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Colorado Judicial Facility Space Needs Assessment:

Conejos County Combined Court and Probation Department

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Conejos County Combined Court Space Assessment

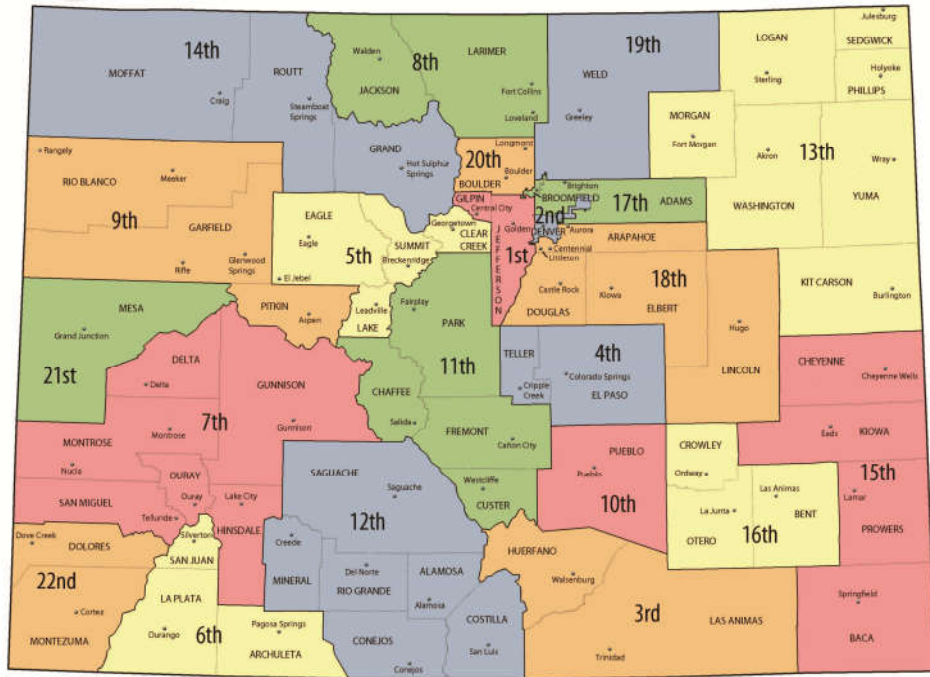


Judicial Space Need Assessment The following space needs exercise has been prepared by the State Court Administrators Office, the District Administrator, Chief Judge and Chief Probation Officer of the 12th Judicial District. The intent of this report is to compile and report the space requirements, building amenities, and potential construction scope of a new or remodeled Conejos County Justice complex to achieve the immediate needs as well as 25 year projections of Conejos County and the 12th Judicial District.

The 12th Judicial District is one of 22 in the State of Colorado and is a part of the Colorado Judicial Branch. All employees of the district are State Judicial Employees. All court operating budgets are allocated by the State Legislature through the State Judicial Department to the various judicial districts. All facilities and facility maintenance for the court operations are provided by the local governments per statute C.R.S. 13-37-108.



COLORADO JUDICIAL DISTRICTS



The **12th Judicial District** is located along the central northern border of New Mexico and along the western edge of the Continental Divide and is comprised of 6 counties. The member counties are Alamosa, Rio Grande, Mineral, Saguache, Costilla and Conejos

Census and DOLA demographic information:

The current population of Conejos County is 8147. The population has decreased slightly since the year 2000 when it peaked at 8400. The main economic drivers of Conejos are agribusiness and the service industry. 60% of the Conejos work force commutes to work in adjacent counties, mostly Alamosa. There are four primary cities in Conejos County including Antonito, Manassa, La Jara and Romeo.

The current population in Conejos County is 8,147. Under current trending, the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) estimates that the population could increase by 500- 1000 in the next 25 years. Current population projection for the year 2045 is 8,650

The Current Conejos Court Facility Assessment

The Conejos County Courthouse at 6683 County Road 13, Conejos, Colorado has served the judicial needs of the community since 1980. It is a one story prefabricated structure that has received an addition and slight modification over the past 35 years. The probation department functions out of an annex biding on the same site. The County Jail is a separate facility located a few miles to the east.

The current office spaces occupied in the Conejos Courthouse by all governments are listed as follows:

County

- Clerk and Recorder, Board of County Commissioners County Treasurer, Tax Assessor, Election Board, and Facilities Department.

Trial Courts

- The State Courts occupies 1 courtroom, 1 judge's chambers, one jury deliberation, a clerk's office with public transaction window and a storage area.

Probation

- Probation occupies a 2 offices in an adjacent annex shared with the district attorney.

Sherriff

- The County Sheriff in and detention facility are located remotely from the courthouse, approximately 2 miles to the east

Courthouse Limitations and Building Deficiencies

The following is a description of current building conditions, size and infrastructure constraints.

- The courthouse is a 1 story prefabricated metal sided structure which over time has expanded and been remodeled to meet business needs. There is one true courtroom but with limited occupancy (65 persons). The Commissioners' Hearing Room is an additional space at the eastern end of the building and has been utilized on occasion by the courts as a hearing room.
- The Courthouse is a well maintained building but with typical wear and tear from aging. The building is lacking in modern infrastructure for data, communications, audio visual and security. The building is difficult to secure and there are dead end egress routes that could entrap court employee in the event of a security event.
- Circulation zones, which are required to separate staff, public and in-custody traffic, are not possible in the current building configuration.
- The electrical systems in the building are undersized and outdated to meet the increasing demand of the courts technology systems. There are numerous extension cords and surface conduits to distribute power. Additional telephone and data cabling

is problematic to install and upgrade because of a non-centralized floor plan. All recently added data cabling is run on the surface of the walls and ceilings

- The court areas are not ADA compliant for judges, staff, or public, specifically jurors, witnesses, and litigants.
- There are no holding cells or secure prisoner traffic routes for in-custody defendants. This shortcoming is a significant concern which has compelled other Colorado courthouses to remodel and sometimes rebuild. In Conejos, prisoners appearing in court are walked to the courthouse where they are brought into the building's back door. There is no separate route for escorted prisoners to be delivered the courtroom. In all cases they are brought in through the public waiting area where they may contact family, friends, and victims. A disturbance or confrontation is always a possibility. Because there are no holding cells, all in-custody defendants are delivered directly to the courtrooms regardless of the readiness of the court.
- There are inadequate available restrooms. Increasing case loads and increased staff have increased the demand for restroom facilities.
- The lack of adequate meeting and conferencing facilities creates compound conflicts for spaces designated for other uses such as jury rooms.
- Probation Services are located in a separate building. Probation will be requiring more space for additional staff in the near future. Their current accommodations do not have security screening for their probationers.
- There is no provision or available space to separate waiting victims, witnesses, and defendants and families.
- **The key deficiency of the current Conejos Justice facility is that the courts have simply outgrown their allocated space. Integral personnel are without permanent offices to prepare for the docket and conduct their business. There are insufficient meeting and interview rooms. Confidentiality is essential for our business but compromised under present conditions. There is no space available for judicially provided programs and services such as Mediation Services, First Appearance and Disposition, Litigant Self Help Center and Public Access Terminals. Jury call is always a challenge due to insufficient assembly area.**

Trial Court Staffing

The 12th Judicial District currently has 4 District Court Judges, 6 County Court Judges and a part time Domestic Relations Magistrate. The Conejos Combined Court currently hosts 4 district court Judges at varying intervals as well as a part-time Domestic Relations Magistrate and the part-time Water Court Referee. The Potential Conejos Judicial Officers are:

- Chief Judge & Water Judge Patti Swift
- District Court Judge Michael Gonzales
- District Court Judge Martin Gonzales
- District Court Judge Amanda C. Hopkins
- County Court Judge Kimberly Cortez-Rodriguez
- Magistrate Kimberly Wood
- Water Court Referee Nicolas Sarmiento
- The District Administrator, Christina Gallegos, is appointed by the Chief Judge and is delegated the authority to perform administrative duties in the operation of the district. This Administrators office is responsible for the overall management of the personnel, budget and the operation of the six county combined courts in the district.

Current and Projected Conejos County Court FTE Staff (FTE or Full time Employee)

Current Trial Court Staff 2013	FTE	25 Year Projected Staff 2035	FTE	Change FTE
District Court Judge	.25	District Court Judge	.5	25. Increase
County Court Judge	.35	County Court Judge	.7	.35 Increase
District Court Magistrate	.15	District Court Magistrate	.3	.15 Increase
Clerical Staff	3.5	Clerical Staff	5	1.5 Increase
Jury Commissioner	0	Jury Commissioner	0	No Change
Collections Investigators	.2	Collections Investigators	.4	.02 Increase
Court Reporters	0	Court Reporters	0	No Change
Legal Research Attorney	0	Legal Research Attorney	0	No Change
Court Interpreter	.3	Court Interpreter	0	No Change
Division Clerk	0	Division Clerk	.4	.4 increase

Account Clerk	0	Account Clerk	0	No Change
Appeals Clerk	0	Appeals Clerk	0	No Change
Family Court Facilitator	0	Family Court Facilitator	0	No Change
Self-Represented Litigant Coordinator	.2	Self-Represented Litigant Coordinator	.2	No Change
Water Referee	.25	Water Referee	.25	No Change
Visiting/Contract Staff	.5	Visiting/Contract Staff	.6	.1 change
Administrative Staff	0	Administrative Staff	0	No Change
Total	5.7		8.3	+ 2.6

*The FTE staffing total does not reflect actual judicial (Trial Court) staff which occupies the facility but does account for their salary allocation for work in Conejos. Some District staff work in all six counties of the 12th district.

Trial Courts Space Projection

From analysis of data and projections compiled in this report, a remodeled Conejos County Trial Court will call for two courtroom sets, (Courtroom sets detailed later) Clerk's Office suite for 5 staff, which may include private offices for Clerk of Court and Collections Investigator. This assessment also calls for publically accessible offices suites and meeting rooms for Mediation Services and Family Court Facilitator as well as a Self Help Center for Pro Se litigants. There are also offices required for IT staff, Court Reporters and Managing Court Interpreter and a visiting Judge Chambers.

Probation Department Staffing

Colorado Probation is committed to public safety and community reparation through offender accountability, skill and competency development. Commitment to these practices requires the implementation of innovative approaches to offender assessments, supervision, victim involvement and service to the community. Colorado Probation is a rapidly expanding program shifting the focus from incarceration of offenders to proactive rehabilitative supervision, victim compensation and reduction of criminal behavior.

Chief Probation Officer, Bill Gurule is the administrative head of the probation department in the 12th and reports to the Chief Judge, Patti Swift. Bill is assisted by two regional supervisors and a combined staff of 33 FTE district-wide

Conejos Probation Staffing

Current Probation Staff	FTE	25 Year Projected	FTE	Change FTE
Chief Probation Officer	0	Chief Probation Officer	0	Part Time
Probation Supervisors	0	Probation Supervisors	1	Full Time
Probation Officers	1	Probation Officers	3	4 Increase
Probation Clerical	.25	Probation Clerical	1	.75 Increase
Visiting and Contract Positions	0	Visiting and Contract Positions	1	2 Increase
Total	1.25		6	4.75 Increase

*This chart denotes salary allocation for Conejos and not actual staffing which will be higher due to visiting staff. Note that 25 year projections show a doubling of this allocation.

Probation Department space projection

The Probation Department operates independently yet should be adjacent and accessible to the trial courts however can have a separate entrance. The Probation Department will reside in a separate office suite with a designated secured probationer waiting area. The projected Conejos Probation Department will contain offices for the Supervising Probation Officer and 1 PO and clerical workstation. The suite will also include a secured check in and waiting area, staff meeting / break room, file storage, and a classroom for group probation sessions. Probationers are frequently scheduled for appointments at any time of day including weekends and evenings so a separate entrance is recommended when practical.

Colorado Courthouse Circulation Requirements

Newly constructed courthouses in Colorado (and nationally) are designed with three separate zones of circulation.

- The first zone is the public circulation zone which includes lobbies, courtrooms, hearing rooms, jury assembly/First Appearance Center, clerk transaction windows and specialty offices.
- The second zone is for staff circulation: including private offices, judges' chambers, jury deliberation, and administration.
- The third is the secured zone for sheriff and prisoner entry and movement, holding area; private prisoner elevator and secured entrance into the courtrooms.

Separation of these circulation zones are typically controlled by electronic card access systems.

Space Assessment Method

This space assessment will arrive at an estimated square footage calculation derived from judicial program requirements, current and projected staffing, current and projected court filings and other contributing factors such as weighted case load and specialty court docket

impact. Room size calculation is determined using the **Colorado State Court Space Guidelines**. All room measurements are totaled to ascertain a gross building space model. This gross total is multiplied by a factor of 35% (Net Grossing Factor for Assembly Buildings) which accounts for circulation, bathrooms, mechanical, electrical, custodial rooms, waiting areas and restroom facilities.

Note that some of the rooms factored into this plan can be examined and possibly combined as multipurpose with other office functions. This reevaluation can create overall space reductions as the Conejos program becomes better defined.

The following sections provide specific room descriptions:

District and County Courtroom Set description

- Judge's Bench - ADA accessible judge position elevated two risers
- Clerk Position - accommodating two courtroom clerks and elevated one riser
- Witness Box - elevated one riser or at floor level for ADA accessibility
- Jury Box - The jury box should seat 14 (12 plus 2 alternates). When possible the front row of seats should be at floor grade to accommodate jurors with wheelchairs. At least one juror seat shall be removable to create a space for wheelchair.
- Counsel Tables - space enough to accommodate 2-4 tables.
- Lectern
- Assure that all sightlines to witness, jury, lectern, evidence display devices and counsel tables are unobstructed.
- Audio Visual and Evidence Display - Controls at the judge's bench and input connections at the podium and counsel tables. Systems are capable of all audio sound reinforcement as well as teleconferencing, video evidence presentation and video court appearance to Jail.
- Court Reporter Station - portable desk unit but accessible to technology connections.
- Gallery Seating - At least one courtroom should have seating for 70 -80 for heavy docket days and large jury pools. All other trial courtrooms should accommodate at least 50 spectators

Note: It is our recommendation to design the jury box to accommodate 14 in all jury courtrooms to permit District and County Courtrooms to be interchangeable.

Prisoner Holding Area: Each holding pen will contain a pair of secured holding cells to hold up to 8 in-custody defendants. When practical, holding areas should be located between courtrooms to create a dedicated prisoner side entrance to the courtroom. Each cell will have a toilet and will be adjacent to a sheriff workstation. In a multi-story courthouse, the holding area should have a dedicated prisoner elevator.

Judicial Chambers with Private Restroom: The chambers will have a judge's desk, credenza and side table at which four to five parties can meet with the judge. Judges Chambers are equipped with restroom facilities.

Attorney / Client Conference Room: These rooms are essential to the efficient operation of all state courthouses. We recommend two attorney client rooms per courtroom set.

Jury Deliberation: The jury table will accommodate a standard 14 jurors, (12 jurors plus 2 alternates) for jury deliberation. Jury rooms are also used during recesses and breaks. Each jury deliberation room should have one restroom and preferably two. When practical, it is preferred that restroom doorways be concealed to the deliberation table. Jury deliberation rooms require a cabinet and sink area for coffee and refreshments.

Clerk's Office Suite: The Clerk's office is the interface between the public and the court and typically is located at ground level for ease of access. The Clerk's Office conducts all public transactions, court filings, payments and maintains all court records and oversees the court calendar. The Conejos Clerk's office requires an ADA compliant transaction window, 5 workstations for staff, an internal private Clerk of Court office, condensed file shelving area, secured evidence and exhibit storage, mail and copier functions, break room for all staff and a bathroom. An adjacent **File Viewing Room** is provided with a supervision window where customers can request and review court files. A public Access E-file computer is available in the File View Room for access to electronically filed cases.

Collection Investigators: The investigators will be located in a publically accessible part of the building near the Clerks Office. This office provides for confidential interviews to discuss incomes and payment plans to the court.

IT Support Office: This is a secured room for computer premise equipment, distribution racks, telephone PBX, computer inventory storage and a workstation for the technician.

Mediation Suite: Mediation hearings often take place in two separate rooms, such as an office with adjoining conference room, so parties can maintain confidentiality while the mediator negotiates between the two rooms.

Conference / Meeting Rooms: Each floor of the courthouse requires a conferencing room for staff for meetings and video conferences. Conference rooms are often multi-function and can be used as mediation rooms and staff breaks rooms.

Self Help Center: The self help center is a room that offers a variety of legal information, brochures, interactive videos and resources to litigants.

Victim Witness Waiting Room: This is a District Attorney supervised space where witnesses and victims can await their appearance in court separated from other parties to the case.

Exhibit, Evidenced and Archive File Storage: This is room near the Clerk’s office where non-active files and court exhibits can be shelved and secured. Active files are maintained within the clerk’s office.

The Probation Suite and Offices:

The following rooms / offices are required to accommodate Probation functions:

- Probationer waiting and check in Room
- Reception / Clerical Work Room
- Probation Interview offices (Probation Officer offices)
- Supervisor Offices
- Classroom
- Secured File Storage
- Conference and Break Room

Square Footage Space Summary for Conejos Trial Court

The following outline represents the assessed quantity of offices and courtrooms with their recommended square footage requirements taken from Judicial Guidelines. It is this tabulation that serves as the basis of design and overall square footage requirements to accommodate the Court and Probation business operation. This report will conclude with summary net and gross totals of the square footage for a courthouse to meet the projected needs for the next 25 years in Conejos County.

Large Jury Courtroom Set (Projected need of 1 for Conejos)

TOTALS

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 1. Courtroom | 1850 SF |
| 2. Chambers with restroom | 350 SF |
| 3. Jury Deliberation Room with Unisex Restroom | 320 SF |
| 4. Attorney Client Conference Rooms 2 @ 100 SF | 200 SF |
| 5. Entrance Vestibule w/ Evidence Storage | 150 SF |
| 6. AV Support Closet | 100 SF |
| 7. Division Office suite Includes Clerks office, Reporter, Assistant | 200 SF |

Total SF for Courtroom 3170 SF

Projected Total for 1 Large Jury Courtroom Sets (recommended for Conejos Courts) **3170 SF**

Standard Jury Courtroom Set (Projected need of 1)

- 1. Courtroom 1650 SF
- 2. Chambers with restroom 350 SF
- 3. Attorney Client Conference Rooms 1 @ 100 SF 100 SF
- 4. Entrance Vestibule w/ Evidence Storage 150 SF
- 5. AV Support Closet 100 SF

Total SF for Courtroom 2350 SF

Projected Standard Jury Courtroom recommended for Conejos Courts **2350 SF**

Holding Cell Facilities (To be shared between two courtrooms) 1 set required

Holding space typical includes 2 lockable cells with toilet, elevator and secured Atty conference room

Total SF 620 SF

Total for Conejos **620 SF**

Clerk's Office (For four staff)

- 1. Clerk of Court Office 200 SF
- 2. Supervisor Office 0 SF
- 3. Accountant Office 0 SF
- 4. Public File View room and Public Access Terminal 200 SF
- 5. Workstation area/ Mailroom Workroom / File Storage/Public transaction Window / Copier

400 SF

Total SF for Clerk's Office **800 SF**

Mediation Rooms

Recommended two conferencing room in a single suite **0**

Family Court Facilitator

One office with adjoined meeting Room **0**

Collection Investigator

Three interview office suite with public access. **0**

Technical Support Office

Office space for regional tech support with storage space **140 SF**

Court Staff Conferencing and Multipurpose Rooms (2 Recommended)

2rooms at 200 SF **400 SF**

Break Room

Kitchen counter / sink and fridge with table for 8 **240 SF**

Self Help and Self Represented Litigant Support Office

Office for distribution of self help materials and volunteer attorney assistance **200 SF**

0

Managing Court Interpreter Office

0

Security Lobby

Space for public queuing and security screening equipment at the main public entrance **300 SF**

Note: Due to the part time and or job share nature of some of the professional services, space allocations may be listed as zero square feet with the understanding that such employees will have access to shared or multipurpose work areas when in Conejos.

Total estimated net building square footage for Conejos Trial Court **8,220 Square Feet**

Square Footage Space Summary for Conejos Probation Department

Probationer Check-in and Waiting Area **200 SF**

Reception and Clerical Workroom **200 SF**

5 Probation Officer Interview Offices; 120 SF Each **600 SF**

Chief Probation Officer **0 SF**

1 Probation Supervisors Office 160 SF each **160 SF**

Classroom **200 SF**

Secured File Storage **150 SF**

UA Lab	0 SF
Conference and Break Room	240 SF
Probation Net Square Footage requirement	1,390 Square Feet
Combined Trial Court and Probation Net Square Footage	9.610 Square Feet

Net Building Grossing Factor

NBGF (Net Building Grossing Factor) This factor is a percentage multiplier that factors net building office square footage estimate by 35 % to ascertain the additional floor space needed for:

1. Public, Staff and in-custody circulation hallway
2. Staff and Public Restrooms
3. Public waiting areas
4. Mechanical / Electrical and Building support rooms(janitor closets)
5. Telephone and Data Distribution
6. Building Storage

Net Grossing Factor	9610 X 35%	NGF = 3,363 SF
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9610 SF Net + 3363 SF Grossing Factor	Total	12,973Square Feet
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Total Estimated Square footage for Conejos Trial Court Facility with Probation	13,000 Square Feet
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Summary

Based on all criteria listed in this report, the estimated net total square foot estimate for the Conejos County Court Program is 13,000 Square feet.

The current allocated space in the existing Conejos Court and Probation at 6683 County Road 13 is roughly **4,000 square feet**.

This estimated space projection for a new or remodeled constructed justice center in Conejos County is more than double that of the current facility. Many factors contribute to this increase; this reports calls for two courtrooms, additional customer support offices and a significant increase in the offices in the Probation Department.

Our square footage estimate for a Conejos Court Facility, prepared by the State Court Administrators Office is a guideline based on projected room quantities and realistic room dimensions. This number can serve as a relatively good estimate for future master planning. **13.000 square** feet is consistent with other similar new 2 courtroom locations in Colorado. We strongly recommend that our net square footage estimate be re-evaluated by a selected Task Force comprised of Judicial, County and Community representatives along with a court qualified program architect to determine space efficiencies and best use practices. The ultimate basis of design will rely on the criteria described within this report but can be adjusted to accommodate space limitations of potential building sites. Upon completing a programming exercise, the net square footage may reduce due to consolidations of selected spaces. It is important to recognize that this estimated space is not excessive and the square footage standard we employed in this estimate are at the low end of the recommended Colorado Judicial Space Guidelines.