The following message is being sent for Ed Ellestad on October 27, 2025.

Dear committee members:

To maintain timely progress, I am sending this request for action-by-email between regularly scheduled committee meetings. As this would otherwise be discussed in an open meeting, we posted public notice to the advisory body webpage, allowing at least one complete business day for public comment (__ received).

This topic was discussed previously, as detailed below. The Judicial Council Facilities Services Office submitted a Budget Change Proposal (BCP) for fiscal year 2026-27 requesting funding to identify physical security deficiencies in trial court facilities throughout the state.

- The funding request was for one-time funds to allow contracted consultants to conduct security assessments at approximately 200 courthouses and identify security features that are lacking, using new courthouse construction standards as a guide.
- The request included ongoing funding for the staffing that would be necessary to manage the assessments and administer the related program: one Manager, one Security Coordinator, and one Associate Analyst.
- The data collected would be analyzed to identify deficiencies, providing a framework to obtain cost estimates for projects to address the deficiencies. Funding for those projects would be sought separately after the cost foundation was established.

If that BCP is unsuccessful, a new request must be started with a Budget Change Proposal Concept (BCPC). Thus, Facilities Services seeks your agreement to be the "requesting entity" listed on the attached 2027-28 Trial Court Physical Security BCPC for submission to the Judicial Branch Budget Committee.

Please reply-to-all with your questions or to indicate your approval by close-of-business on Friday, October 31. Please restrict communications regarding this proposal to e-mail. After the vote concludes, we will create minutes for your approval at the next open meeting. Thank you.

Tracking Number:

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Requesting Entity	Court Security Advisory Committee

Proposal Title	Trial Court Physical Security Assessment and Evaluation

Proposal Summary

The Judicial Council of California requests 3.0 positions and $2.7 million General Fund in fiscal year (FY) 2027–28 and $647,000 in FY 2028–29 and ongoing to conduct assessments, evaluations, and identification of physical security deficiencies in trial court facilities statewide.

Does this proposal require a statutory change? Yes ☐ No ☒

Does this proposal have an information technology component? Yes ☐ No ☒

Does this proposal require data collection or reporting? Yes ☐ No ☒

Proposed fund source: General Fund (0001)

Estimated Cost (Enter whole dollars rounded to thousands) *

Fiscal Year	2027-28 (BY)	2028-29 (BY+1)	2029-30 (BY+2)	2030-31 (BY+3)	2031-32 (BY+4)
Positions	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Personal Services	$688,000	$647,000	$647,000	$647,000	$647,000
Operating Expenses & Equipment	$2,000,000				
Local Assistance					
Total	$2,688,000	$647,000	$647,000	$647,000	$647,000
One-time	$2,000,000				
Ongoing	$688,000	$647,000	$647,000	$647,000	$647,000

*Please include all costs associated with request including costs for other offices and courts.

Problem or Issue

Many California trial court facilities lack adequate physical security elements as recognized by the Judicial Council's California Trial Court Facilities Standards (CTCFS) and the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) publication Steps to Best Practices for Court Building Security. These deficiencies create significant safety risks for the public, judicial officers, court staff, and justice partners.

While no security program can anticipate or prevent every incident, physical barriers such as bollards, reinforced entryways, and other deterrents are proven measures to reduce threats and limit damage. The absence of such features has resulted in serious security breaches in California court facilities:

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In 2007, a man drove his vehicle through the front doors of the Merced County Courthouse. With no bollards in place, he caused significant damage. A year later the same man burst into a packed courtroom wielding two knives he was fatally confronted by law enforcement.

In 2017, a woman drove her vehicle into the Sacramento Jail Courthouse, damaging the entrance and security screening equipment. Again, no protective barriers were present.

The presence of physical security features averted damage or injury. In 2022, at the Madera Courthouse, a truck was prevented from striking the building only because an existing concrete bench and stairs served as unintended barriers.

These incidents underscore the vulnerability of court facilities and the need for systematic evaluation and investment in physical security infrastructure.

Information about these deficiencies has been gathered from deferred security facilities modifications; court requests; and limited court security assessment conducted by the Judicial Council's Emergency Planning and Security Coordination Unit. However, this information remains incomplete and fragmented, leaving the Judicial Council without a comprehensive assessment of statewide security needs by category.

Currently, no dedicated funds are available for the evaluation and identification of physical security deficiencies. In addition, staffing levels are not adequate to manage and administer the assessment and projects. This request includes the one-time funding to retain consulting services to assist Judicial Council staff with the assessment of 200 court facilities and ongoing resources for the staff necessary to administer the assessments, create prioritization, and to implement future projects. Data from the assessments will be analyzed and cost estimates will be used to determine the amount of a funding request to address the identified deficiencies.

To address this gap, the Judicial Council request $2.0 million one-time funding to retain consulting services to conduct an in-depth security assessment at 200 court facilities beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 2027–28 with an estimated completion by FY 2029–30. The assessment will provide cost estimates and evaluations of physical security elements to identify deficiencies. Additionally, 3.0 positions are needed, 1.0 Manager, 1.0 Security Coordinator, and 1.0 Associate Analyst to develop a prioritization plan of the identified deficiencies, manage, administer, and monitor the evaluation process and ongoing analysis of the resulting data. These resources are critical to ensuring that deficiencies are systematically addressed, risks are mitigated, and future funding requests are based on comprehensive, data-driven analysis.

Background/History of Problem

Physical security requirements and best practices have evolved significantly over the years, as detailed in the CTCFS and the NCSC publication "Steps to Best Practices for Court Building Security" (rev. June 2022). Key physical security elements—consisting of ballistic glazing, secure judicial parking, vehicle barriers, clerk's counters and weapons screening vestibules are vital components in ensuring security of the public, judicial officers, and court personnel.

In a prior Budget Change Proposal (BCP), the Judicial Council received funding dedicated to electronic security systems, such as security video, electronic access control, duress alarm, and detention control systems. However, those resources are not available for use for assessing, evaluating, and identifying physical security deficiencies in trial courts.

The CTCFS ensures that the physical security features are included in the design and construction of new court facilities. The requested funding will be used to assess 200 facilities older than 2005.

The lack of dedicated resources has limited the ability to assess and identify physical security deficiencies. As a result, most of the facilities have not had improvements or upgrades in this area resulting in the facility operating without many of the security features identified in the NCSC best practices document or the CTCFS. Because dedicated funding to assess, evaluate and identify physical security deficiencies has not been allocated, a comprehensive list of deficiencies and related projects is not available.

Impact of Denial of Proposal

Denial of the proposal will result in the continued lack of assessment, evaluation, and identification of physical security deficiencies in many courthouses. Failure to identify existing security deficiencies will result in continued vulnerability, risk and liability to facilities, the public and court staff. Insufficient funds exist to absorb the proposed assessment and evaluation project into current programs. Continued delays in evaluating and identifying physical security deficiencies will result in higher cost in addressing them in future fiscal years due to normal escalation cost increases for labor and materials.

Outcomes and Accountability of Proposal

Physical security assessments of up to 200 trial court facilities will be completed with the proposed funds and will be overseen and approved by the Court Security Advisory Committee (CSAC). The evaluated projects will be monitored and accounted for using appropriate inventory tracking methods and standard general accounting principles.

CSAC makes recommendations to the council for improving court security, including personal security and emergency response planning. The committee provides ongoing oversight of the Judicial Council Facilities Security programs and is regularly informed of facilities security related costs, Facilities Services is obligated by the California Rules of Court to provide regular reporting to the advisory committee.

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In addition, this funding request advances the diversity, equity, and inclusion priorities of the administration by ensuring that residents from every California county have access to buildings that are designed, built, and maintained according to standards (the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, the California Building Code) that ensure full access by all individuals, regardless of their abilities. The essence of the enabling legislation of the judicial branch's facilities program is equity across the state: uniformly safe, secure, and well-maintained facilities were the goals established in 2002 and remain the mission of the facilities program today.

Required Review/Approval

Court Security Advisory Committee

Proposal is Consistent with the Following Strategic Plan Goals/Other Considerations

Goal I: Access, Fairness, Diversity, and Inclusion
Goal II: Independence and Accountability
Goal VI: Branchwide Infrastructure for Service Excellence
Goal VII: Adequate, Stable, and Predictable Funding for a Fully Functioning Branch

Approval

I certify that I have reviewed this concept and an accurate, succinct, well written, and effectively justified request is being submitted.

Director Signature: Type your name to enter signature.

Contact Name: Edward Ellestad