



Superior Court of California County of Amador BUDGET SNAPSHOT



January 2014

Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2014-15

Amador Superior Court is faced with several challenges as a result of the ongoing budget reductions. We have a smaller workforce, limited resources to improve technology, and limited ability to restore and improve public access. Our priorities for 2014-2015, if adequate funding is allocated, are to implement technology and business processing improvements for better access. We are unable to provide technological solutions such as e-filing, document imaging and document storage for Court users.

Self-Help / Mediation / Facilitator Services

- Reduced days family law facilitators provide services to users.
- Due to reduction in allocation we have been unable to hire a qualified Family Court Services Mediator / Investigator. We hired a retired annuitant who can provide only limited hours per year to provide mediation and investigation services to the court. This impacts service delivery to litigants trying to get into mediation.
- Court has eliminated child custody evaluators because the litigants cannot afford the \$1200 evaluation fee, and the court cannot afford to absorb the cost of the evaluations.

Court Reporters / Interpreter Services

- With only 2 court reporters, Court is understaffed; all interpreter services are contracted; difficult to get interpreters to come out to rural area courts. As a result, many cases are continued. The Court is looking to reducing court reporter services in early July 2014.

Counters / Clerks / Telephones

- As of October 2012, the Clerk's office and telephone support are open to the public from 9:30 to 3:00 Monday – Thursday, and from 9:30am to Noon on Fridays.

Staff Impacts / Furloughs / Layoffs / Unfilled Vacancies

- **FY 2013-14:** Management and confidential staff paying 7% contribution into CalPERS. **FY 2014-15** all represented staff will be paying 7% into CalPERS.
- **FY 2012-13:** Eliminated one full-time management position. Had two voluntary separations and left positions vacant.
- **FY 2011-13:** All employees took a total of 27 mandatory furlough days with concurrent pay reductions of 6.3% for two years.
- Hiring freeze in place since 2011.
- All employees took 18 furlough days in FY 2009-10; later increased to 20 days, with concurrent pay reductions of up to 9.91% of salary.
- Current vacancy rate is 24.5%; increased workload has resulted in increased absenteeism and stress-related job illnesses and injuries.

Court Security / Safety / Facilities

Although County Sheriff pays for personnel costs, the Court is often called upon to pay for broken equipment and maintenance costs for security-related equipment such as Magnetometers, court control monitors, computers, radio equipment, and other items.

Budget Considerations

Budgeted Revenues* FY 2013-2014	\$2,597,857
<u>Total Revenues* FY 2008-2009</u>	<u>\$3,175,147</u>
Five-Year Revenue Reduction	-\$577,290
<small>*Excludes Sheriff-Provided Security</small>	
Current Year Unfunded Employee Health Benefits and Retirement Costs	-\$210,980
Share of \$60 million augmentation	\$61,365

Court Demographics

Population Served	37,120
Square Miles Covered	605
Total Number of Court Facilities	1
Filled Staff Positions FY 2013-2014	31
<u>Filled Staff Positions FY 2008-2009</u>	<u>36</u>
Lost Positions in 5 years	-5 (16% reduction)
Positions lost since July 1, 2012	-3 (22% vacancy rate)

Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. Susan C. Harlan
Court Executive Officer	Barbara Cockerham
Executive Office Contact	(209) 257-2681

Budget Challenges for FY 2014-15

Changes in service delivery to the public resulting from further baseline budget reductions and reducing of this Court's reserve fund balance down to 1% will continue to erode service and the public's trust and confidence in the judicial system. This court will be left with enormous fiscal, operational, and administrative challenges that will be hard to overcome. Court users will suffer tremendously by continued reduced access to justice and customer service. Court service hours will continue to be reduced. The Court will not be able to meet a bi-weekly payroll or pay contractors for services and/or supplies. It has become more difficult to manage a court where there has been over a 50% revenue reduction. Given these challenges, the Court's priorities if funding is adequately allocated will consist of improving access and its technology infrastructure to assist with operational efficiencies. FY08/09 to FY13/14 Amador Court has seen a \$600,000 reduction in its allocation.