

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 975 (Delegate Arentz, *et al.*)
 Judiciary

Queen Anne's County - Circuit Court Judgeships

This bill alters the number of resident judges of the circuit court by adding one additional judgeship in Queen Anne’s County. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$358,300 in FY 2026 for one additional judge and associated staff; future year expenditures reflect annualization. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	358,300	472,000	479,000	486,400	493,900
Net Effect	(\$358,300)	(\$472,000)	(\$479,000)	(\$486,400)	(\$493,900)

Note: () = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: Queen Anne’s County expenditures increase by at least \$168,000 in FY 2026 and by a minimum of \$235,000 annually thereafter for staff and ongoing operating costs. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: There are 176 circuit court judges in the State, including 1 in Queen Anne’s County.

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures increase by \$358,285 in fiscal 2026, which reflects a 90-day start-up delay from the bill's July 1, 2025 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost of creating one circuit court judgeship in Queen Anne's County and the associated positions of one courtroom clerk and one law clerk with the judgeship (a total of three positions). It includes salaries and fringe benefits.

Future year expenditures generally reflect full salaries with annual increases and employee turnover. However, pursuant to Joint Resolutions 2 and 3 of 2022, judicial salaries have been set in statute through fiscal 2026. Because future increases in judicial salaries depend on any recommendations proposed by the Judicial Compensation Commission and subsequent action by the General Assembly, judicial salaries beyond fiscal 2026 do not account for additional increases.

Local Expenditures: Queen Anne's County anticipates expenditures of at least \$168,000 in fiscal 2026 for costs associated with operating expenses and hiring additional staff to support the new circuit court judgeship; expenditures increase by at least \$235,000 annually thereafter.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: SB 877 (Senator Hershey) - Judicial Proceedings.

Information Source(s): Queen Anne's County; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 14, 2025
rh/jkb

Analysis by: Joanne E. Tetlow

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510