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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

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GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
for
EMERGENCY RELIEF AND RECOVERY

October 3, 2022

The Honorable Karen Umberger, Chairman
Fiscal Committee of the General Court
State House
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

His Excellency, Governor Christopher T. Sununu
And the Honorable Council
State House
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

REQUESTED ACTION

Pursuant to RSA 14:30-a, VI, authorize the Governor's Office for Emergency Relief and Recovery (GOFERR) to accept and expend funds in the amount of $6,401,610 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SFRF) for the Judicial Branch to be used on courthouse security upgrades, increased remote resource access, and improved access to civil legal resources for populations adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, effective upon the Fiscal Committee and Governor and Executive Council approval through June 30, 2023. This is an allowable use of ARPA SFRF funds under Section 602 (c)(1)(C) for provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue. **100% Federal Funds.**

Funds are to be budgeted in FY2023 in the following account:

01-02-002-020210-24690000[1] ARP GRANTS AND DISBURSEMENTS		**FY2023**	**FY2023**	**FY2023**
CLASS	**ACCOUNT**	**CURRENT MODIFIED BUDGET**	**BUDGET REQUEST**	**REVISED BUDGET**
EXPENDITURES				
040 – Indirect Costs	501587	$1,175,250	$2,500	$1,177,750
041 – Audit Fund Set Aside	500801	$204,316	$6,395	$210,711

[1] All direct program costs will be accounted for using activity 00FRF602GS0204A and all administrative and indirect costs will be accounted for using activity 00FRF602GS0204Z. Accounting classifications may be subject to technical changes at the discretion of the Department of Administrative Services' Division of Accounting Services.

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Website: http://www.goferr.nh.gov/ • Email: info@goferr.nh.gov
TDD Access: Relay NH 1-800-735-2964

072 – Grants Federal	500575	$126,080,032	$0	$126,080,032
085 - Interagcy Xfr Out of Fed Fn	588510	$3,019,499	$6,392,715	$9,412,214
103 - Contracts for Op Services	502664	$2,449,800	$0	$2,449,800
TOTAL EXPENSES		**$132,989,397**	**$6,401,610**	**$139,391,007**
SOURCE OF FUNDS				
000 – Federal Funds	400338-16	$132,989,397	$6,401,610	$139,391,007
TOTAL REVENUE		**$132,989,397**	**$6,401,610**	**$139,391,007**

EXPLANATION

This request would enable key investments in the New Hampshire Judicial Branch and help NHJB continue to adapt to the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Proposed funding uses include courthouse security upgrades, expanded online resources for the public to access remotely, and increased access to civil legal resources for those adversely impacted by job loss, health matters, and other hardships brought on by COVID-19.

Security upgrades will enhance measures strained by the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, including alarms, electronic access, and CCTV equipment that will allow for centralized and/or remote monitoring and limit the need for on-site management at each court location.

Conversion of historic paper records at the Law Library into an electronic format will support the Library's expanded remote services to members of the public, which became more heavily relied upon throughout the pandemic. One of the impacts of the pandemic is that members of the public have changed the way they conduct legal research and seek access to legal resources and records. The Law Library has seen a significant reduction in research onsite and a significant increase in remote research and related requests to the Library. Digitizing records will allow easier and broader remote access.

The New Hampshire State Constitution requires the NHJB to provide free and fair access to justice. NHJB's civil legal needs projects are designed to remove the barriers to justice that have been exacerbated by economic hardship brought on by the pandemic. The projects focus on the civil legal needs of NH citizens adversely impacted by job loss, health matters, and other hardships brought on by COVID-19 and provide legal information to unrepresented people. These projects help those without lawyers better understand their rights and the legal processes associated with their cases. Assisting others to help themselves through these initiatives is a cost-effective solution to ensuring the NH judicial system meets its Constitutional obligation.

Example of projects associated with this effort include:

- Simplification and translation of court forms;

- Expanding the existing court navigator pilot program, enabling the addition of volunteer court-trained navigators, equipment, technology, supplies, etc., Navigators help litigants be better prepared for court so that proceedings run smoothly and cases move forward more quickly;
- Expanding the alternative dispute resolution (ADR) work being done by the Judicial Branch;
- Establishing a legal navigator portal that provides legal information and helps to address the needs of those facing a legal issue for which they need assistance but lack sufficient resources or expertise to determine how to proceed; and
- Establishing a virtual court center that provides online, user-friendly legal information designed explicitly for self-represented litigants, accessibility, limited English proficiency, and plain language content.

Funds are being budgeted in the classes listed below as follows:

Class 040 – Indirect Costs to recover, per by RSA 21-I:75, a proportional share of the outside funding source to alleviate agency indirect costs.

Class 041 – Audit Fund Set Aside to comply with RSA 124:16 that requires all agencies that receive federal funds to set aside a percentage (0.1%) of the federal revenue amount received to pay for financial and compliance audits.

Class 085 – Interagency Xfer Out of Fed Funds to the Judicial Branch as described in the explanation.

In the event that Federal Funds become no longer available, General Funds will not be requested to support this program.

Respectfully submitted,

Chase Hagaman
Deputy Director, GOFERR