



# Superior Court of California

## County of Butte

### BUDGET SNAPSHOT



JUDICIAL COUNCIL  
OF CALIFORNIA  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

February 2015

#### Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2015-16

*Our court's budget priorities are to implement and enhance our court's new case management system to enhance access to justice.*

#### Staff Impacts / Furloughs / Layoffs / Unfilled Vacancies

- Laid off three full-time and one temporary employee in FY 2011-12, laid off one full time employee in FY 2013-14.
- Began a voluntary furlough program of two days per month in FY 2009-10 with a 70% participation rate; negotiated mandatory furloughs of 13 days per year in FY 2010-11 and FY 2011-12.
- Negotiated 10 furlough days per year in FY 2013-14 and 13 per year in FY 2014-15.
- Employees now contribute 3.5% of salary towards retirement costs
- No employee COLAs since 2009.

#### Court Security / Safety / Facilities

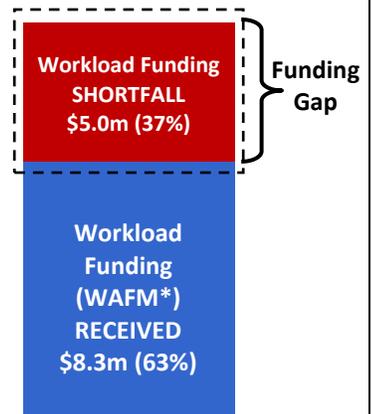
Due to the realignment of court security funding, ten court attendant positions were eliminated. Related jury and courtroom support services are now performed by clerks' office staff (security-related functions transferred to the responsibility of the local Sheriff's Department).

#### Technology modernization

The court will have difficulty funding technology infrastructure modernization (for the maintenance of existing systems) due to current budget realities and the limits placed on fund balance reserves.

#### Funding Shortfall

\*WAFM is the Workload-based Allocation & Funding Methodology. It describes how much funding courts need based on their workload. In the current year, the workload-based allocation *needed* in Butte was calculated at \$13.2 million but the court received \$8.3 million. See reverse for a detailed explanation of how WAFM is calculated.



#### Court Demographics

Population Served	222,316
Square Miles Covered	1,640
Total Number of Court Facilities	5

#### Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. Kristen A. Lucena
Court Executive Officer	Kimberly Flener
Executive Office Contact	(530) 532-7013

#### Budget Challenges for FY 2015-16

*While furloughs and staff reductions have saved money, they have also increased work backlogs and service times. Reductions in our court's fiscal resources have increased case processing times. Staffing levels are not optimal and impede the court's ability to provide adequate levels of public access to justice.*

## The Workload-based Allocation & Funding Methodology (WAFM)

The Workload-based Allocation & Funding Methodology (WAFM) calculates the total funding needed for California's 58 trial courts based on case filings, workload and other factors.

To do this, WAFM relies on results from what we call the Resource Assessment Study (RAS) model to estimate total staffing needed using a weighted caseload model. Developed in partnership with national experts, the RAS model is based on a time study of over 5,000 case processing staff in 24 California trial courts. The study established a set of caseweights (amount of time in minutes to process a case from initial filing through any post-disposition activity) understanding that certain types of filings take more time and resources to handle than others. The weighted filings are used to estimate total staff needed in each court.

The WAFM model converts the staff need data into dollars, taking into account average salaries, benefits, operating expenses and equipment, and the local cost of labor using the Bureau of Labor Statistics as a benchmark. A "funding floor" is applied to the smallest trial courts because there is a basic operating threshold that must be met in order to provide service to the public. In other words, California's small courts do not have economies of scale, and yet there are basic expenditures that even the smallest courts must make. The result is, for each court, an estimate of the core operations funding required to adequately process its workload. This is known as the court's WAFM share.

Starting in FY 2013-14, a portion of each court's allocation is being recalculated according to its WAFM share. (A court's WAFM share is different from the courts' historical share of the statewide funding. The WAFM calculation tells us what the trial courts need to function based on current filings, whereas the historical share was based on the amount each court received from its county.)

Unfortunately, the total WAFM funding needed for all 58 courts exceeds the funding currently appropriated in the state budget by as much as \$800 million. (This is the WAFM funding gap.) To manage the budget reductions resulting from the implementation of WAFM in the absence of full trial court funding, the Judicial Council approved applying WAFM incrementally to each court's historical share of statewide funding, applying it 100% only to "new" money appropriated in the budget. New money is any undesignated general court operations funding increase above the FY 2012-13 State funding level.

The rules of application adopted by the Judicial Council are as follows:

- Each year beginning in FY 2013-14, and through/including FY 2017-18, incrementally more of the historical (base) funding (using FY 2012-13 as the base) will be subject to WAFM, until 50% of the FY 2012-13 base is distributed according to WAFM;
- All undesignated court operations state funding increases after FY 2012-13 are distributed according to the WAFM shares; and
- For each dollar of new state funding, one dollar of the historical base will be reallocated using WAFM.