

# Unlocking Funding Pathways for Court Technology Modernization

## A Strategic Guide for State and County Courts

Prepared by Justice AV Solutions (JAVS)

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# 1. Executive Summary

Across the United States, courts are under immense pressure to modernize their operations while navigating constrained budgets. The gap between public expectations for accessible, efficient, and transparent justice and the available local funding continues to widen. As caseloads grow and the complexity of legal proceedings increases, courts must adopt advanced technologies to maintain the integrity of the judicial process, protect the official record, and ensure equitable access to justice for all citizens.

**Key Insight:** Funding for court technology is often available—but misaligned. Courts that position technology investments as a means to achieve specific justice outcomes, rather than merely as equipment purchases, are significantly more successful in securing federal and state grants.

Justice AV Solutions (JAVS) helps courts bridge this funding gap by combining industry-leading courtroom technology with a strategic, funding-aware approach to project planning. This white paper provides court officials, administrators, and city council members with an authoritative overview of the current court technology landscape, verified data on operational challenges, and a comprehensive guide to navigating primary funding sources. It is intended to serve as a practical resource that can be shared with budget committees, grant-writing teams, and judicial leadership.

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## 2. Introduction: The Imperative for Court Technology Modernization

The American judiciary stands at a critical inflection point. For generations, courtroom operations relied on paper-based processes, manual transcription, and physical evidence storage. While these methods served their purpose, they are increasingly inadequate in a world where litigants, attorneys, and the public expect digital access, real-time information, and verifiable records.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this reckoning. When courts were forced to suspend in-person proceedings, those with robust digital infrastructure adapted; those without were paralyzed. The experience exposed not only the operational fragility of technology-deficient courts, but also the profound access-to-justice implications of the digital divide within the judiciary. Courts that lacked video conferencing capabilities, digital evidence management systems, and reliable recording infrastructure were unable to serve the public during a period of acute need.

The challenge now is to translate the urgency of that moment into sustained investment. The good news is that funding exists at the federal and state levels specifically designed to help courts modernize. The challenge is that most courts lack the institutional knowledge to identify, pursue, and secure these funds effectively. This white paper is designed to close that gap.

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## 3. The Modern Court Challenge: Data and Evidence

### 3.1 Caseloads, Backlogs, and Operational Strain

The operational pressures facing courts today are well-documented. According to the Thomson Reuters Institute's *State of the Courts Report 2024*, which surveyed 223 state, county, and municipal court judges and court professionals, **40% of respondents cited increasing caseloads as the single biggest change they had experienced over the prior two years** [1]. While the acute backlog crisis of the pandemic era has begun to ease, **25% of respondents still reported increases in court backlogs, and 27% reported increases in case delays** [1].

Staffing shortages compound these pressures. The same report found that **64% of respondents experienced staffing shortages in the prior 12 months, and 56% anticipated continued shortages in the year ahead** [1]. Technology is not a substitute for qualified court personnel, but it is a critical force multiplier—allowing existing staff to accomplish more with less.

### 3.2 The Access-to-Justice Imperative

Technology modernization is not merely an administrative convenience; it is a prerequisite for equitable access to justice. The Legal Services Corporation's Justice Gap Report found that **low-income Americans received no or insufficient legal help for 92% of their civil legal problems** [9]. An estimated **three out of five litigants in civil cases appear in court without a lawyer**, according to the Self-Represented Litigation Network [10].

For these self-represented litigants, the accessibility of court proceedings is paramount. Virtual and hybrid hearing capabilities remove geographic and financial barriers that have historically prevented participation. The Thomson Reuters survey found that **82% of court professionals agreed that virtual courts increase justice opportunities for litigants**, with 90% of that group specifically citing the removal of geographic and financial barriers as the primary benefit [1].

### 3.3 The Digital Evidence Gap

The management of digital evidence represents one of the most significant operational gaps in the modern court system. Despite the proliferation of digital evidence in virtually every case type—from body-worn camera footage to social media records—many courts lack the infrastructure to manage it effectively. The Thomson Reuters survey found that **only 35% of respondents used a digital evidence management system**, representing an 8-percentage-point increase from the prior survey but still leaving the majority of courts without this critical capability [1]. Notably, **58% of those not using a digital evidence management system acknowledged that having one would be at least somewhat beneficial** [1].

### 3.4 Public Trust and Transparency

Public trust in the judiciary, while resilient, is not unconditional. The National Center for State Courts' (NCSC) 2024 public opinion survey found that **63% of Americans expressed trust and confidence in America's state courts** [11]. Maintaining and building upon this trust requires courts to demonstrate transparency, accessibility, and operational competence—all of which are supported by modern technology.

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## 4. The Funding Landscape: Where the Money Comes From

A common misconception among local officials is that court modernization must be funded entirely through municipal or county budgets. In reality, the majority of funding for significant technology upgrades originates at the federal or state level. Local budget allocations typically represent only a fraction of the available funding ecosystem.

**Key Takeaway:** The most successful courts approach technology modernization as a grant-funded initiative, with local budget contributions serving as the required matching funds for federal and state programs.

The following diagram illustrates the relative scale of available funding sources:

| Funding Source                 | Relative Scale | Match Required | Primary Use Case                       |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--|
| Federal (DOJ/OJP — Byrne JAG)  | Very High      | None           | Technology improvement, court programs |
| Federal (SJI Project Grants)   | Moderate       | 1:1 Cash Match | Innovative justice improvements        |
| State (AOC/Statewide Programs) | High           | Varies         | Standardization, scalability           |
| Federal (VAWA Courts Program)  | Moderate       | 25% Match      | Victim-centered court improvements     |
| Federal (VOCA Assistance)      | High           | None           | Victim services and technology         |
| Innovation/Pilot Programs      | Low-Moderate   | Varies         | Model courtrooms, new approaches       |

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## 5. Primary Federal Funding Sources

### 5.1 State Justice Institute (SJI)

The State Justice Institute (SJI) was established by Congress in 1984 with a specific mandate: to improve the quality of justice in state courts and foster innovative, efficient solutions to common challenges. SJI is the only federal agency whose primary mission is to support state courts, making it the most directly relevant federal funding source for court technology modernization.

**Mission and Scope:** SJI supports projects that institutionalize innovative technology, including electronic filing and payment systems, online dispute resolution platforms, remote work infrastructure, and virtual court proceedings [2]. Notably, SJI has recently expanded its technology priorities to include the examination of Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration into court processes, including the identification of positive outcomes and potential limitations [2].

#### Grant Types Available:

SJI offers five categories of grants, each suited to different project types and scales:

| Grant Type                              | Purpose   | Maximum Award                                  |
|---|---|--|
| Project Grants                          | Innovative education, training, demonstration, and technical assistance | \$300,000 (state/national) / \$200,000 (local) |
| Technical Assistance Grants             | Targeted technical assistance to courts                                 | Varies   |
| Curriculum Adaptation & Training Grants | Adapting and delivering training programs                               | Varies   |
| Strategic Initiatives Grants            | Broad, systemic improvements to the justice system                      | Varies   |
| Education Support Program               | Supporting judicial education   | Varies   |

**Project Grant Requirements:** Project Grants are the primary vehicle for court technology modernization. State court and national non-profit applicants may request up to \$300,000 for projects of up to 36 months in duration. Local court applicants may request up to \$200,000 for projects of up to 24 months [3]. **All applicants are required to contribute a dollar-for-dollar cash match.** For example, if SJI provides \$200,000, the applicant must provide at least \$200,000 in matching funds [3].

**Application Deadlines:** SJI accepts applications on a quarterly basis, with deadlines on November 1, February 1, May 1, and August 1 of each year [4].

**Critical Limitation:** Courts should be aware that SJI funds **cannot** be used to support "basic court services," which SJI defines as the routine purchase and maintenance of equipment, software licenses, internet access, or supplies [4]. This means that a straightforward request to purchase recording equipment will not qualify. The project must demonstrate an innovative approach to improving the administration of justice that goes beyond routine operations.

**Winning Strategy for SJI:** Frame the project as a demonstration or pilot that can be replicated by other courts nationally. Emphasize the transferability of the approach, the rigor of the evaluation design, and the long-term systemic benefits. For example, a project that implements a new digital evidence management workflow and rigorously evaluates its impact on case processing times is far more fundable than a simple equipment upgrade.

## 5.2 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG)

The Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program, administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) within the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, is the **primary provider of federal criminal justice funding to states and units of local government** [5]. JAG is a formula grant, meaning that states and localities receive allocations based on a statutory formula, rather than competing for a fixed pool of funds.

**Funding Scale:** In Fiscal Year 2024, approximately **\$270.3 million** was available through the JAG program [6]. Congressional Research Service data indicates that top-line JAG funding has ranged from a low of \$365 million in FY2013 to a high of \$964 million in FY2026, averaging approximately \$545 million annually [12].

**Eligible Uses:** JAG funds are notably flexible. The program explicitly authorizes funding for a broad range of program areas, including:

- Law enforcement programs
- Prosecution and court programs
- Prevention and education programs
- Corrections and community corrections programs
- Drug treatment and enforcement programs
- **Planning, evaluation, and technology improvement programs**
- Crime victim and witness programs
- Mental health programs and related law enforcement and corrections programs [5]

The explicit inclusion of "technology improvement programs" and "court programs" makes JAG an excellent vehicle for funding court recording systems, digital evidence management platforms, and remote hearing infrastructure.

**Match Requirements:** JAG has **no match requirement**, making it particularly accessible for jurisdictions with limited local resources [5].

**How to Access JAG Funds:** JAG funds flow through two channels: state formula grants and local direct awards. Courts should work with their state's JAG administrator (typically housed

within the state's criminal justice planning agency) to identify opportunities to access state-level JAG funds. Local governments may also receive direct JAG allocations based on their population and crime statistics.

**Winning Strategy for JAG:** Tie the technology investment directly to public safety outcomes. A request for a digital evidence management system is most compelling when framed as improving evidence integrity, reducing the risk of wrongful convictions, and accelerating the processing of criminal cases. Quantify the expected impact wherever possible—for example, citing the expected reduction in the time from arrest to disposition.

### 5.3 VAWA Court Training and Improvements Program

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Court Training and Improvements Program, administered by the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) within the Department of Justice, supports court-based initiatives that improve the response to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.

**Relevance to Court Technology:** Courts handling domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking cases have specific technology needs, including secure video conferencing for victim testimony, digital evidence management for audio and video evidence, and remote hearing capabilities that protect victim safety. The VAWA Courts Program explicitly supports technology as part of a comprehensive court improvement strategy [13].

**Eligibility:** Courts, prosecutors' offices, and victim service providers are eligible to apply. The program requires a 25% match from non-federal sources.

**Winning Strategy for VAWA:** Frame technology investments in terms of victim safety and access to justice. For example, a remote hearing capability that allows domestic violence victims to testify without being in the physical presence of their abuser is a compelling, fundable outcome.

### 5.4 Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victim Assistance Grants

The Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victim Assistance Program provides formula grants to states, which then distribute funds to local victim service providers and, in some cases, courts. The Crime Victims Fund, which finances VOCA grants, held a balance of over **\$3.6 billion** as of February 2026 [14].

**Relevance to Court Technology:** While VOCA funds are primarily directed toward direct victim services, courts that provide victim-centered services—such as victim notification systems, remote testimony capabilities, and trauma-informed courtroom design—may be eligible for VOCA funding through their state's victim assistance program.

## 5.5 COPS Office Technology and Equipment Program (TEP)

The Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office within the Department of Justice administers the Technology and Equipment Program (TEP), which provides funding to state, local, tribal, and territorial entities to develop and acquire effective crime-fighting technologies. While primarily focused on law enforcement, courts that are part of a broader criminal justice technology initiative may be eligible to participate.

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## 6. State-Level Funding Sources

### 6.1 Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Programs

Every state has an Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) or equivalent body responsible for supporting the operations of the state court system. Many AOCs administer grant programs specifically designed to help local courts modernize their technology.

**Illinois as a Model:** The Illinois Supreme Court's Technology Modernization Grant Program, funded through the state's allocation of federal American Rescue Plan Act funds, allocated **\$13.5 million to 98 counties** for courthouse technology upgrades [7]. Projects funded included sound amplification and recording systems, video arraignment equipment, remote hearing capabilities, and digital kiosks for self-represented litigants. The program achieved close to 100% participation among Illinois counties, demonstrating the pent-up demand for technology investment at the local level.

**California's Judicial Council:** The California Judicial Council regularly approves funding for technology projects to improve court services. In February 2026, the Council approved funding for the Superior Court of Los Angeles County as part of a statewide modernization grant program [15]. California's Tactical Plan for Technology 2025–2026 represents the judicial branch's commitment to advancing technology initiatives on a biennial cycle.

**What States Want:** State AOCs consistently prioritize standardization, scalability, and proven solutions. Courts that propose technology investments aligned with statewide standards—and that can serve as models for other jurisdictions—are more likely to receive state support.

### 6.2 Court Improvement Program (CIP) — Title IV-B

The Court Improvement Program (CIP), authorized under Title IV-B of the Social Security Act and administered by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), provides federal funding to state courts to assess and improve their child welfare and judicial practices. Each state court receives a base allotment of \$255,000 plus additional funds based on the state's share of the national child population [16].

**Relevance to Court Technology:** Courts handling child welfare cases—including dependency, foster care, and adoption proceedings—can use CIP funds to improve their technology infrastructure in ways that support better outcomes for children and families. This

includes digital case management systems, remote hearing capabilities, and tools that facilitate collaboration between courts and child welfare agencies.

### **6.3 State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF / ARPA)**

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) provided approximately \$350 billion in State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) to state, local, tribal, and territorial governments. While the December 31, 2024, obligation deadline has passed for most jurisdictions, funds that were obligated by that deadline may still be expended through December 31, 2026.

**Historical Relevance:** ARPA funds were widely used by courts for technology modernization, particularly for remote hearing infrastructure and cybersecurity improvements. The Illinois example cited above is a direct product of ARPA funding. Courts and local governments that obligated ARPA funds for technology projects before the deadline should ensure those projects are completed and properly documented.

**Looking Forward:** While ARPA's direct relevance is diminishing, it established a precedent for large-scale federal investment in court technology. Courts should monitor future federal recovery or infrastructure legislation for similar opportunities.

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## **7. Innovation and Pilot Program Funding**

Beyond the primary federal and state programs, courts can access funding through innovation-focused initiatives that reward creative approaches to justice delivery.

**Legal Services Corporation (LSC) Technology Initiative Grants (TIG):** LSC's TIG program awards special funding to existing LSC grantees to support creative and innovative uses of technology that improve access to justice [8]. While LSC grantees are typically legal aid organizations rather than courts, courts that partner with legal aid providers on access-to-justice technology projects may be able to participate in TIG-funded initiatives.

**Georgetown Judicial Innovation Fellowship Program:** The Georgetown Judicial Innovation Fellowship Program places technology fellows in courts to study and address specific operational challenges. The Kansas Judicial Branch and Hamilton County, Tennessee General Sessions Court have both partnered with this program to develop technology solutions for self-represented litigants [2].

**NCSC Court Innovation Lab:** The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) operates a Court Innovation Lab that showcases court technologies and encourages courts to collaborate on innovative approaches. Courts that engage with the NCSC may gain access to resources, technical assistance, and connections to funding opportunities.

**Pilot Program Strategy:** A pilot program approach offers several strategic advantages. First, pilot projects are typically smaller in scope and therefore easier to fund. Second, a successful pilot creates a documented evidence base that can support larger funding requests in subsequent grant cycles. Third, pilot programs that demonstrate transferability—meaning their approach can be replicated in other jurisdictions—are particularly attractive to SJI and other federal funders.

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## 8. The Strategic Funding Alignment Framework

The most common reason court technology grant applications fail is poor strategic framing. Grant reviewers are not evaluating whether a court needs new equipment; they are evaluating whether a proposed project will meaningfully advance the administration of justice. Courts that fail to make this connection consistently lose out to applicants who understand the funder's priorities.

### The Three-Level Framing Hierarchy

Successful grant applications move through three levels of framing:

**Level 1 — Equipment Request (Not Fundable):** "We need to replace our 15-year-old audio recording system because it frequently fails."

**Level 2 — Operational Improvement (Partially Fundable):** "We are implementing a digital recording and evidence management system to reduce transcription delays and improve workflow efficiency."

**Level 3 — Justice Outcome (Fully Fundable):** "We are implementing an integrated digital recording and evidence management platform that will reduce case processing times by an estimated 20%, ensure the integrity and accessibility of the official record, expand remote hearing capabilities for self-represented litigants in rural areas, and provide a replicable model for other courts in our state."

## Mapping Technology to Fundable Outcomes

The following table maps common court technology investments to the fundable justice outcomes that should anchor grant applications:

| Technology Investment                    | Fundable Justice Outcome   | Relevant Funding Source   |
|--|--|---------------------------|
| Digital audio/video recording system     | Integrity of the official record; reduced appeals; improved evidence reliability                 | SJI, JAG, State AOC       |
| Remote/hybrid hearing platform           | Expanded access to justice; reduced geographic barriers; improved litigant participation         | SJI, JAG, VAWA, State AOC |
| Digital evidence management system       | Evidence integrity; chain-of-custody compliance; reduced wrongful conviction risk                | JAG, COPS TEP             |
| AI-assisted transcription and captioning | Reduced transcription costs and delays; improved accessibility for hearing-impaired participants | SJI, State AOC            |
| Courtroom AV integration                 | Improved presentation of evidence; enhanced juror comprehension; reduced hearing delays          | JAG, State AOC            |
| Cybersecurity infrastructure             | Protection of sensitive judicial records; compliance with federal security standards             | JAG, State AOC            |

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## 9. Building a Winning Grant Application

Securing grant funding requires more than identifying the right program; it requires a compelling, well-documented application that demonstrates need, proposes a credible solution, and articulates measurable outcomes. The following principles apply across virtually all court technology grant programs.

### 9.1 Establish a Clear Needs Assessment

Grant reviewers want to understand the specific problem the project will solve. Courts should document their current operational challenges with concrete data: the number of recording failures in the past year, the average time from hearing to transcript production, the percentage of litigants who are self-represented, and the number of hearings delayed due to technology failures. This data forms the foundation of a compelling needs assessment.

### 9.2 Define Measurable Outcomes

Every grant application should include specific, measurable outcomes that the project will achieve. Vague commitments to "improve efficiency" are insufficient. Instead, courts should

commit to specific, time-bound targets: "We will reduce the average time from hearing to certified transcript from 45 days to 10 days within 18 months of implementation." Measurable outcomes also facilitate the evaluation process, which is a key selection criterion for most grant programs.

### **9.3 Demonstrate Sustainability**

Grant reviewers are concerned about what happens after the grant period ends. Courts should articulate a clear plan for sustaining the technology investment beyond the initial grant period. This may include a commitment to ongoing local budget allocations, a plan to seek follow-on grant funding, or a revenue-generating model (such as transcript fees) that offsets operating costs.

### **9.4 Emphasize Transferability**

For SJI and other federal programs, the transferability of the project approach to other jurisdictions is a key selection criterion. Courts should explain how their project will produce lessons, tools, or models that other courts can adopt. This might include a commitment to publish evaluation findings, develop training materials, or present at national conferences.

### **9.5 Partner Strategically**

Multi-jurisdictional or multi-agency partnerships strengthen grant applications by demonstrating broad support and increasing the project's potential impact. Courts should consider partnering with their state AOC, neighboring courts, legal aid organizations, or academic institutions. Vendor partners like JAVS can also contribute to the application by providing technical expertise, project management support, and documentation of the proposed solution's track record.

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## **10. Cybersecurity, Evidence Integrity, and the Case for Modern Technology**

As courts increasingly rely on digital systems, cybersecurity and evidence integrity have become critical concerns. These issues are not merely technical; they are fundamental to the fairness and legitimacy of the judicial process.

### **10.1 The Cybersecurity Threat Landscape**

Courts are increasingly attractive targets for ransomware, data theft, and operational disruption. The FBI's 2024 Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) Report recorded 3,156 ransomware complaints in 2024, an 11.7% increase from the prior year [17]. Government entities, including courts, are among the most frequently targeted sectors. A successful

ransomware attack on a court system can result in the loss of case records, the disruption of proceedings, and significant recovery costs.

Modern court technology systems must be designed with security as a foundational requirement, not an afterthought. This means implementing zero-trust network architectures, ensuring compliance with the Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Security Policy, and selecting vendors who can demonstrate adherence to recognized security frameworks such as NIST, SOC 2 Type 2, and Cyber Essentials.

## **10.2 The Deepfake Challenge and the Integrity of the Official Record**

The rise of hyper-realistic synthetic media—commonly known as "deepfakes"—has introduced new challenges for the evidentiary landscape. As courts increasingly encounter digitally manipulated audio and video evidence, the integrity of the official court record becomes more important than ever.

The critical distinction is between externally sourced evidence and the court's own official record. Third-party videos, phone recordings, and body-worn camera footage may lack a guaranteed provenance chain and can be subject to manipulation. In contrast, courtroom recordings created within closed, end-to-end systems with cryptographic integrity protections are inherently resistant to tampering. The right response to the deepfake challenge isn't to lose trust in digital recordings, but to invest in court-grade systems that deliver verifiable, tamper-evident records.

## **10.3 Chain of Custody and Digital Evidence Standards**

The legal validity of digital evidence depends on a documented, unbroken chain of custody. Courts that lack proper digital evidence management systems are vulnerable to challenges to the admissibility and integrity of evidence. Modern digital evidence management platforms provide automated chain-of-custody documentation, access controls, and audit trails that protect the integrity of the record and reduce the risk of successful evidentiary challenges.

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# **11. The JAVS Advantage: Technology Built for the Modern Judiciary**

Justice AV Solutions (JAVS) is not merely an equipment vendor; we are a strategic partner dedicated to helping courts navigate the modernization process from funding strategy through long-term support.

## 11.1 Complete Solution Stack

JAVS offers a comprehensive, end-to-end solution for courtroom technology modernization:

**Hardware:** JAVS designs and manufactures purpose-built, Made-in-the-USA courtroom AV and recording equipment engineered specifically for the unique acoustic and operational demands of the judiciary. Unlike generic commercial AV equipment, JAVS hardware is designed to clearly capture every word in challenging courtroom environments.

**Software — Suite 9:** The JAVS Suite 9 platform is an all-in-one, web-based courtroom software platform purpose-built for the age of AI and hybrid hearings. Suite 9 provides real-time AI captioning, instant transcription, secure browser-based access, and comprehensive case management integration. Recent enhancements include editable Microsoft Word transcripts, enabling court staff to produce final transcripts more efficiently than ever before.

**Software — REC9:** The JAVS Recorder 9 (REC9) provides full HD digital recording for any courtroom, with digital audio and video capabilities, more than 4,000 hours of audio-only recording capacity, and an open API for integration with case management systems.

**Integration:** JAVS provides seamless integration of full courtroom systems, ensuring interoperability with existing case management platforms, evidence management systems, and remote hearing tools.

**Support:** JAVS provides long-term partnership and dedicated support to ensure systems remain reliable, secure, and current with evolving technology standards.

## 11.2 Funding-Aware Project Design

JAVS understands that the path to a modernized courtroom runs through the grant application process. We work with courts to design technology projects that align with the specific requirements and priorities of major grant programs. This includes:

- Helping courts articulate their technology needs as fundable justice outcomes
- Providing documentation of system capabilities that supports grant narratives
- Assisting with the development of measurable outcome metrics
- Connecting courts with grant-writing resources and technical assistance

## 11.3 Proven Track Record

With decades of experience and thousands of installations worldwide, JAVS has a documented track record of successful courtroom technology deployments. This track record is itself a valuable asset in the grant application process, as funders consistently prioritize applicants who can demonstrate that their proposed solution has been proven effective in comparable settings.

## 11.4 Measurable Impact

Courts utilizing integrated JAVS systems achieve tangible, documented operational improvements:

- **Improved Recording Reliability:** Ensuring every word is captured accurately, protecting the official record and reducing the risk of appeals based on incomplete transcripts.
  - **Reduced Transcription Delays:** Streamlined digital workflows and AI-assisted transcription accelerate the production of certified transcripts, reducing backlogs and improving case processing times.
  - **Enhanced Courtroom Efficiency:** Integrated AV systems allow judges, attorneys, and court staff to focus on the proceedings rather than managing technology.
  - **Expanded Public Access:** High-quality audio and video capabilities facilitate remote hearings, improving access to justice for litigants who cannot easily travel to the courthouse.
  - **Strengthened Evidence Integrity:** Secure, tamper-evident recording systems provide a reliable foundation for the evidentiary record.
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## 12. Practical Next Steps for Courts and City Councils

For court officials and city council members looking to advance technology initiatives, the following steps provide a practical roadmap:

**Step 1 — Conduct a Technology Assessment:** Before pursuing funding, courts should conduct a comprehensive assessment of their current technology infrastructure, identifying gaps, risks, and priorities. This assessment provides the data foundation for a compelling grant application and ensures that funding requests are targeted at the most critical needs.

**Step 2 — Identify Relevant Funding Sources:** Use the information in this white paper and the SJI Funding Toolkit ([fundingtoolkit.sji.gov](https://fundingtoolkit.sji.gov)) to identify the funding programs most relevant to your court's specific needs and circumstances. Consider both federal and state sources, and explore whether your state AOC has active grant programs.

**Step 3 — Align Project Design with Funder Priorities:** Before drafting a grant application, carefully review the priorities and requirements of the target funding program. Ensure that your project design directly addresses the funder's stated goals and that your application narrative is framed in terms of justice outcomes rather than equipment purchases.

**Step 4 — Build Your Match:** Most grant programs require some level of matching funds. Begin building your match early by identifying local budget allocations, in-kind contributions, or third-party partnerships that can satisfy the match requirement.

**Step 5 — Start with a Pilot:** If full-scale modernization is not immediately feasible, propose a pilot project in a single courtroom or for a specific case type. A well-designed pilot that produces documented evidence of impact is a powerful foundation for subsequent, larger funding requests.

**Step 6 — Partner with JAVS:** JAVS can help you build a funding-ready courtroom modernization plan that resonates with grant reviewers. Our team understands the funding landscape and can assist you in designing a project that is both technically sound and strategically positioned for funding success.

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## 13. Conclusion

The modernization of court technology is not a luxury; it is a prerequisite for a functioning, equitable, and trustworthy justice system. The data is clear: courts that invest in digital recording, evidence management, and remote hearing capabilities are better positioned to manage caseloads, protect the integrity of the official record, and serve the public effectively.

The good news is that significant funding exists to support this modernization. Federal programs like the Byrne JAG and SJI, state AOC initiatives, and innovation-focused grants collectively represent billions of dollars in available funding for courts willing to pursue it strategically. The key is to approach the funding process with the same rigor and intentionality that courts bring to the administration of justice itself.

Courts that align their technology projects with the strategic priorities of federal and state funding agencies are far more likely to secure the necessary capital to modernize—and to modernize faster. Justice AV Solutions (JAVS) is committed to being a strategic partner in that process, combining industry-leading technology, deep domain expertise, and funding alignment into a single, comprehensive approach.

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## 14. Appendix: Quick-Reference Funding Summary

| Program                          | Administering Agency                           | Max Award                      | Match Required | Primary Eligibility                                   | Application Timing                     |
|----------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|----------------|---|--|
| SJI Project Grants               | State Justice Institute                        | \$300K (state); \$200K (local) | 1:1 Cash       | State courts, local courts, national nonprofits       | Quarterly (Nov 1, Feb 1, May 1, Aug 1) |
| Byrne JAG (State Formula)        | DOJ / Bureau of Justice Assistance             | Formula-based                  | None           | States; local governments                             | Annual (varies by state)               |
| Byrne JAG (Local Direct)         | DOJ / Bureau of Justice Assistance             | Formula-based                  | None           | Local governments meeting population/crime thresholds | Annual                                 |
| VAWA Courts Program              | DOJ / Office on Violence Against Women         | Varies                         | 25%            | Courts, prosecutors, victim service providers         | Annual (competitive)                   |
| VOCA Victim Assistance           | DOJ / Office for Victims of Crime              | Formula-based                  | None           | State victim assistance programs                      | Annual (state-administered)            |
| Court Improvement Program (CIP)  | HHS / Administration for Children and Families | \$255K base + formula          | None           | State courts  | Annual                                 |
| State AOC Programs               | State Administrative Office of Courts          | Varies by state                | Varies         | Local courts  | Varies by state                        |
| LSC Technology Initiative Grants | Legal Services Corporation                     | Varies                         | None           | LSC grantees and partners                             | Annual (competitive)                   |

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*This document is intended for distribution to court administrators, judicial officers, city council members, and budget officials. For assistance in developing a funding-ready courtroom modernization plan, contact JAVS at [www.javs.com](http://www.javs.com).*