



DALLAS COUNTY OFFICE OF BUDGET AND EVALUATION

August 10, 2026

TO: Commissioners Court

THROUGH: Dr. Ronica Watkins, Budget Officer

FROM: Vanessa Rodriguez, Budget and Policy Analyst

SUBJECT: FY2027 Court Cost Miscellaneous Budget

Background

Each fiscal year, the Budget Office develops a baseline budget for all County departments. The purpose of this briefing is to discuss the proposed baseline budget for department 4080 – Court Cost Miscellaneous. This department is used to supplement operating expenses to the Dallas County courts that exceed their fiscal year operating budgets.

Salaries and Benefits

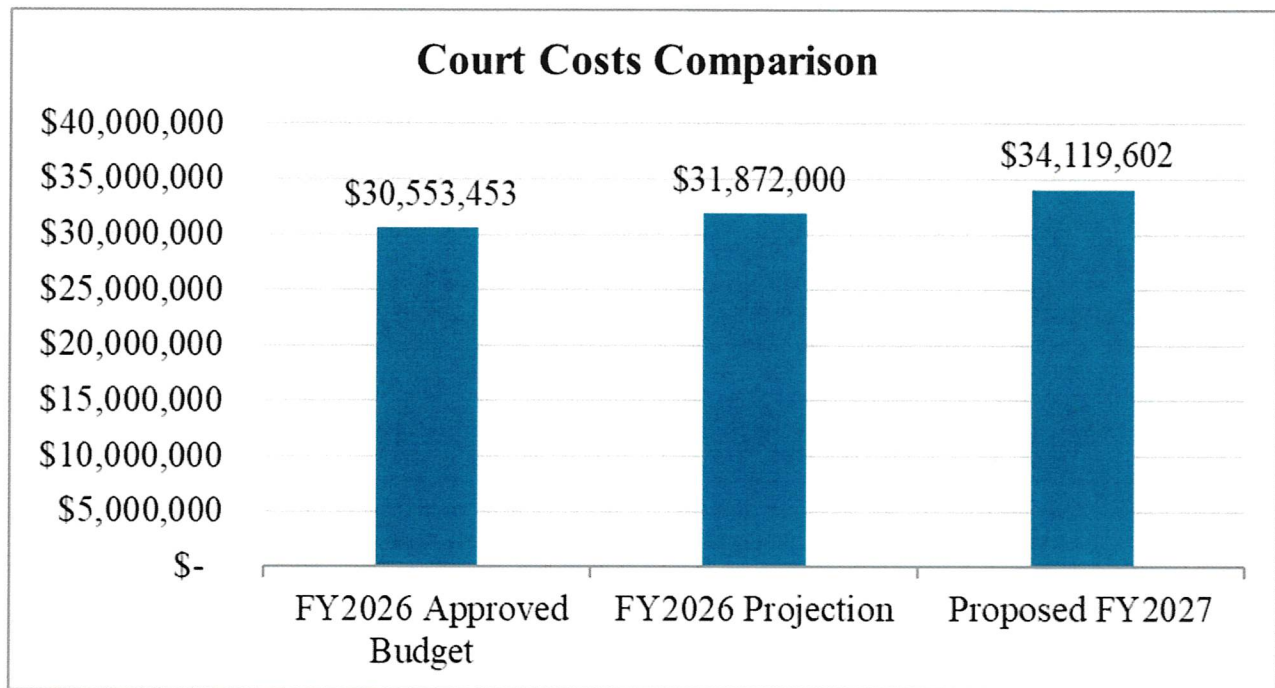
Account 61060 Salaries-Extra Help was added to the FY2016 Budget. Account 61060 is used to estimate the combined Extra Help budget for all the Courts.

Operating Expenses

In line with the focus on cost savings and budget optimization, Court Costs Miscellaneous will be held at its current funding level for FY2027. The total cost to operate the miscellaneous court fund and all court funds is budgeted at \$14,948,905 for FY27. In FY2026, the Criminal District Judges approved an increase for court-appointed attorney fees. As such, we are anticipating an increase in costs for court-appointed attorneys for FY2027.

Court costs include costs for visiting judges, court-appointed attorney payments, court-appointed interpreters, and other related expenses. For FY2026 the budget for all court-related expenses was approved at \$30.5 million. Total court costs for FY2026 are projected to be around \$31.8 million, which is approximately a \$2 million increase from FY2025. As of July, approximately 78 percent of the court costs budget has been expended, indicating that a significant portion of the budgeted funds have been utilized at this point in the fiscal year, with the biggest drivers being court-appointed attorneys for felony and misdemeanor cases along with parent/child representation for CPS cases.

Account Description	FY2026 Adopted Budget	FY2026 Projection	FY2027 Proposed Budget
62013-Legal Notices	16,200	20,513	346,450
62136-Court Appointed Interpreter	1,173,300	1,117,232	1,212,836
62155-Juror Housing & Meals	2,600	-	2,600
62310-Petit Jury	2,500,000	2,064,639	2,500,000
62320-Grand Jury	226,000	301,277	226,000
62330-Visiting Judges	110,000	866,686	210,000
62340-Visiting Court Reporters	124,000	48,948	104,000
62410-Substitute Court Reporters	984,621	877,650	1,134,711
62465-Court Appointed Masters/Referee	53,000	62,853	78,000
62470-Court Appointed Attorney - Other allowable Exp District Court	17,000	4,307	17,000
62471-Court Appointed Attorney - Other allowable Exp County Court	4,000	2,691	4,000
62472-Court Appointed Attorney - Other allowable Exp Appeals	3,000	739	3,000
62473-Court Appointed Attorney - Misdemeanor	2,448,100	3,417,313	2,573,100
62474-Court Appointed Attorney - County Court Appeal	317,000	11,807	517,000
62475-Court Appointed Attorney - Felony	12,250,000	15,465,190	14,298,905
62476-Court Appointed Attorney - Capital Murder	618,000	4,000	718,000
62477-Court Appointed Attorney - Writs	420,000	55,181	570,000
62478-Court Appointed Attorney - Investigator	696,000	777,857	746,000
62479-Court Appointed Attorney -Child Welfare	666,500	5,100	663,500
62480-Court Appointed Attorney - Delinquency	1,037,500	614,192	1,237,500
62481-Court Appointed Attorney - Death Penalty	222,500	29,853	272,500
62483-Court Appointed Attorney - District Court Appeal	846,000	438,595	971,000
62484-County Appointed Attorney - Other Expense Capital	-	32,639	-
62485-Ct. Appt. Ad-item Full Guardianship	200,000	-	200,000
62486-Court Appointed Advocates	286,000	288,317	286,000
62487-CPS Cases - Parent/Child Representation	2,710,000	3,149,739	2,760,000
62488-Trial Expense Other Court Costs	172,800	111,163	172,800
62491-Transcripts of Proceedings	837,850	454,390	1,037,850
62492-Mediators	632,982	113,040	283,850
62493-Witness Fees	185,000	173,576	185,000
62494-Expenses -Visiting Judges & CT Reporters	23,000	-	23,000
62497-Expert Testimony – Non-Psych	131,000	310,718	130,500
62498-Expert Testimony - Psych	515,000	883,937	515,000
62499-Expert Testimony – Non-Psych Capital	14,000	19,326	14,000
62500-Expert Testimony - PD	83,000	61,825	83,000
62501-Expert Testimony - Psych Capital	18,000	61,794	18,000
62503-Capital Public Defender - Expert Witness Non-Psych	9,500	-	4,500
62505-Investigator - Capital	-	24,913	-
Total	30,553,453	31,872,000	34,119,602



Recommendation

Based on the anticipated increase in court costs, it is recommended that the Court Costs Miscellaneous FY2027 Budget be increased to a total budgeted amount of \$34,119,602, including \$14,320,510 in the Court Costs Miscellaneous Reserve.