement Fund, as well as future projects planned through Fiscal 2030. According to this plan, total Major IT expenditures over the next five years would be \$94.5 million. As discussed below, revenue constraints may affect the spending plan.

CHART 1 – MAJOR IT EXPENDITURES, Fiscal 2026 – Fiscal 2030

Project Name	FY26 Approp.	FY27 Estimated	FY28 Estimated	FY29 Estimated	FY30 Estimated
Guardianship	750,000	250,000	-	-	-
SMART System Replacement	300,000	200,000	-	-	-
Enterprise Financial/HR System	1,500,000	1,000,000	900,000	-	-
Case Management Optimization	4,170,000	3,820,000	4,820,000	4,820,000	4,820,000
Case Notification	500,000	600,000	600,000	600,000	600,000
Data Analytics	1,000,000	1,400,000	1,400,000	1,400,000	1,400,000
Digital Evidence	1,400,000	1,000,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000
Enterprise Content / Records Management	3,200,000	4,000,000	3,450,000	3,450,000	3,450,000
Information Security Enhancements	1,300,000	1,300,000	1,300,000	1,300,000	1,300,000
Mobile Information	1,500,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000
Network Redesign	1,000,000	1,500,000	2,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Infrastructure Modernization	3,000,000	2,500,000	2,500,000	2,700,000	2,700,000
Artificial Intelligence	-	-	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Total	19,620,000	18,370,000	19,970,000	18,270,000	18,270,000
Grand Total	94,500,000				

Current Fund Conditions

As indicated in **Chart 2**, the Fund’s collections have fluctuated over time, from a low in Fiscal 2011 of \$15.8 million to a high in Fiscal 2021 of \$49.6 million. Since Fiscal 2023, collections have been relatively consistent, averaging \$27.6 million. Fiscal 2025 experienced a 9 percent increase in collections compared to Fiscal 2024.

CHART 2 – CIRCUIT COURT REAL PROPERTY RECORDS IMPROVEMENT FUND COLLECTIONS

Circuit Court Real Property Records Improvement Fund Actual Collections					
Fiscal Year	Surcharge	Copy Fees	Interest	e-File Fee	Total
FY2006	32,291,633	1,961,261	3,088,274	-	\$37,341,169
FY2007	28,049,949	1,132,130	3,804,311	-	\$32,986,390
FY2008	20,944,174	796,303	3,747,098	-	\$25,487,575
FY2009	16,430,433	703,286	2,624,747	-	\$19,758,467
FY2010*	16,033,336	488,862	-	-	\$16,522,199
FY2011	15,350,066	470,461	-	-	\$15,820,528
FY2012**	31,392,458	443,025	-	-	\$31,835,483
FY2013	37,979,669	390,347	-	-	\$38,370,016
FY2014	30,112,239	385,353	-	-	\$30,497,592
FY2015	28,467,020	438,502	-	-	\$28,905,521
FY2016***	29,846,531	492,241	-	5,428,196	\$35,766,968
FY2017	31,774,518	484,192	-	5,621,856	\$37,880,566
FY2018	28,539,762	389,945	-	5,635,540	\$34,565,247
FY2019	26,345,418	314,088	-	5,741,441	\$32,400,947
FY2020	32,053,206	245,668	-	4,756,244	\$37,055,118
FY2021	45,592,783	154,074	-	3,894,143	\$49,641,001
FY2022	40,173,474	193,403	-	4,028,957	\$44,395,834
FY2023	24,027,384	184,049	-	4,580,216	\$28,791,648
FY2024	20,785,958	157,162	-	4,887,559	\$25,830,679
FY2025	22,726,494	141,947	-	5,195,362	\$28,063,804

* Per the 2010 Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act (BRFA), interest was reverted to the General Fund.

** Surcharge was increased from \$20 to \$40.

*** e-filing Service Fee collection began.

Chart 3 shows actual revenues in Fiscal 2025 and estimated revenues from Fiscal 2026 to 2030. The Judiciary used a five-year average, from Fiscal 2021 through 2025, to forecast revenues from surcharges, copy fees, and e-filing fees through Fiscal 2030. A one-time transfer of funds out of the Fund to the General Fund in Fiscal 2026 was authorized by House Bill 352 of 2025 (the Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act), decreasing anticipated fund balance by \$20.0 million. The State's General Accounting Division reports that the transfer will occur in May or June 2026, after the legislative session has adjourned and any additional current year (Fiscal 2026) actions are known. This results in estimated revenues of \$15.3 million in Fiscal 2026, increasing to an estimated \$35.3 million from Fiscal 2027 to 2030 based on the five-year average.

The Fund is experiencing a structural deficit. If operations expenditures continue under existing plans, funds will be exhausted in Fiscal 2028. The Judiciary will be reviewing and revising spending plans according to projected revenues.

CHART 3 – FUND COLLECTIONS AND ANTICIPATED DISBURSEMENT

	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Estimated	FY 2027 Estimated	FY 2028 Estimated	FY 2029 Estimated	FY 2030 Estimated
Revenues:						
Transfer from RPRIF to GF	-	(20,000,000)	-	-	-	-
Surcharge, Copy Fees	22,868,442	30,827,346	30,827,346	30,827,346	30,827,346	30,827,346
e-Filing Service Fees	5,195,362	4,517,247	4,517,247	4,517,247	4,517,247	4,517,247
Total	28,063,804	15,344,593	35,344,593	35,344,593	35,344,593	35,344,593
Operations:						
ELROI Operations/Maintenance	1,407,845	2,671,632	2,671,632	2,805,214	2,945,474	3,092,748
e-Filing Operations/Maintenance	5,000,000	5,200,000	5,408,000	5,651,360	5,905,671	6,186,191
Archives - mdlandrec	500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000
Circuit Court Offices (2.5% increase for out years)	21,379,522	21,914,010	22,461,860	23,023,406	23,598,992	24,188,966
Major IT Projects	10,231,508	19,620,000	18,370,000	19,970,000	18,270,000	18,270,000
Total	38,518,874	50,905,642	50,411,492	52,949,980	52,220,137	53,237,905
Projected Fiscal Year Structural Surplus/(Shortfall)	(10,455,070)	(35,561,049)	(15,066,899)	(17,605,387)	(16,875,544)	(17,893,312)
Beginning Fund Balance	73,900,752					
Total Ending Fund Balance	63,445,682	27,884,633	12,817,734	(4,787,653)	(21,663,197)	(39,556,509)

Notes:

Numbers may not sum to total due to rounding.

GF = General Fund.

RPRIF = Real Property Records Improvement Fund.

Transfer of \$20 million from RPRIF to General Fund will occur in Fiscal 2026 per House Bill 352 of the 2025 Session (Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act).

FY25 Actual Fiscal Year Encumbrances:	
A0012 AY18	877,020.95
A0012 AY21	323,685.88
A0012 AY23	316,950.00
A0010 AY24	28,386.98
A0012 AY24	483,027.00
A0009 AY25	71,111.40
A0010 AY25	11,754.20
A0012 AY25	1,462,280.29
Total Open Encumbrances	3,574,216.70