

# 2023 Budget Request

Gwinnett County Courts  
Superior – State – Magistrate

Judge George F. Hutchinson, III  
Chief Judge, Superior Court



# Mission Statement

The Georgia Constitution established the Courts of the Gwinnett Judicial Circuit to enforce and administer the laws of this State and of the United States. As a separate and distinct branch of government, the Courts are under a constitutional mandate to resolve disputes and enforce laws in a fair and impartial manner.

# Vision

The judges of the Gwinnett Judicial Circuit are committed to professional, efficient, and impartial case resolution.



# Superior Court

- Superior Court is a trial court of general jurisdiction.
- The Superior Court has exclusive Constitutional authority over all felony cases, domestic cases, cases involving title to real property, and any case seeking equitable relief.
- Criminal cases are prosecuted by the District Attorney's Office.
- The Superior Court also has jurisdiction to correct errors made by lower courts by issuing certiorari; as well as hearing direct appeals from the Board of Workers' Compensation, Department of Labor (unemployment benefits), and lower courts such as municipal courts.

# Superior Court



# State Court

- State Court is a trial court with limited jurisdiction.
- Cases include misdemeanors as well as traffic violations.
- These cases are prosecuted by the Solicitor's Office.
- Civil cases handled by State Court include torts, contract actions, product liability, medical malpractice, and personal injury.
- State Court can also handle all other civil actions except where the Superior Court has exclusive jurisdiction such as divorce, equity, and title to land.

# State Court



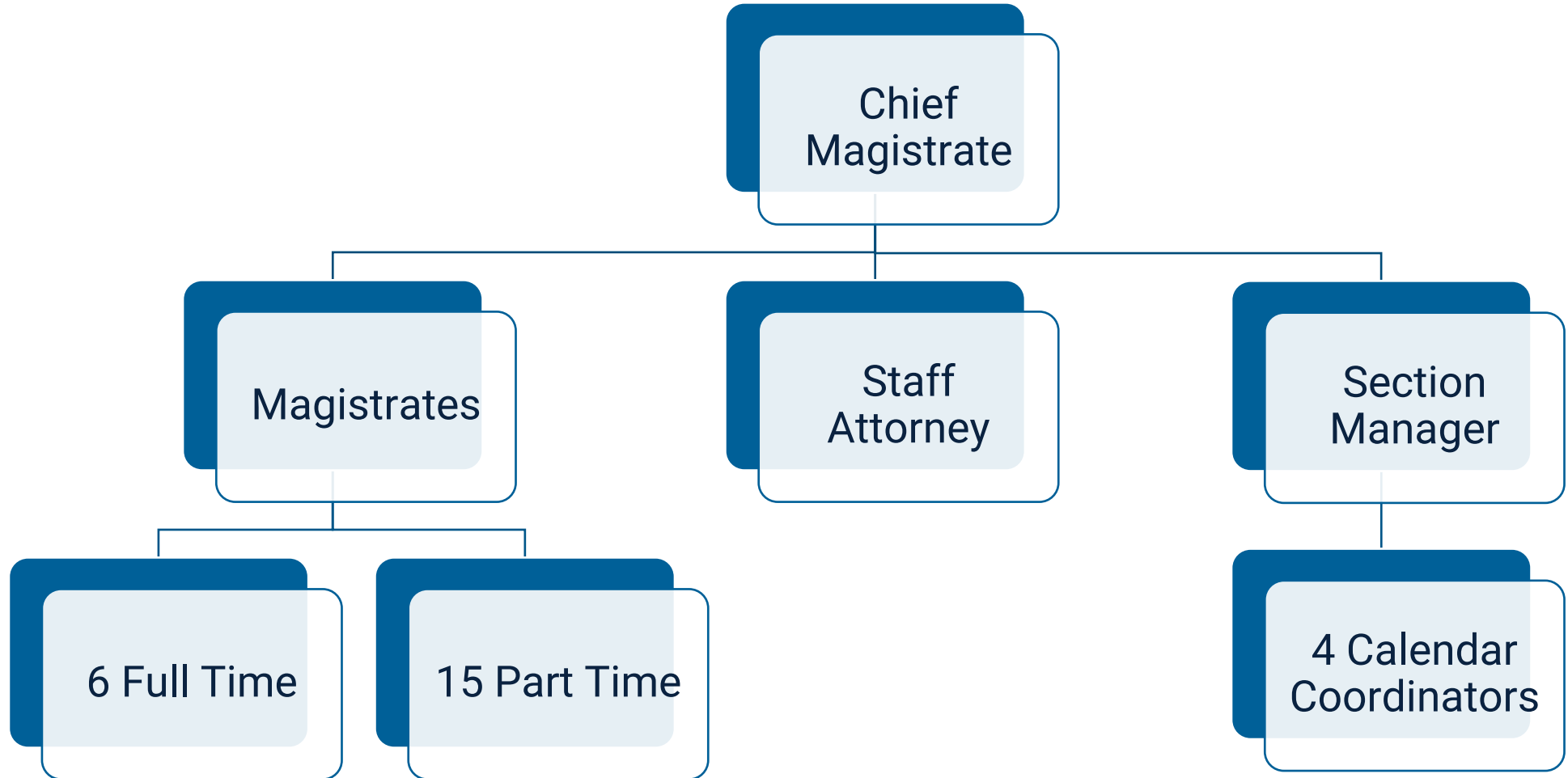
*\*7<sup>th</sup> Judge will be added in January 2023*

# Magistrate Court

- Operates 365 days a year, 24 hours a day
- Is directly accessible to the self-represented public and law enforcement
- Magistrate Court provides judicial assistance to all other courts
- Magistrate Court hears both civil and criminal cases, including:
  - Civil Cases less than \$15,000
  - Garnishment Actions
  - Post-Judgment Collection
  - Landlord/Tenant Cases
  - Family Violence/TPO
  - Abandoned Motor Vehicle Claims
  - Personal Property Foreclosures
  - Arrest & Search Warrants
  - Citizen Warrant Applications
  - First Appearance Hearings
  - Preliminary/Committal Hearings



# Magistrate Court



# Administrative Office of the Courts



# Operational Decisions

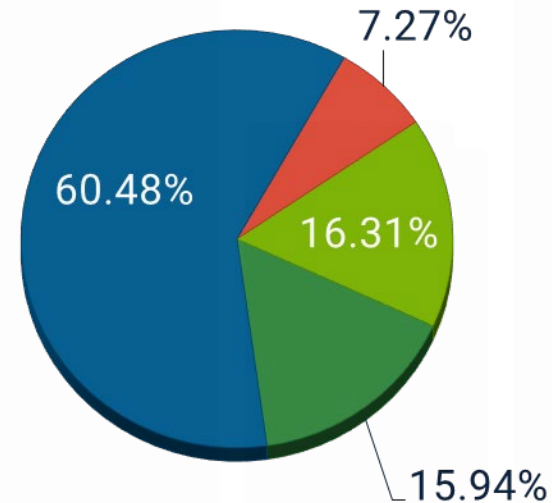
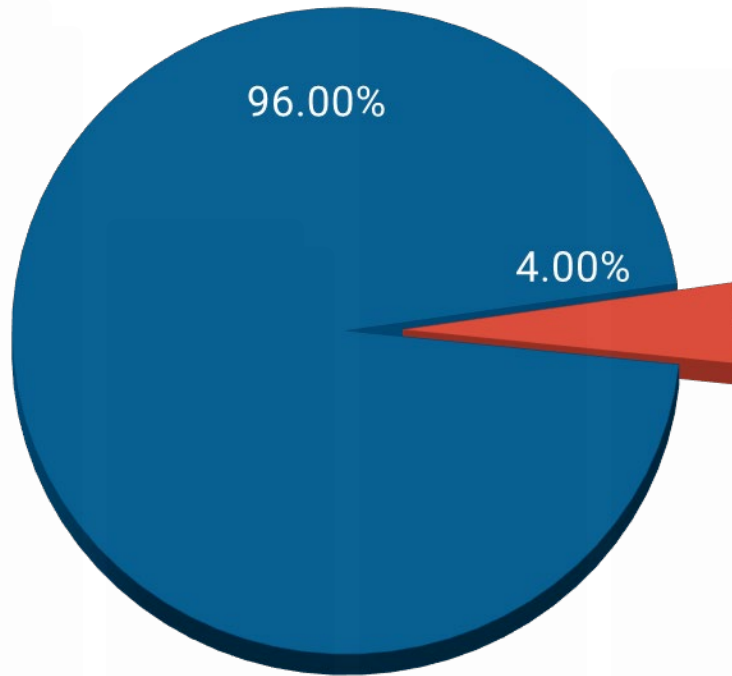
- Increase the use of technology to make the services of the court more accessible, secure, and convenient while maintaining cost effectiveness.
- Ensure that court facilities accommodate current and future workflow and technology needs.
- Promote timely case resolution by providing optimal resources to all judges and staff, to include the tools needed to operate in a digital court environment.
- Improve communication with the public to provide a better understanding of the issues that affect the delivery of justice.
- Expand cultural awareness and sensitivity training for judges and court personnel.

# County Initiatives

- **Safe, Livable, and Healthy Community**  
Ensure a safe community by providing superior and comprehensive services and engaging partners to create a healthy Gwinnett.
- **Sustainability and Stewardship**  
Maintain a smart and sustainable government by consistently operating based on sound reasoning and best practices with a long-term focus.
- **Organizational Excellence and Accountability**  
Maintain the Gwinnett Standard, attract and retain a quality workforce, and continue the practice of transparency while providing services to the residents of Gwinnett.

# Percentage of Department General Fund Utilized

- County Department General Fund
- Superior, State, Magistrate Courts & AOC



- Personal Services
- Operations
- Allocations
- Contributions to Other Funds



# Charlotte J. Nash Court Building

- SPLOST approved in 2008
- 2020: 11<sup>th</sup> Superior Court Judge
- 2023: 7<sup>th</sup> State Court Judge
- Pandemic case backlogs

# Decision Package

## 2023\_JUD\_001

- Requesting funding for the addition of a 7<sup>th</sup> State Court Judge
  - Approved by the legislature with the passing of HB1570
  - Package includes funding for personnel and general operating expenditures in line with the funds provided to the current State Court Judges

# Decision Package

## 2023\_JUD\_002

- Requesting two full-time IT Associate III positions to provide technology assistance to the courts and residents
  - Last IT position added in 2016
  - Nash Court Building operational
  - Increased use of technology providing virtual proceedings
  - Converting the services of two contract IT staff members on a full-time schedule



# Decision Package

2023\_JUD\_003

- Requesting two full-time Court Reporter positions for Superior and State Court
  - Court Reporters are essential to the operations of the courts
  - Across the state, the courts are experiencing a dire shortage of certified Court Reporters
  - Full-time positions are needed to enable competitive recruitment of Court Reporters

# Decision Package

## 2023\_JUD\_004

- Requesting a full-time Administrative Support Associate II position for the Jury Division
  - Last Jury Division position added in 2017
  - Since 2012, have utilized the services of a contract staff member on a full-time schedule
  - In 2020, addition of the 11<sup>th</sup> Superior Court Judge
  - In 2022, addition of the 7<sup>th</sup> State Court Judge

# Total Budget

<b>Total Requested Budget</b>	<b>\$30,911,671</b>
Decision Packages	\$1,207,652



# Questions



Gwinnett