



Superior Court of California County of El Dorado BUDGET SNAPSHOT



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
OF THE COURTS
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

January 2014

Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2014-15

To promote access to justice within the confines of our reduced budgeted, we are currently working on changing the website design to an improved format; implementing a family-centered case resolution program; assigning staff to work strictly on backlog on court closure days; shifting staff among 5 court locations to address backlog and cover staffing shortages; and, setting up online case dockets and calendars. The implementation of each of these items requires staff resources, puts additional burdens on staff, and increases backlogs in day-to-day operations.

Self-Help / Mediation / Facilitator Services

- More than 150 persons per year seeking self-help services turned away due to lack of resources.
- Elimination of paralegal and attorney contract services which has reduced self-help center service hours.
- Family Law Facilitators and self help staff unable to keep up with increased requests for assistance; daily limit imposed.

Court Reporters / Interpreter Services

- Schedule matters needing interpreters on specific days.
- Staff interpreter must travel 120 miles round-trip on a single day to provide services between 5 court locations.
- No longer have court reporters for non-mandated hearings and trials.

Counters / Clerks / Telephones

- Clerk counter hours reduced to 8:00-3:00; telephone hours reduced to 8:00-1:00; counter lines increased.
- Increased staff absences, time out for stress related illness and injury, timeliness impacted.
- Increased duties on each staff member, including inter-court mail deliveries.
- Traffic courtesy notices discontinued; traffic and small claims regularly out of compliance with statutory timelines.

Closed Courtrooms and Court Houses

- Reduced small claims calendars from weekly to twice per month.
- Reduced Civil Case Management & Mandatory Settlement conferences from twice per week to once a week.

Staff Impacts / Furloughs / Layoffs / Unfilled Vacancies

- Positions held vacant, 23% staff reduction in filled positions.
- Reduced employee benefits: employees must now pay 7% EE PERS, longevity reduced, Tahoe Differential eliminated, EE contribution to health benefit premium increases.

Availability of Judicial Officers

- One commissioner handles DCSS matters and is required to travel each week between South Lake Tahoe & Placerville.
- Dispute Resolution Officer position eliminated; workload shifted to Civil judge & temporary judges. Civil cases delayed up to 3-4 months. Small Claims scheduled over 70 days from filing.

Budget Considerations

Budgeted Revenues* FY 2013-2014	\$7,956,774
<u>Total Revenues* FY 2008-2009</u>	<u>\$9,790,618</u>
Five-Year Revenue Reduction	-\$1,833,844
*Excludes Sheriff-Provided Security	
Current Year Unfunded Employee Health Benefits and Retirement Costs	-\$128,170
Share of \$60 million augmentation	\$239,635

Court Demographics

Population Served	180,712
Square Miles Covered	1,788
Total Number of Court Facilities	5
Filled Staff Positions FY 2013-2014	71
<u>Filled Staff Positions FY 2008-2009</u>	<u>92</u>
Lost Positions in 5 years	-21 (23% reduction)

Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. Suzanne N. Kingsbury
Court Executive Officer	Tania Ugrin-Capobianco
Executive Office Contact	(530) 621-5155

Court Security / Safety / Facilities

- Due to funding cuts, El Dorado Superior Court is unable to afford to install safety measures such as security cameras, secure-access key fob pads, and secured seating for in-custody defendants in *all* courthouses.
- We also cannot afford to replace jury seating, which is in poor condition and in some cases broken, making our court less desirable a location for the public to undertake their civic duty.

Budget Challenges for FY 2014-15

- *Increased funding for salary and benefits, to address benefit cost increases, reductions in staff salary through implemented benefit reductions, and for cost of living increases. Last salary increase was .5% (point five percent) in July 2011.*
- *Staffing levels must be restored in order to: reduce backlogs in civil law, family law, traffic, small claims, juvenile dependency counsel collection program, criminal/traffic collections, develop policies and procedures to comply with new legislation, and records management; implement eFiling and document management systems; and, increase public access to justice. Baseline budget does not cover appropriate staffing levels.*
- *Family Law Facilitator and Self-Help services need increased funding to cover the needs of the public.*
- *IT department is unable to upgrade infrastructure to provide: basic public access such as web-based document viewing; document management system for imaging of records; and, electronic filing.*
- *Will need to utilize statutorily restricted funds for future Children's Waiting Room and Micrographics for cash flow due to 1% fund balance cap.*