



Courts of Mississippi

Five Year Strategic Plan — July 9, 2025

FY 2027-2031

Business Area 1051

1. MISSION STATEMENT:

The judicial power of the State shall be vested in the Supreme Court and such other courts as are provided for in our Constitution. Miss. Const. of 1890, Art. VI, § 144. The mission of every court is to **administer justice without respect to persons and do equal right to the poor and to the rich**, and faithfully and impartially discharge and perform all the duties incumbent upon the Court to the best of each judge's ability and understanding, agreeably to the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution and laws of the state of Mississippi. Miss. Const. of 1890, Article VI, § 155.

2. PHILOSOPHY:

Administration of Justice requires an open courthouse door to all, the hearing of cases and rendering of justice pursuant to the Law.

The judges of the courts of this state take the Oath as recited above (Mission Statement). Our society is faced with many challenges: crime, mental health, substance addiction, poverty, and collapse of the family structure. Courts strive to be the solution.

We provide an impartial forum for all litigants, civil and criminal alike, to resolve disputes. To accomplish justice and be true problem solvers, courts are committed to improving the legal system and providing the resources and tools available to resolve problems and ensure justice for all.

3. RELEVANT STATEWIDE GOALS AND BENCHMARKS:

Statewide Goal — Government and Citizens:

To create an efficient government and an informed and engaged citizenry that help to address social problems through the payment of taxes, the election of capable leaders at all levels of government, and participation in charitable organizations through contributions and volunteerism.¹

¹ As allowed by the judicial canons.

Relevant Benchmarks:

- Government Efficiency
 - Administrative efficiency: Expenditures on state government administrative activities as a percentage of total operational expenditures
- Average wait time for state government services²
- State dollars saved by providing government services online
- Percentage of state employees leaving state service within five years of employment

4. OVERVIEW OF THE FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN:

The mission of the Judicial branch, to include but not limited to, "to administer justice without respect to persons" remains unchanged since our Constitution was adopted. The Judiciary is comprised of 568 judges and thousands of court personnel statewide.

The Judiciary seeks to uphold its mission while seeking to perform all duties within its constitutional authority that will assist the State and its citizens with conserving precious assets, both monetary and humanitarian. To accomplish these goals, we address specific areas that are under the auspices of the Judiciary in the pages that follow.

FIVE YEAR FOCUS

Throughout the next five years the Judiciary will continue its focus and achievement of these interrelated priorities:

Economic Impact

- Intervention Courts
 - Graduates of Intervention Courts have resulted in adding more than 10,000 people into the workforce of our State since FY2006.
 - Employment of participants during and after program completion
 - Increased collection of fines, fees, and victim restitution on county level from intervention court participants
 - Continue to improve the workings of mental health courts, whether stand alone or as a track
- Court Reporter Shortage
 - Respond to an urgent need for well-trained professional, certified court reporters to record, transcribe, and create official court records of court proceedings
 - Coordinate development of additional court reporter schools
 - Continue to graduate more qualified court reporters
 - Explore impact of using automated systems where court reporters are unavailable

Continuous Focus on Serving the Individual

- Increase *Access to Justice*³ voluntary legal services to all Mississippians

² The average wait time is calculated at the Appellate Court level.

³ The Mississippi Supreme Court created the Access to Justice Commission in 2006 to develop a unified strategy to improve access to the civil courts for the poor. As of July 1, 2025, Access to Justice is now housed at the AOC.

- Provide optimum access to civil courts and volunteer legal clinics for low-income individuals
- Promote volunteerism by court personnel and Bar members
- Increase pro-bono services offered, such as providing guardianships, adoptions, etc., without legal fees
- Increase Language Access to LEP (limited English proficient) individuals via court interpreters
- Develop infrastructure of the Judiciary to include mental health courts and veterans' courts to satisfy legislative requirements to address unmet needs
- Secure optimal federal funding to aid in the establishment of judicial programs
- Continuous process improvement of court rules, procedure, and service delivery
- Ongoing pursuit of federal and state grant opportunities

Ongoing Commitment to Accountability Programs

- Intervention Courts - Drug, Veterans and Mental Health
 - Continue to realize savings to the State as an alternative to incarceration - Estimated \$370,660,080 in incarceration cost savings for FY276 – FY31.⁴

Expansion of Technology and Utilization Statewide - "Deliver Services to all Mississippians"

- Digital recordings of trial court proceedings in courts of record
- Digital transcription of trial court proceedings in courts of record
- Mississippi Electronic Courts (MEC) - implementation in all chancery, circuit, and county courts was completed at the end of FY2025. MEC will interface with state agencies including, but not limited to, Department of Corrections and Department of Public Safety to streamline submission process and seamless transmission of data between entities.
- Ongoing pursuit of federal and state grant opportunities for technology
- Develop and implement changes from the internal audit of Mississippi Youth Court Information Delivery System (MYCIDS) to better serve parties

Mitigate Turnover and Achieve Greater Retention of Court Personnel

- Continuing to increase appropriation for court personnel salaries at all levels of the Judiciary consistent with the other branches of government
- Review of organizational structure to align the right person (skill set and experience) in the right position/role and compensate accordingly

5. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

External Factors

- COVID-19 - continuing impact
- Inflation - staff reduction / unemployment
- Fluctuations in federal program appropriations and federal grant funding for states
- Annual Legislative Budget Appropriations - Flat or reduced budget appropriations impact salaries, PINs, and programs
- Existing and perspective unfunded mandates

⁴ According to PEER Publication #711 dated December 9, 2024, the average cost per day to house an inmate in the Mississippi Department of Corrections is \$65.35 (\$23,852 per year). Mississippi intervention courts projected average in FY25 is 3,108 adult felony participants per year. Per FY25, 3,108 participants times \$23,852 represents a total savings of \$74,132,016. For FY2027 through FY2031 the total savings to the Mississippi Department of Corrections is an estimated \$370,660,080.

- Impact on compliance of mandated legislative programs such as drug intervention, veterans and mental health intervention courts, and any future programs mandated by the Legislature
- Influence by national organizations advocating for adoption of their respective agendas
- Cyber security - compliance to ensure Personal Identifying Information (PII) security
- Grant funding - fluctuations of funding from public and private sources
- International Landscape
- Continued Supply Chain Shortages
- State and Federal Elections

Internal Factors

- Compensation challenges
 - Retention of court personnel
 - Attracting qualified personnel, especially specialized professionals
 - Securing PINs for right size staffing of key talent
- Reduced Annual Appropriations
 - Understaffing due to budget cuts
 - Limitations on expansion of services to counties and individuals
- Greater Efficiencies and Savings
 - Continue to identify ways to achieve greater efficiencies and savings while continuing to be **good stewards of the State's appropriations**
 - Re-engineer existing processes to identify and minimize/eliminate waste to achieve greater savings in the areas of time management, human resources, and purchasing

6. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

PROGRAM 050-00: SUPREME COURT SERVICES

Goal A: To operate a fair and effective system of justice.

Objective A.1: Render the efficient and timely disposition of all matters brought before the Court

Outcome: Percentage of cases disposed of within 270 days of filing of final brief

Outcome: Percentage of writs of certiorari disposed of within 180 days after acceptance

Outcome: Average increase per year in total number of motions disposed of

A.1.1. Strategy: Implement a program to track cases, certs, and motions, dates of filings, and dates of disposition

Output: Number of case decisions issued by the Supreme Court

Output: Number of motion decisions issued by the Supreme Court

Output: Number of cases dismissed by the Supreme Court

Output: Number of motions decided/disposed of by the Supreme Court

Efficiency: Average number of days to decide cases after filing of final brief

Efficiency: Average number of days to decide motions

Objective A.2: To administer a timely and efficient case flow management system for all case filings received by the Supreme Court

Outcome: Percentage of delinquent fees collected

Outcome: Percentage of decisions and mandates disseminated timely

A.2.1. Strategy: Calendar all filings promptly and determine compliance with rules of the Court, including any jurisdictional requirements and framework

Output: Number of Notices of Appeal filed for the Supreme Court

Output: Number of records filed for the Supreme Court

Output: Number of briefs filed for the Supreme Court

Output: Number of motions filed for the Supreme Court

Output: Number of Dispositions disseminated

Output: Total amount collected from Clerk fees generated

Output: Number of procedural motions processed by the Clerk

Output: Number of orders processed by the Clerk

Output: Number of Certiorari petitions filed for the Supreme Court

Output: Number of Interlocutory Appeals granted for the Supreme Court

Output: Number of Mandates issued by the Clerk

Efficiency: Average amount of fees collected per case filed

Efficiency: Average number of dispositions disseminated

Efficiency: Average number of days to track record preparation and briefing

Efficiency: Average number of days to disseminate court decisions upon entry in the Clerk's office

Efficiency: Average number of days to issue mandates after Court decisions or ruling or rehearing

Objection A.3: To provide current legal research and reference services for the Supreme Court, state courts, state officials, and the general public in a complete and timely manner

Outcome: Percentage increase in new titles added

Outcome: Percentage increase in government documents processed

A.3.1 Strategy: Develop internal procedures for tracking reference requests and response times

Output: Number of bound volumes processed

Output: Number of new titles added to the collection

Output: Number of government documents processed

Output: Total amount collected from library fees generated

Output: Number of patrons served

Efficiency: Average response time (minutes) for reference questions

PROGRAM 051-00: CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION (CLE)

Goal A: To operate an efficient commission on continuing legal education.

Objective A:1: Ensure each member of the Bar complies with the rules and regulations established by the Commission and meets the mandatory CLE requirements in a timely and efficient manner.

Outcome: Percentage of delinquent attorneys
Outcome: Percentage of program requests answered
Outcome: Percentage of CLE seminars entered

A.1.1. Strategy: Develop new internal management system to full automate the CLE department

Output: Number of Bar members reported

Output: Number of program requests received

Output: Number of CLE seminars requested

Output: Number of months to compile reports

Efficiency: Average amount of fees collected yearly per attorney

Efficiency: Average amount of fees collected yearly per sponsor

PROGRAM 052-00: TRIAL JUDGES

Goal A: To operate a fair and effective system of justice.

Objective A-1: Directly support the constitutionally mandated duties of the trial judges of the state and related personnel

Outcome: Percentage of Trial Judge Office Allowance Reimbursed Compared to the Total Appropriation

Outcome: Percentage of Trial Judge Rent Allowance Reimbursed Compared to the Total Appropriation

Outcome: Percentage of Trial Judge Support Staff Allowance Reimbursed Compared to the Total Appropriation

A.1.1. Strategy: Develop system to effectively manage and distribute salaries in timely manner

Output: Number of chancery judges served

Output: Number of circuit judges served

Output: Number of trial judge support staff served

Output: Number of court reporters served

Efficiency: Average number of court reporters paid monthly

Efficiency: Average number of trial judge support staff paid monthly

Efficiency: Average number of counties who timely pay their share of trial judge support staff

PROGRAM 053-00: COURT OF APPEALS

Goal A: To operate a fair and effective system of justice.

Objective A.1: Render the efficient and timely disposition of all matters brought before the Court

Outcome: Percentage of cases disposed of within 270 days of filing of final brief

A.1.1. Strategy: Implement a program to track cases, dates of filings, and dates of disposition

Output: Number of case decisions issued by the Court of Appeals
Output: Number of motion decisions issued by the Court of Appeals
Output: Number of cases dismissed by the Court of Appeals
Output: Number of motions decided/disposed of by the Court of Appeals
Efficiency: Average number of days to decide cases after filing of final brief
Efficiency: Average number of days to decide motions

Objective A.2: To administer a timely and efficient case flow management system for all case filings received by the Court of Appeals

Outcome: Percentage of delinquent fees collected

Outcome: Percentage of decisions and mandates disseminated timely

A.2.1. Strategy: Calendar all filings promptly and determine compliance with rules of the Court, including any jurisdictional requirements and framework

Output: Number of records filed for the Court of Appeals

Output: Number of Dispositions disseminated

Output: Number of briefs filed for the Court of Appeals

Output: Number of motions filed for the Court of Appeals

Output: Number of procedural motions processed by the Clerk

Output: Number of orders processed by the Clerk

Output: Number of Certiorari petitions filed for the Court of Appeals

Output: Number of Interlocutory Appeals granted for the Court of Appeals

Output: Number of Mandates issued by the Clerk

Efficiency: Average amount of fees collected per case filed

Efficiency: Average number of dispositions disseminated

Efficiency: Average number of days to track record preparation and briefing

Efficiency: Average number of days to disseminate court decisions upon entry in the Clerk's office

Efficiency: Average number of days to issue mandates after Court decisions or ruling or rehearing

PROGRAM 054-00: ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF COURTS

Goal A: To operate a fair and effective system of justice.

Objective A-1: Administrative Office of Courts: To provide administrative support to chancery, circuit, and county judges.

Outcome: Percentage of Court Administrators compliant with certification

Outcome: Percentage of Circuit Clerks compliant with statute

Outcome: Percentage of Municipal Clerks compliant with statute

Outcome: Percentage of Justice Court Clerks compliant with statute

Outcome: Percentage of Fees, based on newly filed cases, not submitted by clerks

A.1.1. Strategy: Develop process with DFA to ensure all fees are collected and deposited with Finance Department

Output: Number of chancery judges served
Output: Number of circuit judges served
Output: Number of county judges served
Efficiency: Average number of Certified Court Administrators
Efficiency: Average number of Circuit Clerks who timely report statistics for PEER report
Efficiency: Average number of Municipal Clerks who timely report statistics for PEER report
Efficiency: Average number of Justice Court Clerks who timely report statistics for PEER report
Efficiency: Amount of Filing Fees collected from clerks for Judicial Systems Operations Fund

Objective A-2: Certified Court Reporters: To administer examinations to applicants for certification purposes, issuing certificates, promulgating regulations, and exercising jurisdiction over disciplinary matters.

Outcome: Percent of applicants in compliance with the Rules governing certified court reporters

Outcome: Percentage increase (decrease) in number of Certified Court Reporter applications

Outcome: Percentage of increase (decrease) in number of complaints filed against certified court reporters

A.2.1. Strategy: Recruit new court reporters statewide

Output: Number of court reporters certified annually

Output: Number of court reporters recertified annually

Efficiency: Average annual certification fees collected

Efficiency: Average annual recertification fees collected

Objective A-3: Youth Courts: To improve the plight of Mississippi's children in need through judicial reform, legislative initiatives, and the dissemination of educational materials addressing the complex area of child protective issues.

Outcome: Percentage of allowable youth court support funds reimbursed to county courts compared to total allocation

Outcome: Percentage of allowable youth court support funds reimbursed to referee courts compared total allocation

Outcome: Percentage of allowable youth court support funds reimbursed to chancery courts compared to total allocation

Outcome: Percentage of youth court support funds reimbursed for intake officers' salaries

Outcome: Percentage of youth court support funds reimbursed for expenses other than intake salaries

A.3.1. Strategy: Collect independent system assessments (technology, child welfare, juvenile justice, and cross over youth) in addition to federal funding experts into actionable statewide plan

Output: Number of county courts serving as youth courts

Output: Number of referee courts serving as youth courts

Output: Number of chancery courts serving as youth courts

Output: Number of Intake officers

Efficiency: Number of county courts timely submitting reimbursement forms for youth court support funds

Efficiency: Number of referee courts timely submitting reimbursement forms for youth court support funds

Efficiency: Number of chancery courts timely submitting reimbursement forms for youth court support funds

Efficiency: Number of County courts in compliance with statutory mandates

Efficiency: Number of Referee courts in compliance with statutory mandates

Efficiency: Number of Chancery courts in compliance with statutory mandates

Objective A-4: Adult Felony Drug Court Fund: To provide dispositional alternatives for judicial matters involving adults with substance use disorders

Outcome: Percentage increase (decrease) in the number of participants who have successfully completed the program

Outcome: Percentage increase (decrease) in the number of babies born drug-free who were at risk of being born drug-addicted

Outcome: Percentage increase (decrease) in the amount of fines/fees collected from participants

A.4.1. Strategy: Increase number of intervention courts statewide

Output: Number of drug courts operating

Output: Number of Adult clients served by drug court programs

Output: Number of counties served by drug court programs

Output: Number of fiscal reports reviewed and processed monthly

Output: Number of programmatic reports reviewed and processed monthly

Output: Amount of fines collected from participants

Output: Amount of fees collected from participants

Efficiency: Average cost per felony drug court program

Efficiency: Savings to state by not incarcerating drug court clients

Objective A-5: Mississippi Electronic Case Management (MEC): To provide a uniform case management and electronic filing system to all chancery, circuit, and county courts in the state and to provide online public access to court records.

Outcome: Percentage increase in usage fees collected and distributed to clerks

Outcome: Percentage increase in number of courts using MEC

Outcome: Percentage increase in number of electronic filings

Outcome: Percentage increase in number of electronic documents available to the public

Outcome: Percentage increase in number of public users

Outcome: Percent of active Mississippi attorneys registered

Outcome: Percent of Mississippi population served by county courts using MEC

Outcome: Percent of Mississippi population served by the chancery courts utilizing MEC

Outcome: Percent of Mississippi population served by the circuit courts utilizing MEC

Outcome: Percentage of County courts using MEC

Outcome: Percentage of Chancery courts using MEC

Outcome: Percentage of Circuit courts using MEC

A.5.1. Strategy: Improve the functioning of MEC now that all courts are on

Output: Number of chancery courts using MEC

Output: Number of circuit courts using MEC

Output: Number of county courts using MEC

Output: Number of electronic documents viewed online by public.

Output: Number of data sharing interfaces with other agencies

Efficiency: Average amount of usage fees collected annually

Efficiency: Average amount of usage fees returned to court district

Objective A-6: Court Interpreters Program: Provide training and certification to individuals who wish to serve as interpreters in the courtrooms of Mississippi.

Outcome: Increase in number of available languages offered by interpreters

Outcome: Increase in number of credentialed interpreters

A.6.1. Strategy: Maintain up-to-date registry of registered and certified court interpreters

Output: Number of prospective interpreters tested for the written examination

Output: Number of interpreters who passed the written examination

Output: Number of interpreters taking the oral proficiency examination

Output: Number of interpreters who passed the oral proficiency examination

Output: Number of newly certified court interpreters

Output: Number of new registered court interpreters

Efficiency: Amount of fees collected for orientation

Efficiency: Amount of fees collected for application

Efficiency: Amount of fees collected for testing

Objective A-7: Youth and Family Drug Court Fund: To provide dispositional alternatives for judicial matters involving youth and families with substance use disorders

Outcome: Percentage increase (decrease) in the number of participants who have successfully completed the program

Outcome: Percentage increase (decrease) in the number of babies born drug-free who were at risk of being born drug-addicted

Outcome: Percentage increase (decrease) in the amount of fines/fees collected from participants

A.7.1. Strategy: Increase number of intervention courts statewide

Output: Number of drug courts operating

Output: Number of Youth and Family clients served by drug court programs

Output: Number of counties served by drug court programs

Output: Number of fiscal reports reviewed and processed monthly

Output: Number of programmatic reports reviewed and processed monthly

Efficiency: Average cost per youth drug court program

Efficiency: Average cost per family drug court program

Objective A-8: Mental Health Treatment Court Fund: To provide dispositional alternatives for judicial matters involving adults with mental health disorders

Outcome: Percentage increase (decrease) in the number of participants who have successfully completed the program

Outcome: Percentage increase (decrease) in the number of participants enrolled in the program

Outcome: Percentage increase (decrease) in the number of resources available for participants

A.8.1. Strategy: Analyze two pilot programs to determine if it is feasible to operate statewide

Output: Number of mental health courts operating

Output: Number of clients served by mental health court programs

Output: Number of counties served by mental health court programs

Output: Number of fiscal reports reviewed and processed monthly

Output: Number of programmatic reports reviewed and processed monthly

Efficiency: Average cost per mental health court program

Objective A-9: Mississippi Access to Justice: Create an efficient government and informed and engaged citizenry by increasing participation in charitable organizations through contributions and volunteerism

Outcome: Increase (decrease) in rank of the state in justice index survey

Outcome: Increase (decrease) in amount of fees collected from *pro hac vice* attorneys

Outcome: Increase (decrease) in amount of fees collected from attorneys who did not provide any pro bono hours

Outcome: Increase (decrease) in amount of self-reported pro bono hours

A.9.1. Strategy: Increase offerings of legal clinics for attorneys to provide aid to low-income citizens

Output: Number of Mississippians provided with free legal assistance

Output: Number of free legal clinics provided to the poor

Output: Number of volunteer attorneys participating in providing free legal assistance

Efficiency: Rank of the state in the most recent justice index survey

Efficiency: Average amount of fees collected from *pro hac vice* attorneys

Efficiency: Average amount of fees collected from attorneys who did not provide any pro bono hours

Efficiency: Increase (decrease) in amount of self-reported pro bono hours

Objection A-10: CCID Court: To hear and determine all preliminary matters and criminal matters authorized by law for municipal courts within the boundaries of the Capitol Complex Improvement District

Outcome: Increase (decrease) in amount of fees collected and transferred to the City of Jackson

A.10.1 Strategy: Continue to work with all relevant agencies to improve CCID court

Output: Average number of tickets processed per month

Output: Average number of initial appearances per felony and misdemeanor per month

Output: Average number of criminal trials per month

Output: Average number of traffic tickets per month

Output: Average number of preliminary hearings per month

Efficiency: Average amount of fees collected and transferred to the City of Jackson per month

PROGRAM 055-00: BOARD OF BAR ADMISSIONS

Goal A: To create an efficient government.

Objective A-1: Ensure applicants comply with the rules governing admissions for the MS Bar and administer and evaluate the Bar Examination semi-annually.

Outcome: Percent of applications investigated

Outcome: Bar exam passage rate (percentage)

A.1.1. Strategy: Review rules to determine necessary changes with upcoming NextGen UBE role out

Output: Number of bar exam applicants

Output: Number of law student applicants

Output: Character/Fitness hearings held

Output: Character and Fitness Committee - informal conferences held

Output: Appeals hearings held

Output: Number of Admissions on Motion applicants

Efficiency: Number of weeks to complete investigation

Efficiency: Cost per out-of-state character investigations for law students

Efficiency: Cost per out-of-state character investigations for attorneys

Efficiency: Minimum court reporter costs for hearings

Efficiency: Committee member cost for one-day hearings