

Staff Report

Subject: Approve to accept the grant award for the Judicial Council of Georgia AOC's American Rescue Plan Act grant funding in order to support Georgia's Judicial Branches backlog of court cases

Author: Jody A. Jones, Grants Coordinator, presented by Mark W. Barnes

Department: Finance Department

Meeting Date: 3/7/23

Item Description: Consideration of approval to accept grant award of the Judicial Council of Georgia AOC's office to support the backlog of court cases, in the amount of \$54,995.14

Summary Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval to accept the grant award from the Judicial Council of Georgia AOC's American Rescue Plan Act to support the backlog of court cases grant program.

Executive Summary:

Governor Brian P. Kemp has allocated up to \$110 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to address backlogs of court cases, particularly cases involving serious violent felonies. This ARPA funding will provide an opportunity for courts, prosecutors, public defenders, and related agencies to hire additional staff and acquire temporary workspace and facilities to address the backlog of cases. Priority will be given to eliminating the backlog of serious violent felony cases in superior courts because of the impact such cases have on public safety and the significant burdens that they place on the judicial system. Allowable costs include jury expenditures for the trial of cases that are part of the case backlog caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Judicial Council of Georgia Ad Hoc Committee on American Rescue Plan Act Funding ("ARPA Committee") will oversee the application process for \$96 million in ARPA grants to authorized trial courts (excluding municipal courts), appellate courts, prosecutors, and related agencies. The remaining \$14 million in ARPA funds is allocated to public defenders and will be administered by the Georgia Public Defender Council. The Judicial Council's Administrative Office of the Courts will staff the ARPA Committee and facilitate the Judicial Council's grant application, awarding, compliance, reporting, and reimbursement processes.

Background:

1. The Ogeechee Judicial Circuit and Bulloch County Board of Commissioners are the primary fiscal agents of this award, and are coordinating with counties within the circuit for these jury-related cost reimbursements.
2. The funds represent a reimbursement of jury duty fees as well as a reimbursement for certain personnel costs related to these jury trials.
3. The award amount is \$54,995.15.

Alternatives for Commission to Consider:

1. Approve to accept the grant award for the Judicial Council of Georgia AOC's American Rescue Plan Act grant funding in order to support Georgia's Judicial Branches backlog of court cases.
2. Do not approve to accept the grant award.
3. Provide Staff with Direction

Recommended Alternative:

Staff recommends Alternative number 1 – Approve to accept the grant award for the Judicial Council of Georgia AOC's American Rescue Plan Act grant funding in order to support Georgia's Judicial Branches backlog of court cases.

Other Alternatives:

N/A

Department Review: *(list departments)*

Finance

Funding Source:

Jury expenditures originally paid out of general fund.

Attachments:

Grant award check

Judicial Council of Georgia ARPA Overview