

**Agency: Alaska Court System****Project Title:****Project Type: Other**

# Court Security Projects

**State Funding Requested: \$1,231,600****House District: Statewide (1-40)**

Future Funding May Be Requested

**Brief Project Description:**

This request includes projects to provide physical security for the public and others in court facilities statewide.

**Funding Plan:**

Total Project Cost:	\$4,653,400
Funding Already Secured:	(\$3,090,000)
FY2012 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$1,231,600)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$331,800

*Funding Details:*

The Alaska Court System received \$500,000 in FY04 and in FY05; \$750,000 in FY07; \$150,000 in FY09; and \$1,190,000 in FY10.

**Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

Recent and on-going national events and state incidents highlight the need to protect the public and court staff in both rural and urban locations. Government facilities have increasingly become targets of acts of violence and terror. The increases in domestic violence and criminal cases, as a percentage of overall caseload, have left the court system with concerns for security of litigants, jurors, victims, witnesses, attorneys, and staff. These concerns are further complicated by the fact that many court facilities also share quarters with other governmental agencies whose risk of threat is even higher, thereby increasing concerns about physical safety for those who enter court buildings. It is important that each courthouse maintain effective security, which simultaneously ensures fair, safe and orderly trials while creating a public atmosphere of respect for judicial proceedings. Security of court facilities and surrounding grounds can be substantially improved by employing strategic architecture designed to improve security and advance security technology. This is a multi-year project.

The Alaska Court System received \$500,000 in FY04 and in FY05; \$750,000 in FY07; \$150,000 in FY09; and \$1,190,000 in FY10. The court system requested funding in both FY10 and FY11, but did not receive \$978,800 for FY11. The amount requested for FY12 through FY17 includes that amount.

Funds appropriated to date have been used or are slated for the following projects: screening equipment in Anchorage, Palmer, Kenai, Ketchikan, Bethel and Juneau; ballistic shielding of customer service counters in Juneau, Ketchikan, Kenai, Palmer and Kotzebue; replacement of failing security systems for the Anchorage campus; ballistic shielding of judge's benches in courtrooms throughout the state; single entry with screening station and access controls systems at Ketchikan, Juneau, Anchorage, Palmer, Bethel, and Kenai; surveillance equipment at Juneau, Ketchikan, Kenai, Fairbanks, Bethel, Palmer and other superior court sites as needed; remodels and expansion of Judicial Services (JS) prisoner holding areas at Palmer; creation of a juvenile holding cell in Nesbett (Anchorage); secured staff entry at Anchorage Jail; and security lighting at Nesbett (Anchorage) parking garage and other facilities that still need it.

Securing a court facility should be comprehensive, integrating security operations and technology with the architecture. Facilities that house courts vary in age from new to 30+ years old. The older facilities have significant constraints, both in physical design and in building systems, which limit the applicability of a single solution for all courts. Courthouse security generally centers around physical components such as duress alarms, card access systems, entry screening and surveillance of high risk areas. In addition to control systems, surveillance equipment, and other monitoring or alarm systems, courts need sufficient court security officers. The Department of Public Safety is aware that several court locations still lack adequate court security officer staffing, and is working to address it. The following sections describe the physical elements of an integrated security system for these courts.

A significant portion of the funding requested is needed to address critical security issues at the rural courts, such as Craig, Petersburg, Wrangell, Barrow, Nome, Kotzebue, Kodiak, Glennallen, Homer, Dillingham, Valdez, Unalaska, Aniak, and Nenana. Funds are also needed for screening equipment at high-risk sites, and construction of holding cells at locations where none are available. This request includes costs for engineering, bid document preparation, and project management costs.

Nationally, many courts rely on entry control at all exterior access points to provide a large measure of security. Access control consists of two components: a badging system to control entry at exterior doors and metal detection equipment installed at a single public entry to screen people and objects entering the buildings. (Installation of metal detection equipment necessitates funding for contractual services in the operating budget to operate the equipment.) Only Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Bethel, Palmer and Kenai trial courts are equipped with both of these components, although x-ray and walk-through equipment needs to be replaced in Fairbanks and Palmer (\$67,500). Ketchikan is being equipped this year.

In addition to exterior control, interior access control is needed to keep the public out of secured private areas of the courthouse: chambers, corridors, and clerks' offices. This access control typically includes a badging system or cipher locks on secure doors in dividing walls, and a camera/intercom system for request to enter. Currently Juneau, Fairbanks and Kotzebue courthouses and the Snowden Administrative building require these components in several secure areas to keep staff areas secure. The total for this work is \$71,000. The Sitka courthouse is presently receiving this type of upgrade with current funding.

The Kenai courthouse needs upgrades to Judicial Services areas to ensure safe transport of prisoners and in-custody defendants and for the safety of staff and the public. The estimated cost is \$200,000.

Portable detection units are an alternative for many court locations that do not have the space or need for a permanent in-place security system. These portable units can also be used in urban areas to provide additional security for high-risk cases. The units, which consist of a portable metal detector and handheld wand, cost approximately \$6,500 each, plus installation of power estimated to cost approximately \$6,000 per installation site. These portable units are recommended for fourteen court locations (Craig, Sitka, Wrangell, Petersburg, Barrow, Kotzebue, Nome, Kodiak, Glennallen, Homer, Dillingham, Valdez, Unalaska, and Nenana), which include those constructed to accommodate superior court trials presided over by a traveling superior court judge. Additionally, a portable set is requested for Bethel to accommodate high-profile proceedings. The total for these units is \$187,500.

Public counters in high volume courts should be protected by bulletproof shielding below the counter and high-impact safety panels mounted on the counter top. These clear, bulletproof panels allow visual and audio contact with the public but provide a protective barrier for court staff. This protection is still needed at Barrow, Nome, Anchorage, Dillingham, Kenai,

Palmer, Juneau and Bethel. The cost will vary by location depending on the size and configuration of the counters, but is estimated to total \$193,000. Additionally, safety panels only are required at the Kodiak location, and a full counter replacement is needed for Kotzebue. The cost for these projects is \$13,500.

Duress alarms are used to notify court security officers of an emergency situation. While alarm systems are already installed in most court facilities, many are failing and in need of replacement. Unfortunately, many of these systems are routed to a remote dispatch location and not to enforcement officers who are stationed in the building. Only the courts in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Palmer and Kenai have Judicial Services personnel located within the building. Efforts have been made to have alarm signals sent to the closest law enforcement agency. However, in many communities response to these alarms is slow, as other duties take precedence. This security deficit cannot be solved with technology alone, however, the estimate for providing or improving duress alarms where needed is \$198,700.

Bulletproof shielding for courtroom judicial benches is needed in all court locations. Many of the newer courtrooms in Anchorage, Palmer, Kenai, Kotzebue, Fairbanks, Bethel, Unalaska, and Homer were constructed with this feature. A few judicial benches at other locations have been fortified with shielding as remodeling projects were completed, and all new lease contracts require the landlord to provide judicial bench shielding. However, fifty-seven judge and in-court benches still need ballistic shielding for protection. Funding was appropriated in FY10, but a balance of \$153,500 is still needed to complete this work.

Surveillance cameras in screening entries, clerks' counters, lobbies, corridors and other high-risk areas will improve security in those locations where judicial services personnel are available to monitor the cameras and respond. The cameras allow court security officers to view the event circumstances when an alarm is activated. A complete video monitoring system costs approximately \$5,000 to install in each location in each courthouse. New advances in technology allow for multiplexing of video signals, which allows up to four cameras to output to a single monitor and recording device. Providing these systems at the remaining superior court locations is estimated to cost \$101,800.

Holding cells should be provided in all Superior Court locations, and several other court locations where criminal proceedings may be held and a local holding facility is not available. Without holding cells, the Judicial Services officers are required to hold prisoners in court staff areas during breaks in proceedings, presenting a critical safety and security concern.

At this time, holding cells are lacking and needed in the Aniak and Nome courthouses. The estimated cost is \$30,000 each (including plumbing for a security toilet) for a total of \$60,000. There are currently holding cells at Dillingham, but the doors are not secure and require replacement for \$5,000. In Anchorage, prisoner delivery to the Boney Courthouse is made by Judicial Services and Anchorage Police Department officers to an exterior secure door which leads to the holding cells. However, the parking area for dropping off prisoners is directly adjacent to staff parking. A screening wall is required to visually screen and secure the area for prisoner delivery and ensure safety for the staff and public. The cost for this is estimated at \$80,000.

The furniture at the screening station in the lobby of the Fairbanks courthouse does not adequately enclose the screening area. Additionally, a second screening station is needed to provide higher capacity for busy days, particularly to keep the public from waiting out in the cold. The total cost for this work is \$28,000.

Anchorage, Fairbanks, Bethel, Juneau, Palmer, and Kenai have recently completed or are in the design process for security projects with capital and grant funds appropriated to date; however, these courts still need additional access control, surveillance components, bullet-resistant shielding or other security elements and so remain on this list of courts requiring security work. Project management and engineering expense for the numerous security projects is estimated to be

\$203,900.

**Project Timeline:**

FY12 - \$1,231,600; FY13 - \$230,000; FY14 - \$101,800.

**Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:**

The Alaska Court System.

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Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority?  Yes  No