

**Trial Court Improvement
ARPA Subgrant
Policies and Guidelines**

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**Administrative Office of the Courts
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I. PURPOSE

This document sets forth the requirements for Nevada trial courts seeking grant funding of up to \$200,000 through the Trial Court Improvement ARPA Subgrant. Grant funding may be used for projects in many qualifying areas, including, but not limited to: USJR, for projects improving the ability to provide accurate and timely mandatory USJR statistical information to the Nevada Supreme Court; trial court improvement for projects in the areas of technology, security, and court interpreters; training for judges and court staff; and projects designed to improve public access to justice. This grant cannot be used for specialty court-related projects, reoccurring fees, or personnel costs.

The goal of this document is to provide a vehicle for all Nevada trial courts to compete for the limited funds available on an equal basis and to ensure grant funding is fairly allocated. In order to prioritize grant funding requests, properly account for the funds, remain neutral and fair to all courts, and maintain the integrity of the grant program, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) expects applicants to provide all required information, as outlined in these guidelines, within the established timeframes. Requested documentation also helps to ensure all projects are well-conceived, documented, and planned. These are basic project management fundamentals known to increase the success rate of funded projects.

II. QUALIFYING AREAS

A. Uniform System for Judicial Records

USJR is defined as “a system by which statistics and other data regarding the operation of the State Court System are collected, compiled, and transmitted to the Supreme Court.”¹ Qualifying criteria for the allocation of assessment fees distributed to the Office of the Court Administrator for the “development of a uniform system for judicial records”² are listed in priority and include:

- **Statewide Statistical Systems and Automation Effort:** hardware, software, consulting services, and limited term personnel necessary to collect, compile, analyze, and publish statistics of the judicial branch at the state level. Endeavors that provide services to the courts to support their efforts to apply technology to the work of their court as it pertains to the USJR also fall in this category.

B. Trial Court Improvement Projects

Trial Court Improvement projects address court ordered, statutory, or procedural requirements in the areas of technology, security, and court interpreters for Nevada trial courts. Projects meeting multiple selection criteria will receive preference.

- Examples of projects that may be eligible for grant funding under the TCI grant are JAVS systems, security enhancements, and court interpreter credentialing sponsorship.

¹ NRS 1.360(4)

² NRS 176.059(8)(a)(1)(II)

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C. Training

This category includes projects designed to improve court personnel skillsets, knowledge, and performance.

D. Access to Justice Improvements

Access to justice improvement projects are those designed to increase and improve public trust in and access to the justice system.

III. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All applications for Trial Court Improvement ARPA Subgrant funding must contain the information identified below. Depending on the size and scope of the project or request, some sections may not be applicable. If a section does not apply, please include the section with the comment “Not Applicable.” All applications must include a cover sheet, a project narrative, at least one current vendor quote, and a signed assurances form. **Applicants requesting funds of \$50,000 or more must submit three current vendor quotes.**

A. Required documents (documents are available in fillable PDF format via the Trial Court Improvement ARPA Subgrant webpage on the Supreme Court’s website)

1. **Cover Sheet:** serves as a checklist of required documents for submittal. The intended use is to help the requester ensure all required documents are completed and included in the grant submission packet. The Judge(s), Chief Judge, or Court Administrator of the requesting court must sign the cover sheet. This signature denotes the proposed project has been approved by the court. If grant funding for the project is approved by the AOC, the authorizing official or specified designee will receive, administer, and be accountable for the awarded funds and project reporting.
2. **Project Narrative:** should address the specific qualifying area identified in the particular request for grant funds. The project narrative should be thorough, yet brief and should not exceed 6 pages. The page limit does not include the budget form, assurances, any appendices, or vendor quotes. Additional background information may be attached if it is essential to impart a clear understanding of the proposed project. Numerous and lengthy appendices are discouraged. The project narrative should describe:
 - a. Statement of Problem: Why this project is needed and how it will benefit the requesting court? The narrative should include a clear, concise statement of what the proposed project is intended to accomplish. Courts seeking these funds must demonstrate a need for the funding and explain how these grant funds would alleviate that need. Additionally, the narrative should describe how the project falls within the qualifying areas and aligns with federal ARPA project goals.
 - b. Project Design and Implementation: The narrative should delineate the tasks to be performed in achieving the project objectives and the methods to be used for accomplishing each task, including the anticipated length of the project or grant period. Applications should: describe alternative solutions, such as equipment, software and communication strategies, considered; include their strengths and weaknesses; and explain why the proposed solution was chosen over the

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alternatives. Additionally, applicants should describe any relevant existing resources and how those resources will be utilized in the completion and/or maintenance of the grant project.

- c. Capacity to Manage Project: Applications should demonstrate the requesting court's ability to manage the project. If third-party consultants or contractors will be used, include their names, qualifications, selection process, and their project roles and responsibilities.
- d. Plan for Evaluation of Project Success: The application should address how the project will be evaluated, including the evaluation criteria.
3. **Budget Worksheet and Vendor Quotes**: The Trial Court Improvement ARPA Subgrant Application Budget Worksheet must be completed and included with the grant application. Please include **one** current vendor quote to support your budget worksheet. Applicants requesting funds of \$50,000 or more must include **three** current vendor quotes.
4. **Assurances Form**: This form is available via the Trial Court Improvement ARPA Subgrant webpage; it must be thoroughly reviewed and signed by the court judge or administrator.

B. Submission Methods and Timeline

1. Grant requests must be post-marked or received between March 18, 2024 and April 30, 2024. Applications received outside of this window will not be accepted.
2. Grant awards are expected to be announced by July 1, 2024. Grant funds are to be dispersed to selected courts by December 31, 2024. Projects funded by the Trial Court Improvement ARPA Subgrant must be completed, and all funds expended, by September 30, 2026. Final reports are due by December 31, 2026.
3. Courts seeking funding for multiple projects must submit a separate and complete application for each grant project; each application shall contain the original signature of the judge or court administrator.
4. The Trial Court Improvement ARPA Subgrant program is open to Nevada trial courts only. Trial Court Improvement ARPA Subgrant Agreements must be between the AOC and Nevada trial courts via the judge or court administrator. No third party may enter into a Trial Court Improvement ARPA Subgrant agreement on behalf of a trial court.
5. Please send all applications to:

Via mail at:

**AOC Grant Program Administrator
Administrative Office of the Courts
201 South Carson Street, Suite 250
Carson City, NV 89701**

Or via email at:

aocgrant@nvcourts.nv.gov

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V. REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS

AOC grant requests are evaluated competitively against other requests received within the award submission period. AOC is committed to ensuring a fair and open process of awarding grant funds. Applications are reviewed by the AOC's Grant Review Board, made up of AOC grant program administrators and AOC staff experts in the areas of the requests. When necessary, applications may also be reviewed by outside experts.

The Grant Review Board first reviews each request to assess completion of the required documents. A second review evaluates whether the request is reasonable, understandable, achievable, and within the parameters of the qualifying areas of the applicable grant. During this process, grant requests are evaluated and ranked based on several factors, including need and the requester's compliance with reporting requirements (MAS, USJR, previous grant cycle awards, etc.) Courts previously awarded funding must be in compliance with all reporting requirements, as provided in the grant agreement, in order to be considered for funding in any future grant cycles.

The AOC Grant Program Administrator will send written notice to each applicant concerning decisions to approve, conditionally approve, defer, or deny funding of their projects and the key issues and questions that were raised during the review process. A decision to deny funding of a project may not be appealed. Subgrant recipients are required to submit the Trial Court Improvement ARPA Subgrant Subrecipient Risk Assessment to the AOC Grant Program Administrator prior to being awarded subgrant funding.

If conditionally approved or if additional information is needed, a notice requesting the additional information will be sent to the requesting court. Courts have until the date indicated in the notice to respond with the information or provide any requested revisions. If the requested revisions (or a reasonable schedule for submitting such revisions) have not been received by the date indicated in the notice, the conditional approval will be reconsidered and may be deferred or denied. Subgrant approval and awarding of funds is contingent upon receipt and approval of the Trial Court Improvement ARPA Subgrant Subrecipient Risk Assessment form.

Approvals are based on available funding. The approved grant award may be made for an amount other than the amount requested. Once a request is approved, an agreement is prepared and forwarded to the requester for signature. The requester is asked to produce an original copy of the agreement, obtain authorized signature, and return to the AOC Grant Program Administrator for signature by the AOC Director. A conformed copy is returned to the requester.

VI. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The responsibilities of the Nevada Supreme Court, Administrative Office of the Courts, in relation to this grant are to:
 1. Oversee expenditure of all state funds, administrative assessment fees, and/or preemptory challenge fees designated to the purpose of the AOC grant program.

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2. Set standards for the disbursement of equipment, software, and funds to the courts in meeting the purpose of the AOC grant program.
 3. Set statewide judicial branch statistical reporting requirements including information standards (data elements and definitions) for all trial courts.
 4. Set statewide communication standards to assure all courts can electronically transfer case information to the Department of Motor Vehicles and Public Safety's criminal history repository, the AOC, and other courts.
 5. Perform analysis and publish pertinent statewide judicial information.
- B. The responsibilities of the local court receiving the grant are to:
1. Design and purchase systems that meet established state judicial branch approved standards.
 2. Diligently manage state equipment, software, and funds provided to support the Trial Court Improvement ARPA Subgrant.
 3. Include in any contractor agreement the need for contractor to submit invoices within 30 days of work completion.
 4. Provide budget reports to the AOC Grant Administrator throughout the project time period in accordance with the terms outlined in the Trial Court Improvement ARPA Subgrant Agreement. The Trial Court Improvement ARPA Subgrant Final Budget Report Form is available on the Trial Court Improvement ARPA Subgrant website.
 5. Make every effort to provide accurate, timely, and consistent judicial information to all necessary state and local agencies according to Supreme Court information standards.
 6. Provide a final narrative report of project completion in accordance with the terms outlined in the Trial Court Improvement ARPA Subgrant Agreement. This report should be an overview of the project on court letterhead confirming the successful completion of the project. The final report should be thorough, yet brief, and may not exceed 2 pages. Receipts for the project should be included with the final budget report. Additionally, the Trial Court Improvement ARPA Subgrant Final Budget Report Form should also be included in the submission. The final narrative, receipts, and Final Budget Report Form are due to the AOC no later than December 31, 2026, following the completion of the project.
 7. Ensure that grant projects are completed thoroughly and in accordance with both the grant agreement and with the project narrative for which funding was awarded. Absent extenuating circumstances, and written approval from the State Court Administrator, funding must be used for the purposes presented in the grant application or be returned to the AOC.
 8. Keep in mind that grant funds must be awarded and expended by the end of the grant cycle; should an amendment to the original grant agreement terms be necessary for any reason, the court will contact the AOC Grant Program Administrator no later than 30 days prior to the expiration of the original grant agreement. Courts requesting an amendment must submit the Trial Court Improvement ARPA Subgrant Amendment Request Form.
 9. Should a project be completed under budget, the Grantee court must notify the AOC, and make plans for return of surplus funds, no later than 30 days prior to the termination date of the Trial Court Improvement ARPA Subgrant Agreement.