

American Rescue Plan (ARP) State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SFRF) Request Form

Please complete this form in accordance with the process instructions.

Agency/Point of Contact: Minnesota Judicial Branch

Title of Request: Court Backlog

Date: 8/25/2021 **Request Amount:** \$ 9,961,000

Expenditure Time Period: 7/1/2021 to 6/30/2023

Brief Summary of Request: (Summary must be complete on this page with supporting information attached)

The Minnesota Judicial Branch is requesting \$9.961 million to help our courts with staffing and related costs needed to reduce the significant case backlog that has resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Minnesota Judicial Branch has taken unprecedented steps to protect the health and wellbeing of court users and personnel, while maintaining access to justice.

These steps included temporarily limiting physical access to the state's courthouses, delaying trials, and conducting most court hearings in on-line courtrooms. As a result of these steps, the case backlog in Minnesota's district courts has grown significantly since the start of the pandemic.

It is estimated that it will take approximately 41,946 hours of judicial officer work time to address the current pandemic-related backlog. Major Criminal (more complicated) cases make up a majority (38,679) of our current backlog. Costs are calculated as follows: Major Criminal Case Hours (38,679) multiplied by hourly rate of judicial unit (Judicial Officer, Court Reporter, Law Clerk, and two Court Operations Associates) of \$257.55.

This requested funding would allow the Judicial Branch to leverage the expertise of senior (retired) judicial officers and temporary Referees to begin addressing this substantial backlog, cover other related staffing needs and supporting costs.

As you know, on June 23, 2021, the U.S. Treasury updated its guidance on ARPA/Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. The Treasury's FAQ now specifically cites case backlogs as an eligible use.

Shorba, Jeff

Department Head Signature

Digitally signed by Shorba, Jeff
Date: 2021.09.03 09:10:29 -05'00'

9/3/2021

Date