

Special Session



Kansas Supreme Court

6:30 p.m.

APRIL
23

SCAN FOR LINKTREE



Lansing Middle School

220 Lion Lane
Lansing

Informal public reception to follow

ON THE COVER

Supreme Court justices pictured on front, from left to right: K.J. Wall; Caleb Stegall; Eric Rosen; Marla Luckert (chief justice); Dan Biles; Evelyn Wilson; and Melissa Standridge.

April 2024

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Topeka, KS 66612-1507
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Welcome

This special session is the Kansas Supreme Court's first visit to Lansing and its 15th time to hear cases in the evening. When this session concludes, we invite you to join us for an informal reception.

This evening you will hear oral argument in two cases. An oral argument is a discussion of facts and law involved in a case on appeal. Attorneys representing each side of a case are granted 15 minutes to present their arguments. The court can grant additional time.

The court ordinarily sits in its courtroom in the Kansas Judicial Center in Topeka, but it has arranged this special evening session to make its work accessible to more people. The procedures are the same as if the justices were sitting in their courtroom.

Special thanks

The Supreme Court extends a heartfelt thanks to Lansing Middle School and USD 469, specifically: Marty Kobza, superintendent; Brooks Jenkins, principal; Sharon Burns, communications and marketing; and Jan Zoellner, administrative support. Everyone has gone beyond their regular duties to make our visit successful.

We also thank the Lansing Police Department, Leavenworth County Sheriff's Department, and Kansas Highway Patrol for providing security, and Leavenworth County EMS for being on hand in case there is a medical emergency.

Thanks also to Chief Judge Joan Lowdon and the judges and staff of the 1st Judicial District for helping us plan and carry out our visit.

In 2011, to mark the state's 150th anniversary, the Supreme Court convened in the historic Supreme Court courtroom in the Kansas Statehouse. The Capitol had been the court's home from 1869 to 1978. Since then, the court has conducted special sessions in:

- Salina
- Greensburg
- Wichita
- Overland Park
- Pittsburg
- Kansas City
- Hays
- Garden City
- Topeka
- Hiawatha
- Hutchinson
- Winfield
- Emporia
- Colby
- Manhattan
- Lawrence
- El Dorado
- Great Bend
- Parsons
- Concordia
- Dodge City
- Lansing

Oral argument

An oral argument is an oral presentation attorneys make to the court. It is an opportunity

for attorneys to emphasize certain legal points and for the appellate court to ask questions about the case to help clarify the parties' arguments.

Oral argument is not an opportunity to raise new facts or new legal arguments.



Justice Dan Biles asks an attorney a question during an oral argument at the Hays special session. (Photo courtesy of Mitch Weber, FHSU.)

Attorneys must limit their presentations to information in the trial court record and to legal issues raised on appeal.

Order of oral arguments:

- the appellant (party who filed the appeal) speaks first.
- the appellee (opposing party) speaks after the appellant.
- the appellant may follow with a brief rebuttal or reply argument.
- during oral argument, justices may ask the attorneys questions.

Oral arguments are always open to the public. The Supreme Court has its regular sessions in the Kansas Judicial Center in Topeka. The court's docket is available online, as is a livestream of all the court's proceedings. Archived oral arguments are also available. Visit us at www.kscourts.org.

Kansas appellate courts

There are two appellate courts in the Kansas judicial system—the Kansas Supreme Court and the Kansas Court of Appeals.

The Court of Appeals hears all appeals from district courts in both civil and criminal cases, except those that may be appealed directly to the Supreme Court. It also has jurisdiction over original actions in habeas corpus and certain appeals from decisions by administrative agencies.

The Kansas Supreme Court is the state court of last resort. It hears direct appeals from district courts in the most serious criminal cases and appeals in cases where a statute has been held unconstitutional. It may review decisions by the Court of Appeals, and it may transfer cases from that court to the Supreme Court. It also has jurisdiction over certain original actions.

Appellate procedure

An appeal transfers a case from a trial court to a higher court—an appellate court—for review of the lower court decision or judgment to ensure the law has been followed.

An appellate court does not preside over trials. Appellate court hearings do not involve witnesses, juries, new evidence, or court reporters. Instead, an appellate court reviews the written record of the trial court to determine whether any significant legal errors occurred during the trial. The trial court record includes the evidence admitted during the trial, transcripts of witness testimony, and rulings from the trial court.

Appellate procedure requires that parties provide the court with written arguments called briefs. Briefs describe the facts of the case and lay out the parties' legal arguments. The appellate court studies the briefs, examines the trial court record, and researches relevant law.

The Supreme Court moved into the new Kansas Judicial Center in 1978. The building also houses the Kansas Court of Appeals, various court offices, the Clerk of the Appellate Courts, the Supreme Court Law Library, and the Judicial Council.

As part of its review, the appellate court may hear oral argument from the attorneys for the parties.

Sometimes during oral argument, a justice will refer to briefs or other materials such as Kansas statutes. The Kansas appellate courts have made the transition to electronic documents, so some justices access case briefs and other legal materials using their laptop computers they carry with them.

Court decisions

Following oral arguments, the court will discuss in private the legal questions raised in the case. Later, one justice assigned the task of writing the collective decision of the court will begin drafting the court's decision, which is called an opinion. At the same time, the other members of the court are also writing decisions for other cases.

Decision drafts circulate among members of the court. The justices comment on the circulating decision drafts and debate legal points with each other. This process continues until a majority of justices agree on a final version of a decision.

A justice who disagrees with the majority decision may write a dissent that explains why the justice disagrees. A justice who agrees with the result, but not necessarily for the same reasons, may write a special concurrence.

Court decisions are posted on the Kansas judicial branch website as soon as they are released, typically around 9:30 a.m. Friday, although they can be released any day of the week.

Visit the court's search decisions page at www.kscourts.org/Cases-Decisions/Decisions.

The Supreme Court can:



- uphold the decision or order of the lower court.

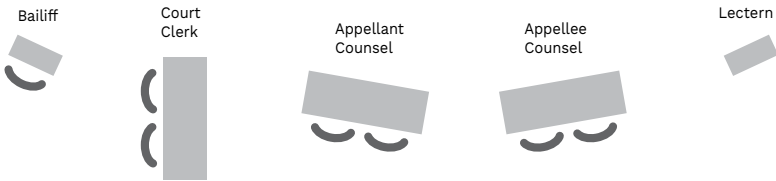
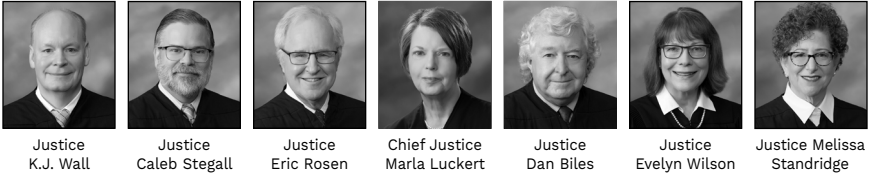


- set aside the decision or order of the lower court.



- return to the trial court with instructions, such as ordering a new trial.

Courtroom participants



Bench: The Supreme Court sits at the front of the courtroom on a raised platform called the bench. The justice with the most seniority on the bench—the chief justice—sits in the center and the remaining justices alternate taking seats to her right and to her left in order of their seniority. The newest justice on the bench sits to the chief justice’s far left or, if you are facing the bench, to your right.

Clerk: The Clerk of the Appellate Courts sits at a table near the court’s right end of the bench. The clerk calls the docket at the beginning of the court session.

Bailiff: The bailiff maintains order and announces the court’s arrival in the courtroom. The honorary bailiff for this evening’s session is Donna Oswald, a longtime 1st Judicial District court employee who retired from the Atchison County District Court.

Attorneys: Attorneys scheduled to argue are seated at tables before the bench. Appellant counsel sits nearest the clerk and appellee counsel sits nearest the lectern. Each attorney’s time is monitored by the chief justice and arguments are stopped when the time allotted expires. Justices may ask questions throughout an attorney’s argument to clarify issues the court will discuss later in case conference.

Cases to be heard

Appeal No. 124,160: *Benchmark Property Remodeling, LLC. (appellant) v. Grandmothers, Inc., CoreFirst Bank and Trust, Kansas Department of Revenue, Robert Zibell, and State of Kansas (appellees)*

Counsel for Appellant: Diane Hastings Lewis

Counsel for Appellees: Christine Caplinger, R. Patrick Riordan, Adam D. King

Shawnee County: (Petition for Review) The Kansas Department of Revenue leased a building from Grandmothers. Benchmark submitted quotes for remodeling the building; KDOR approved the quotes and, once Benchmark completed the work, KDOR paid Grandmothers the full amount. Grandmothers did not pay Benchmark the full amount, however, and Benchmark sued both. The district court granted summary judgment to KDOR and partial summary judgment to Grandmothers, holding that Benchmark had no contract with either. Benchmark moved to dismiss its remaining claims without prejudice to appeal. The Court of Appeals reversed. The panel held it had appellate jurisdiction because Benchmark—which was time-barred from reviving its dismissed claims—had no pending claims in the district court. The panel also concluded the district court erred in holding, as a matter of law, that no contract existed. Grandmothers petitions this court for review.

Issues on review are whether the Court of Appeals erred: 1) by holding it had jurisdiction; and 2) in finding that issues of material facts remain.

Appeal No. 125,318: *State of Kansas (appellee) v. Zshavon Malik Dotson (appellant)*

Counsel for Appellant: Peter Maharry, Kansas Appellate Defender

Counsel for Appellee: Clair Kebodeaux, Assistant District Attorney; Kris W. Kobach, Attorney General

Wyandotte County: (Criminal Appeal) Dotson appeals his convictions for premeditated first-degree murder and aggravated battery. The district court sentenced him to life in prison with no possibility of parole for 25 years, also known as a hard-25 sentence.

Issues on review are whether: 1) the prosecutor misstated the law on premeditation during closing arguments; 2) there was insufficient evidence of premeditation to support a conviction for first-degree murder; 3) premeditated first-degree murder and intentional second-degree murder are identical offenses; 4) the district court erred when instructing the jury on premeditation; 5) the verdict form erroneously listed guilty before not guilty; 6) Dotson's trial counsel provided constitutionally ineffective assistance; and 7) the cumulative effect of multiple trial errors denied Dotson a fair trial.

Kansas Supreme Court

The Kansas Supreme Court is the highest court in the state court system. A Supreme Court decision sets binding legal precedent that lower courts must follow.

The Supreme Court also regulates the practice of law in Kansas through its authority to admit persons to practice as attorneys in the courts of Kansas, to prescribe rules to supervise attorney conduct, and to discipline attorneys.

The Supreme Court also approves rules of procedure and practice used throughout state courts in Kansas. Under the Kansas Constitution, the court has supervisory authority over the entire judicial branch and over all judicial officers and court employees.

Becoming a justice

Supreme Court justices are appointed through a merit-based nomination process that Kansans voted to add to the Kansas Constitution in 1958.

When there is a vacancy on the bench, the Supreme Court Nominating Commission reviews applications and conducts public interviews of the nominees. The commission narrows the nominee pool to three names that it sends to the governor. The governor chooses one nominee to appoint.

The Supreme Court Nominating Commission has nine members. There is one lawyer and one nonlawyer from each of the state's four congressional districts, plus one lawyer who serves as chairperson. Nonlawyers are appointed by the governor. Lawyers are elected by other lawyers within their congressional districts. The chairperson is elected by lawyers statewide.

There have been 82 Supreme Court justices since Kansas became a state in 1861. Of them, six have been women. The first woman appointed to the bench was Kay McFarland in 1977. She became the first woman to serve as chief justice in 1995. She retired from the bench in 2009 and died in 2015 at age 80.

Learn more about the Supreme Court Nominating Commission at www.kscourts.org/Judges/Become-a-Judge/Supreme-Court-Nominating-Commission.

Judges and justices must follow the law and not be influenced by politics, special interest groups, public opinion, or their own personal beliefs.

When the Supreme Court Nominating Commission reviews nominees for justice, they look at the person's:

- legal and judicial experience;
- educational background;
- character and ethics;
- temperament;
- service to the community;
- impartiality; and
- respect of colleagues.

Judges and justices demonstrate their accountability by following a Code of Judicial Conduct that establishes standards of ethical behavior. They also take an oath of office that includes swearing to support, protect, and defend the U.S. Constitution and Kansas Constitution.

Retention elections

Once a justice takes a seat on the bench, their term expires the second Monday in January following the first general election that occurs after the justice has served 12 months in office.

To remain on the bench, the justice must file a declaration of intention with the Secretary of State at least 60 days prior to the next general election. The justice's name then will appear on the ballot. Justices retained by voters serve six-year terms. Retirement is mandatory at age 75 or on completing the term in which the justice turns 75.

William Agnew Johnston was the longest-serving member of the Kansas Supreme Court. He was an associate justice from 1884 to 1903 and then chief justice from 1903 to 1935—a total of 51 years. He served when justices were directly elected by voters and when there were no age restrictions. The chief justice died in 1937 at the age of 88.

Chief Justice Marla Luckert



Luckert was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2003. She became chief justice in 2019. Luckert is a fourth generation native of Sherman County and a graduate of Goodland High School. She then moved to Topeka, where she received her bachelor's and law degrees with academic honors from Washburn University. She served as technical editor of

the Washburn Law Journal and received faculty and alumni awards for best student note.

Luckert joined a Topeka law firm. Her peers selected her to be in The Best Lawyers in America. She also was an adjunct professor of law at Washburn University.

She was appointed district judge of the 3rd Judicial District (Shawnee County) in 1992. She became chief judge in 2000.

Luckert is co-chair of the Civil Justice Committee of the Conference of Chief Justices and Conference of State Court Administrators, and she serves on the Judicial Conference of the United States Committee on Federal-State Jurisdiction. She just completed a term on the board of directors of the Chief Justices Conference. She is past president of many judicial and attorney organizations.

She recently received a certificate of recognition from the Legal Services Corporation for extraordinary commitment to providing equal access to justice and increased pro bono practice in Kansas. She received distinguished service awards from Washburn University and many law-related organizations, the 19th Amendment Centennial Celebration Committee's Outstanding Woman of Kansas, and the Topeka YWCA Woman of Excellence and Go Topeka's Entrepreneurial and Minority Business Development Program Woman of Influence awards.

She has served on charitable and civic boards and been an active community volunteer, including delivering Meals on Wheels.

Read Luckert's full biography at www.kscourts.org/Judges/Supreme-Court-Justices/Marla-J-Luckert.

Justice Eric Rosen



Rosen was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2005.

Rosen is from Topeka and earned a bachelor's degree and a master's degree with honors from the University of Kansas. He received his law degree from Washburn University School of Law.

Rosen served 12 years as judge in the 3rd Judicial District. He also served two years as chief judge of the district's domestic division.

Rosen was a partner in the law firm of Hein, Ebert, and Rosen. He also served as associate general counsel for the Kansas Securities Commissioner and as assistant district attorney and assistant public defender in Shawnee County.

Rosen graduated from Appellate Judges School at New York University School of Law and is a member of that school's Dwight D. Opperman Institute of Judicial Administration. He is a member of the American Judges Association, American Judicature Society, Kansas District Judges Association, and the Kansas and Topeka Bar Associations.

In 2002, Rosen served on a 24-member presidential commission charged with commemorating the 50th anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of the U.S. Supreme Court. Other commendations include the E. Newton Vickers Professionalism Award, the Smiling Bull Award from the Leavenworth County Bar Association, the Martin Luther King Living the Dream Humanitarian Award, an honorary diploma and certificate of honor for his many contributions to Topeka High School, the Attorney General's Victim Service Award for Outstanding Judge, and the Topeka Capital-Journal's Kansan of Distinction in the area of law in 1999. In 2013, he was inducted into the Topeka West High School graduate hall of fame.

He is the Supreme Court liaison for attorney disciplinary matters, the Lawyers Assistance Program, Judges Assistance Committee, and to court services officers.

Read his full biography at www.kscourts.org/Judges/Supreme-Court-Justices/Eric-S-Rosen.

Justice Dan Biles



Biles was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2009.

Biles was born in El Dorado. He graduated from Kansas State University with a degree in journalism and from Washburn University School of Law.

While in law school, Biles worked for The Associated Press in Topeka until 1980, when he served as assistant attorney general in the litigation division under Robert Stephan. In 1985, he entered private practice in Overland Park, where he focused on administrative, trial, and appellate work on behalf of individuals, corporations, and various state, county, and local government agencies. He represented the Kansas State Board of Education as its private attorney until he was appointed to the Supreme Court.

Biles is a past chair of the National Council of State Education Attorneys, which is connected to the National Association of State Boards of Education, Washington, D.C. In 2009, he received the state education attorneys' Douglas F. Bates Distinguished Service Award.

He has been active in many organizations and has served on the board of directors of Community Living Opportunities Inc., a Kansas nonprofit corporation serving more than 300 children and adults with severe developmental disabilities in residential, day programs, and case management. He also served as an advisory board member of the Johnson County Housing Coalition.

Biles is the Supreme Court liaison for electronic case filing and electronic case management in state district and appellate courts, a multiyear effort that will improve court efficiency and generate cost savings. He also is court liaison for pro se litigants, the Alternative Dispute Resolution Council, technology and computer services and the Kansas Bar Association's federal courts committee.

Read his full biography at www.kscourts.org/Judges/Supreme-Court-Justices/Dan-Biles.

Justice Caleb Stegall



Stegall was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2014.

Stegall was born in Topeka and grew up in Lawrence. He graduated from Lawrence High School in 1989 and from the University of Kansas School of Law in 1999. He lives in rural Jefferson County.

Stegall is the Supreme Court liaison for the Client Protection Fund Commission and to court clerks. He is also a liaison for the Kansas eCourt Steering Committee, eFiling Committee, and for technology and computer services.

Read his full biography at www.kscourts.org/Judges/Supreme-Court-Justices/Caleb-Stegall.

Justice Evelyn Wilson



Wilson was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2019.

She was appointed district judge of the 3rd Judicial District (Shawnee County) in 2004 and became chief judge in 2014. Her assignments included domestic, felony criminal, civil, and probate dockets, and she

presided over at least 80 felony jury trials.

Wilson was born in Smith Center and received a bachelor's degree in business/economics, graduating magna cum laude from Bethany College in Lindsborg. She received a law degree with dean's honors from Washburn University School of Law.

After law school, Wilson was an associate in the Lund Law Firm of Oberlin, Kansas. She also served as Oberlin city counselor and prosecutor for several years.

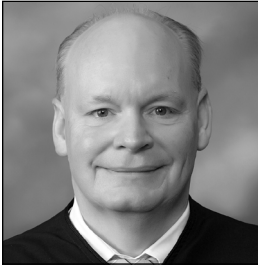
Before she was appointed district judge, Wilson was a managing partner, partner, and associate at Wright, Henson, Somers, Sebelius, Clark & Baker law firm of Topeka. She was a civil litigation attorney, obtaining an "AV" rating from Martindale-Hubbell. She was also an adjunct professor of law at Washburn University School of Law.

Wilson is a member of the American Bar Association, Kansas Bar Association, Kansas Bar Foundation, Kansas Women Attorneys Association, Sam A. Crow Inn of Court, Topeka Bar Association, Topeka Lawyers Club, and Women Attorneys Association of Topeka.

Wilson is the Supreme Court liaison to the Access to Justice Committee, Board of Examiners of Court Reporters, Commission on Judicial Conduct, Language Access Committee, and for specialty courts.

Read her full biography at www.kscourts.org/Judges/Supreme-Court-Justices/Evelyn-Z-Wilson.

Justice Keynen “K.J.” Wall Jr.



Wall was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2020.

Wall is from Scott City and earned a bachelor's degree in communications from Kansas State University, where he was CEDA National Debate Champion and National Debate All-American in 1993.

He then earned a master's degree in scientific and technical communications from the University of Minnesota in 1996, and a law degree from the University of Kansas School of Law, graduating Order of the Coif in December 2001.

After law school, Wall was a law clerk for Chief Judge John W. Lungstrum of the U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas. In 2004 he became associate attorney for Witwer, Oldenburg, Barry & Johnson in Greeley, Colorado, and in 2008, senior legal counsel for Federated Insurance in Owatonna, Minnesota.

Wall returned to Kansas in 2013 as special projects counsel and deputy general counsel for the Kansas Supreme Court, where he handled capital cases and special projects.

He was a partner of Forbes Law Group, LLC, at the time of his appointment and represented county hospitals, rural healthcare providers, and community mental health centers throughout Kansas.

Wall is the Supreme Court liaison to the Child Support Guidelines Advisory Committee, Kansas Children's Cabinet, National Center for State Courts' family plans and programs, Permanent Families Account Advisory Committee, Task Force on Permanency Planning, and the KU Law Research Clinic. He is currently chair of the Kansas Supreme Court's Rural Justice Initiative Committee.

Read his full biography at www.kscourts.org/Judges/Supreme-Court-Justices/Keynen-KJ-Wall.

Justice Melissa Standridge



Standridge was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2020 after serving 12 years on the Court of Appeals.

Standridge received her bachelor's degree from the University of Kansas and her law degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law, where she graduated cum laude. She served as editor-in-chief of the UMKC Law Review, and received the Clerk Boardman Callaghan Award, Exemplary Third-Year Student.

After graduating law school, Standridge was chambers counsel for U.S. District Judge Elmo Hunter, U.S. District Court of Western Missouri. She then joined Shook, Hardy & Bacon as an associate attorney. Before being appointed to the Court of Appeals, she served as chambers counsel for U.S. District Magistrate Judge David Waxse, U.S. District Court of Kansas.

She has received service awards from the Kansas Bar Association, UMKC School of Law, and the American Inns of Court, as well as the Carol Foreman Medal of Civility from the Kansas Women Attorneys Association, Diversity Award from the Kansas Bar Association, Angel in Adoption for the 3rd Congressional District from the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, Kansas City Legal Leaders of the Year Award from The Daily Record and the Tierra Farrow Community Leadership Award from the UMKC Women Law Student Association.

She has served on charitable and civic group boards and been an active community volunteer, including delivering Meals on Wheels.

Standridge is the Supreme Court liaison to the Board of Law Examiners, Admission Review Board, attorney registration, and all education, training and testing for appellate judges, district judges, district magistrate judges, municipal judges, and lawyers.

Read her full biography at www.kscourts.org/Judges/Supreme-Court-Justices/Melissa-Taylor-Standridge.

About the Kansas judicial branch

Kansas state government, like our federal government, is composed of three branches: the legislative branch, which makes laws; the executive branch, which enforces laws; and the judicial branch, which interprets and applies laws.

Kansas courts are unified in the judicial branch. In 1972, voters added to the Kansas Constitution an amendment that vests judicial power in a single court system, giving the Supreme Court general administrative authority over all courts in Kansas.

Kansas courts—including district courts, the Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court—provide the people of Kansas a venue to resolve disputes through a legal process by interpreting and applying the law and by determining when laws are unconstitutional.

District courts

District courts are trial courts, with general original jurisdiction over all criminal and civil cases, including divorce and domestic relations, damage suits, probate and estate administration, guardianships, conservatorships, care of the mentally ill, juvenile matters, and small claims. They are where criminal and civil jury trials take place.



The Leavenworth County District Court is in Leavenworth.

District courts are created by the Kansas Constitution. They are grouped in 31 judicial districts, and each district has at least one district

judge. The districts vary in size from one to many counties and in number of judges.

Kansas statutes require that each county have a district court with at least one judge, either district or magistrate, who is a resident of and has a principal office in that county. Each district court also is required to have an office of the clerk of the court where cases may be filed.

Each judicial district has a chief judge who makes case assignments and has general supervisory authority over the clerical and administrative functions of the court. The chief judge may appoint a chief clerk, chief clerk administrator, or court administrator to help with administrative functions, such as jury management, personnel administration, and budget preparation.

Each judicial district also has a court services division in which court services officers supervise the probation of nearly 17,000 adult and juvenile offenders statewide, work with children in need of care, conduct home studies or mediations for divorce and child custody issues, and research and write presentence investigation reports.

Caseload

In fiscal year 2023, more than 333,000 cases were filed in Kansas district courts, including about:

- 2,000 adoptions
- 3,600 property disputes
- 11,000 probate cases
- 9,400 divorces
- 12,500 misdemeanor cases
- 21,500 felony cases
- 82,600 contract disputes

District courts also protected vulnerable Kansans by issuing about 15,800 restraining orders and processing more than 5,200 child in need of care cases.

Budget

Funding for Kansas courts accounts for less than 1% of all funds in the state budget.

The judicial branch budget for fiscal year 2024, which began July 1, 2023, is about \$195.2 million. Of that amount, about \$182.9 million is from the state general fund.

The balance of the judicial branch budget—about \$12.43 million—comes from grants, pass-through funding, and fees. Beginning in fiscal year 2023, all fees, fines, and forfeitures paid to courts are deposited into the state general fund or other state

and local expenditure-specific funds as spelled out in statute. These deposits to the state general fund also include fees that fund core judiciary operations.

Expenditures

Each Kansas county pays the operating expenses for the district court in its county. This includes costs to maintain court facilities and provide necessary office supplies and equipment.

With most district court building and operating expenses paid by counties, the base judicial branch budget is used primarily to pay salaries for 290 judges and justices and about 1,700 employees. For fiscal year 2024, about 92% of our budget request is to fund salaries and wages.

Funding requests

The 2023 Legislature appropriated funding for a 5% salary increase for all non-judge judicial branch employees as of July 1, 2023. The judiciary thanks the Kansas Legislature for its work to strengthen the court system by making these appropriations.



Chief Justice Marla Luckert delivers her State of the Judiciary address in January 2024. State officials and Kansas legislators were in the audience.

To maintain a well-functioning judiciary, we must continue to offer employee salaries that are competitive in the job market. To account for the continuing impact of inflation, we asked for a cost-of-living adjustment in our

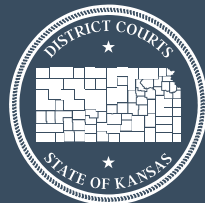
fiscal year 2025 budget request.

In fiscal year 2018, Kansas judges received their first salary increase of any kind in nine fiscal years. It was a 2.5% increase.

Without increases during those nine years, Kansas judge salaries fell far behind the market in pay. Since fiscal year 2018, Kansas judges received pay increases to begin to address this gap. As of July 1, 2023, Kansas judges ranked 48 out of 50 states in actual salaries according to a report from the National Center for State Courts.

The judicial branch budget request for fiscal year 2025 includes funding needed to implement the new judicial salary formula codified after the Legislature passed 2023 House Substitute for Senate Bill 229. This formula uses district judge salaries as its lodestar. Beginning January 1, 2025, district court judges will earn 75% of the annual salary of a U.S. district judge. Salaries for the remaining classes of Kansas judges are calculated from the resulting district judge figure.

Judges have profound responsibilities. Among the weightiest are when they are called to impose death and other significant criminal sentences that deprive others of life and liberty. They also resolve child custody disputes that affect fundamental parental rights. And they conduct many other criminal and civil proceedings that result in life-altering judgments. Kansans want highly qualified individuals to make the decisions asked of judges.



Fair and impartial courts for all Kansans