

SUPREME COURT OF VERMONT
OFFICE OF THE COURT ADMINISTRATOR

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TO: Sen. Benning, *Chair, Senate Institutions Committee*
Rep. Emmons, *Chair, House Corrections and Institutions Committee*

FROM: Gregg Mousley, Chief of Finance and Administration, Vermont Judiciary

DATE: December 14, 2021

RE: Coronavirus Capital Funding Request - Ventilation in County Courthouses

Eligibility:

This funding is necessary to carry out critical capital projects directly enabling work and health monitoring and improvements in air quality in response to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19).

An appropriation of \$5,719,552 to the Vermont Judiciary would allow for construction of the designed upgrades to the HVAC system at the twelve county courthouses. We propose that this construction estimate be considered for approval and/or appropriation of Coronavirus Capital Projects funding provided by the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA). A courthouse specific breakdown is provided in the attached excel spreadsheet.

The Judiciary has 23 courthouses throughout the state that all needed to be assessed for safety due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While many courthouses have been approved to have jury trials, some remain unusable for jury work during COVID conditions until an adequate heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system can be installed. In other courthouses that are already approved for trials, some HVAC systems serve only part of a courthouse. However, each county courthouse continues to require long-term HVAC installations or upgrades.

The Judiciary has developed an estimate of costs related to installing or improving the HVAC systems at the county courthouses based on the recommendations provided by mechanical engineering firms or HVAC certified vendors.

The Judiciary has engaged with a mechanical engineering firm, Engineering Services of Vermont, to oversee all HVAC work in the county courthouses. For the five courthouses that require a new installation, a bidding process was used to select the best bid for each building.

The costs reflected in this funding request have been vetted and reviewed by the Judicial team and consultants to ensure the best price and application.

During the 2021 Legislative session, an appropriation was made of \$800,000 to the Judiciary to complete planning and design work for the purpose of starting this work as soon as possible. The Judiciary has used a small amount for HVAC work at these county buildings. However, the vast majority of this funding was not used due to the inability to get HVAC designs in time for this funding proposal. As a result, the Judiciary changed strategy and instead included the design work in the request for proposals from vendors. The funding request deducts this General Fund appropriation from the total cost of the proposed HVAC work.

It is expected that the work described in this proposal could be substantially completed by the spring of 2023, just over a year from now. The completion of this work will ensure that all existing Vermont courthouses have the necessary ventilation to support ongoing Judicial proceedings even in a pandemic environment.

CC: *Senate Institutions Committee*
 Sen. McCormack, Vice Chair
 Sen. Mazza
 Sen. Parent
 Sen. Ingalls

House Corrections and Institutions Committee
Rep. Coffey, Vice Chair
Rep. Morrissey
Rep. Bos-Lun
Rep. Campbell
Rep. Dolan
Rep. Martel
Rep. Morgan
Rep. Sullivan
Rep. Taylor

Patricia Gabel, State Court Administrator
Catherine Benham, Chief Fiscal Officer, Legislative Joint Fiscal Office

Summary of Courthouses and Cost Estimates:

New / Upgraded HVAC for County
Court Houses

15-Dec-21

Type of Work		Dec. 2021 Funding Request
New	Grand Isle (North Hero)	\$ 591,400
New	Franklin Civil (St. Albans)	\$ 733,909
New	Orleans Civil (Newport)	\$ 722,382
New	Essex (Guildhall)	\$ 581,902
Upgrade	Chittenden Civil (Burlington)	\$ 33,300
Upgrade	Lamoille (Hyde Park)	\$ 33,300
Upgrade	Washington Civil (Montpelier)	\$ 531,944
Upgrade	Orange Court House (Chelsea)	\$ 517,328
Upgrade	Rutland Civil (Rutland)	\$ 622,332
Upgrade	Windsor Civil (Woodstock)	\$ 517,328
Upgrade	Bennington Civil (Bennington)	\$ 612,332
New	Windham Civil (Newfane)	\$ 625,743
	Sub Total all Projects	\$ 6,123,200
	Construction Manager (CM) 6%	\$ 367,392

Total all Projects	\$	6,490,592
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Spent to Date	\$	28,960
Already Funded with GF	\$	800,000

Total Funding Request	\$	5,719,552
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