

Planning and Design for Court Facilities - Bethel and Palmer

FY2023 Request: \$980,000
Reference No: 64134

AP/AL: Appropriation **Project Type:** Research / Studies / Planning
Category: Law and Justice
Location: Bethel **House District:** Lower Kuskokwim (HD 38)
Impact House District: Lower Kuskokwim (HD 38) **Contact:** Rhonda McLeod
Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2022 - 06/30/2027 **Contact Phone:** (907)264-8215

Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

The Alaska Court System has renewed efforts to work with executive branch agencies to develop and build a Justice Center that would better serve the community of Bethel. The intent would be to incorporate a number of State of Alaska agencies into one facility to allow for ease of use and better community support.

Funding:	<u>FY2023</u>	<u>FY2024</u>	<u>FY2025</u>	<u>FY2026</u>	<u>FY2027</u>	<u>FY2028</u>	<u>Total</u>
1004 Gen Fund	\$980,000						\$980,000
Total:	\$980,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$980,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	0
Totals:	0	0

Prior Funding History / Additional Information:

SFCS1 moved to FY23 4/11/2022 The current facility that the Alaska Court System occupies has a number of issues, including space constraints, structural issues, lack of appropriate HVAC systems, and physical security challenges. The Alaska Court System had worked with local contractors and building owners in Bethel in the past to plan to remodel an existing structure, but when that became unavailable there were no other appropriate existing buildings to move forward with the original design.

Project Description/Justification:

This request is to engage designers to locate raw land and design a space that would be useful to many State agencies in Bethel and also provide significantly better service to the community. To facilitate this process, the Alaska Court System is requesting \$630,000 to conduct a feasibility study and for planning and design of a Bethel Justice Center.

The Palmer Courthouse has eight courtrooms and nine judicial officers. All courtrooms are in use throughout the day. The Palmer court has the highest number of superior court filings per superior court judge in the state. The case filings have grown along with the population (according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Matanuska- Susitna Borough has grown 21.7% in the past decade). To provide relief to the Palmer court, pro tem judges and judges from other courts in the third district are traveling to Palmer to hold trials and other court proceedings. Due to the limited availability of courtrooms,

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accommodating additional judges and juggling court calendars is very challenging, and, at times impossible. Adding two more courtrooms in the Palmer Courthouse would reduce delays in court proceedings. Planning and design funding totaling \$350,000 is requested for this project. For planning purposes, this would also accommodate new Palmer judges if it is determined that the continued increased population in the Mat-Su Valley and related case filings require additional judges for that court.