

South Carolina Administrative Law Court

**House Ways and Means
Constitutional Subcommittee
FY 2024-2025 Budget Hearing
Thursday, January 29, 2026**

Key Officials Attending Meeting

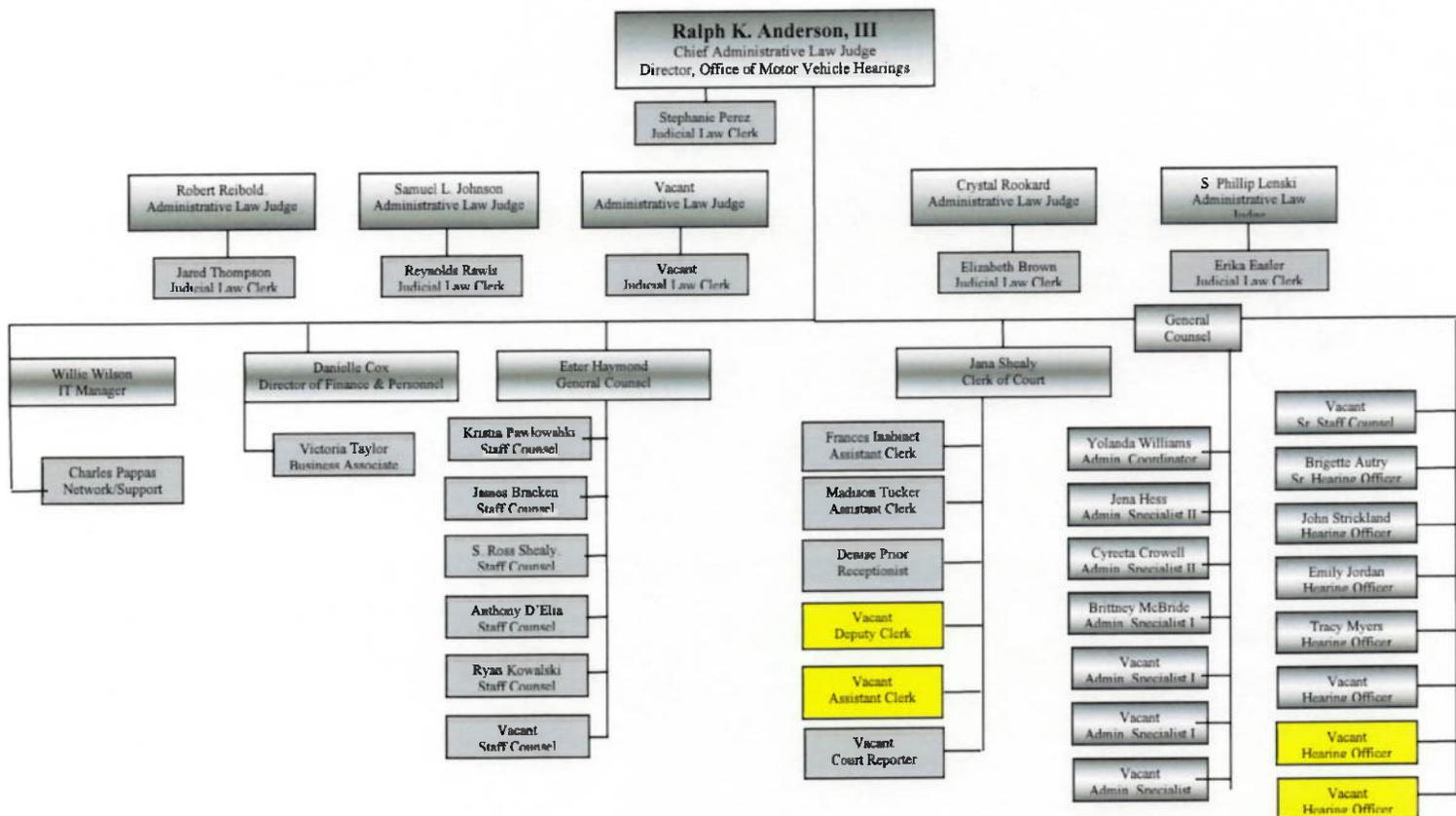
- Ralph K. Anderson, III, Chief Judge
803.734.6409
- Jana Shealy, Clerk of Court
jshealy@scal.c.net
803.734.6411
- Danielle Cox, Finance Director
dcox@scal.c.net
803.734.6414

The South Carolina Administrative Law Court Overview

The Administrative Law Court (ALC) is a court of record and one-program agency in the Executive Branch of SC and is comprised of the ALC and Office of Motor Vehicle Hearings (OMVH)

ALC Mission: To provide a neutral forum for fair, prompt and objective hearings for any person(s) affected by an action or proposed action of certain agencies or departments of the State of South Carolina

OMVH Mission: To provide a neutral forum for fair, prompt, and objective hearings for person(s) affected by an action or proposed action of the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles, ensuring due process and respecting the dignity of all.



*The highlighted are delimited positions from 30350000

ALC FY 26-27 Budget Requests

Priority 1: Funding Request of \$70,000.00, for Employer Contributions for the ALJs to the JSRS.

The Administrative Law Court (ALC) currently employs five Administrative Law Judges (ALJs), all of whom are enrolled in the Judges and Solicitors Retirement System (JSRS). Prior to 2023, the ALC paid JSRS employer contributions for four ALJs and South Carolina Retirement System (SCRS) contributions for one retired-in-place judge. Following that judge's departure, a newly elected ALJ assumed office and, pursuant to Section 9-8-40 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, automatically became a JSRS member.

As a result, beginning in FY 2024, the ALC was invoiced for JSRS contributions for five ALJs, representing a notable increase in retirement-related expenditures. The agency has absorbed this additional cost—approximately \$70,000 annually—for three fiscal years using carryforward funds and fringe savings from a vacant position. However, as the agency continues to fill vacant positions, this budgetary flexibility will no longer be available. Without additional funding, the continued obligation to cover increased JSRS contributions may adversely impact the agency's personnel budget and its ability to maintain competitive compensation. The ALC respectfully requests an increase in recurring appropriations to cover the additional JSRS employer contributions, ensuring continued fiscal stability and support for judicial personnel.

Priority 2: Funding Request of \$243,200.00 for salary increases and fringe for court staff and attorneys.

Securing adequate funding for employee compensation is essential to maintaining a highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce. Competitive salaries, particularly in comparison to other state agencies and courts, significantly enhance the Administrative Law Court's (ALC) ability to recruit and retain experienced personnel.

Attorneys and administrative staff play a vital role in supporting the Court's operations. Their responsibilities include, but are not limited to, conducting legal research, accepting filing fees, processing deposits, scheduling hearings for OMVH Hearing Officers, and assisting litigants with the e-filing process. These contributions are instrumental in enabling the ALC to fulfill its mission of issuing sound and timely decisions, thereby reducing the time between case filing and disposition.

In recent years, the ALC has implemented salary increases that have reduced staff turnover. Nevertheless, there is an ongoing risk that current compensation levels may become noncompetitive, particularly as other state agencies continue to raise salaries to attract and retain qualified employees—especially attorneys. Ensuring that compensation remains competitive for all staff is a critical priority for the agency.

PROVISOS – NO CHANGES/AMENDMENTS

SECTION 58 - C050 - ADMINISTRATIVE LAW COURT

- 58.1.** (ALC: Copying Costs Revenue Deposit) The Administrative Law Court shall retain and expend, for the same purpose for which it is generated, all revenue received during the current fiscal year as payment for printing and distributing copies of court rules and other agency documents.
- 58.2.** (ALC: County Office Space for Judges) Every county shall provide for each Administrative Law Judge residing therein, upon their request, an office within the existing physical facilities if space is available, to include all utilities and a private telephone. The request shall only be made provided that the judge's residence is not within fifty miles of the official headquarters of the agency by which the Administrative Law Judge is employed.
- 58.3.** (ALC: ALJ Travel) While holding court or on other official business outside the county in which he resides, within fifty miles of his residence, an Administrative Law Judge is entitled to a subsistence allowance in the amount of \$35 per day plus such mileage allowance for travel as is provided for other employees of the State. While holding court or on other official business at a location fifty miles or more from his residence, an Administrative Law Judge is entitled to a subsistence allowance in the amount as provided in this act for members of the General Assembly plus such mileage allowance for travel as is provided for other employees of the State. However, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the allowance as provided shall not exceed \$8,000 per judge in a fiscal year.
- 58.4.** (ALC: Office Space for Hearing Officers) Every county and municipality shall provide a space to conduct administrative hearings for the Office of Motor Vehicle Hearings upon request by the Chief Judge of the ALC. This space shall be within their existing physical facilities and include all utilities.

South Carolina Administrative Law Court

Financial Overview & Efficiency

Budget vs Actual for FY 2026 as of January 2026

STATE APPROPRIATION		Budget	Actual
501048	Chief Judge	\$ 199,731.00	\$ 116,509.68
501049	Administrative Judges	\$ 887,705.00	\$ 429,057.32
501060	Unclassified Positions -	\$ 2,419,903.00	\$ 1,100,652.95
512001	Operating	\$ 435,150.00	\$ 435,150.00
513000	Fringe	\$ 1,614,793.00	\$ 1,158,195.14
	Carryforward from 2025	\$ 524,179.23	\$ 43,085.80

OTHER FUNDS		Budget	Actual
501060	Unclassified Positions	\$ 821,770.68	\$ 287,371.26
513000	Fringe	\$ 248,692.32	\$ 128,524.34
512001	Operating	\$ 585,523.00	\$ 75,174.30

Financial Overview & Efficiency

Budget vs Actual for FY 2025

STATE APPROPRIATION	Budget	Actual
501048 Chief Judge	\$ 195,815.00	\$ 195,814.80
501049 Administrative Judges	\$ 870,303.00	\$ 731,843.18
501060 Unclassified Positions	\$ 2,039,298.95	\$ 1,813,715.37
512001 Operating	\$ 435,150.00	\$ 435,150.00
513000 Fringe	\$ 1,524,819.14	\$ 1,500,559.97
Carryforward from 2023	\$ 503,852.10	\$ 503,852.10

SPECIAL CARRY-FORWARD - 10050023	Budget	Actual
Renovations	\$ 510,470.31	\$ 510,470.31
IT Upgrade	\$ 17,115.74	\$ 17,115.74

SPECIAL CARRY-FORWARD 10050024	Budget	Actual
Courtroom Upgrades	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00

The ALC updated the outdated audiovisual hardware (AV) in all three courtrooms.
Breakdown of the funding for the project:

Special Carry-Forward 10050024 -	\$ 75,000
Carryforward from 2024 -	\$ 194,000
	\$ 269,000

OTHER FUNDS			
501060	Unclassified Positions	\$ 821,770.68	\$ 470,502.63
513000	Fringe	\$ 248,692.32	\$ 207,438.17
512001	Operating	\$ 585,523.00	\$ 129,590.94

HIGHLIGHT/SUCCESSSES

- Implementation of mandatory E-Filing System (EFS) for attorneys
- Almost 700 attorneys have registered in the EFS
- Mandatory for attorneys filing in the ALC since November 12, 2025 (approximately 30 cases have been filed using the EFS)
- Mandatory for attorneys filing in the OMVH since August 1, 2025 (the majority of cases in the OMVH are filed by attorneys and therefore must use the EFS)
- Credit Card payments for walk-in filings

FTE Breakdown – Total 46

State FTE

Authorized - 30

Filled - 27

Vacant - 3

Other FTE

Authorized – 16

Filled - 5

Vacant - 11

NOTES:

1. Pursuant to Proviso 117.193 (FTE Management) four Other Funds FTEs were delimited on 11/21/2025.
2. Vacant State FTE includes -
 - a. Administrative Law Judge vacant since July 2025,
 - b. Judicial Law Clerk May 2025
 - c. Staff Attorney vacant since July 2025.