



Superior Court of California County of Del Norte BUDGET SNAPSHOT

February 2016



JUDICIAL COUNCIL
OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Hon. William H. Follett, Presiding Judge

Sandra Linderman, Court Executive Officer

(707) 465-3299

Court Service Highlights in the Current Year

Court has maintained the same level of access in light of continued budget shortages and reductions in staffing levels.

Court Service Highlights in Detail

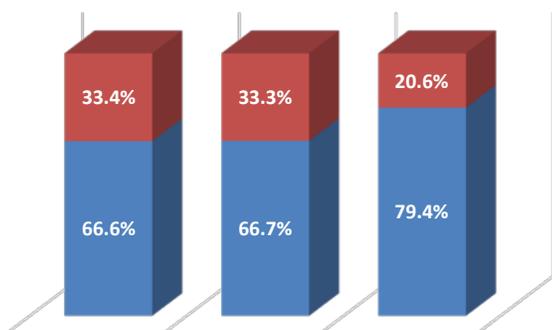
Proactive implementation of traffic ticket/infraction amnesty program

The Court implemented the traffic ticket infraction amnesty program as prescribed by statute. However, it is imperative to understand that this has put an undue hardship on our Court by increasing workload and significantly reducing revenue.

Workload Allocation & Funding Gap (see reverse)

DEL NORTE

■ WAFM Funding ■ WAFM Funding Gap



FY 2013-14 FY 2014-15 ESTIMATED
FY 2015-16

Budget Challenges and Priorities

Self-Help / Mediation / Facilitator Services

The Court continues to employ one full-time and one part-time mediator. Should funding not be appropriated, cuts may need to be made in this department. Delays on complex family law cases create significant hardships for all involved.

Counters / Clerks / Telephones

The next cost saving measure will be to reduce public access to the Court through reduced counter hours and phone access. The Court has avoided this in the past year, but absent any further cost saving measures, this is the most logical step.

Staff Impacts / Furloughs / Layoffs / Unfilled Vacancies

Court has continued to hold several positions vacant due to budget reductions, with salary savings redirected toward operating expenses. Even with these reductions, without the funding gap closed, layoffs may need to be considered.

The Court intends on holding the hiring freeze in place until the funding gap is resolved. This continues to create untold delays in case processing and requires the Court operate without sufficient staffing levels. The long term effects of working with such limited resources may take years to realize.

Court Demographics

Population Served	28,131
Square Miles Covered	1,230
Total Number of Court Facilities	2

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' traditional share of the statewide funding. The WAFM calculation tells us what the trial courts need to function based on current filings, whereas the traditional share was based on the amount each court received from its county not taking into consideration the courts' filings or staff needs.)

Unfortunately, the total WAFM funding needed for all 58 courts exceeds the funding currently appropriated in the state budget. (This is the WAFM funding gap.) California's trial courts are underfunded by at least a collective \$444 million. The underfunding is made worse for those courts that experience a reduction of funding based on their WAFM share. 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, applying it fully only to new money appropriated in the budget.

The rules of application adopted by the Judicial Council are:

- Each year beginning in FY 2013-14, and through/including to 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 12-13 base is distributed according to WAFM;
- All new state funding is 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.