



Superior Court of California County of El Dorado BUDGET SNAPSHOT



JUDICIAL COUNCIL
OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

February 2015

Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2015-16

Our priorities are sufficient funding for a fully functioning court and to cover rising costs. We are working to develop our website to increase general usefulness and self-help accessibility. The plan includes development of public access to case specific data. The Court's case management system will not have maintenance support to implement new legislation beginning 2017. The Court is pursuing options for a new system, but with only 1% fund balance we may not be able to. The Court is pursuing additional system and operating efficiencies such as remote telephonic appearances and video remote interpreting. The efficiencies have one time cost which may not be an option with only 1% fund balance.

Self-Help / Mediation / Facilitator Services

- The Court turns away 120 persons (est.) per year seeking self-help services due to reduced staffing and hours
- Increased backlogs for family law calendars and self-help services due to implementation of legislatively mandated family centered case resolution program with no funding allocation.

Interpreter Services

Scheduling interpreters for our remote court is a challenge with travel over highways impacted by weather. We must expand interpreter services in civil matters with no funding for our non-interpreter coordinator employee.

Counters / Clerks / Telephones

- Clerk office hours remain reduced to 8:00-3:00; telephone hours are still 8:00-1:00 with longer counter lines
- Increased duties on staff, including inter-court mail deliveries
- Increased backlogs with shift of staff to records management project to reduce the amount of records stored off site.

Closed Courtrooms and Court Houses

We had to reduce small claims calendars to twice per month, placing us regularly out of compliance with statutory timelines.

Staff Impacts / Furloughs / Layoffs / Unfilled Vacancies

- 23% staff reduction in filled positions; many positions vacant
- Reduced employee benefits: employees now pay 7% EE PERS, longevity reduced, Tahoe Differential eliminated
- Increased workload without funding allocation with Prop 47

Safety / Facilities

Jury, lobby and spectator seating in poor condition, unable to replace with 1% fund balance

Availability of Judicial Officers

One commissioner handles DCSS matters and is required to travel each week between South Lake Tahoe and Placerville

***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 El Dorado was calculated at \$9.35 million but the court received \$6.35 million. See reverse for a detailed explanation of how WAFM is calculated.**

Workload Funding
SHORTFALL
\$3.0m (32%)

Workload
Funding
(WAFM*)
RECEIVED
\$6.35m (68%)

Funding
Gap

Court Demographics

Population Served	182,404
Square Miles Covered	1,788
Total Number of Court Facilities	5

Court Leadership

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

Budget Challenges for FY 2015-16

- Increased funding for wages, benefit cost increases, reductions in staff salary through benefit reductions, and COLA
- Staffing levels must be restored in order to reduce backlogs in civil, family, traffic, small claims, juvenile dependency counsel collections, and criminal/traffic collections; staff also is needed to develop policies and procedures to comply with new legislation, and records management. Our baseline budget does not cover appropriate staffing levels.
- Increased funding to upgrade infrastructure, specifically for case management, telephonic appearances, video remote interpreting, e-filing, and document management

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.