

Superior Court of California County of Fresno BUDGET SNAPSHOT

February 2016



JUDICIAL COUNCIL
OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Kimberly A. Gaab, Presiding Judge

Sheran L. Morton, Court Executive Officer

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Court Service Highlights in the Current Year

- **Maximized 5% ongoing funding to rebuild our staffing levels to improve access to all;**
- **Maximized productivity by implementing new case management system to improve efficiencies; and**
- **Enhanced services to all litigants and justice partners utilizing improved technology.**

Court Service Highlights in Detail

Maximized 5% ongoing funding to improve access

We hired 99 employees to rebuild staff to provide access; as a result, we increased services to the public and improved the timely processing of documents and cases.

Implemented a new case management system in all case types to improve efficiencies

Our Tyler Odyssey system allows *all* employees to understand and utilize one system. Immediate results include:

- Lower annual maintenance costs;
- eFiling capacity for the public;
- A paperless system, saving time and money;
- Increased access for the public and justice partners;
- eCitation capacity, saving significant time and money for the public and the court

Improved Technology

- Electronic court reporter transcripts create operational efficiencies for our court reporters and court staff;
- Remote video proceedings (previously a pilot project) allow people to appear from closer to their homes and jobs, saving a significant amount of their time and money;
- Video remote interpreting pursuant to our contract with CFI allows greater access to the public who need interpreter assistance; and
- Domestic violence services provided to remote locations help people who are unable to travel to downtown Fresno.

Other Court Services

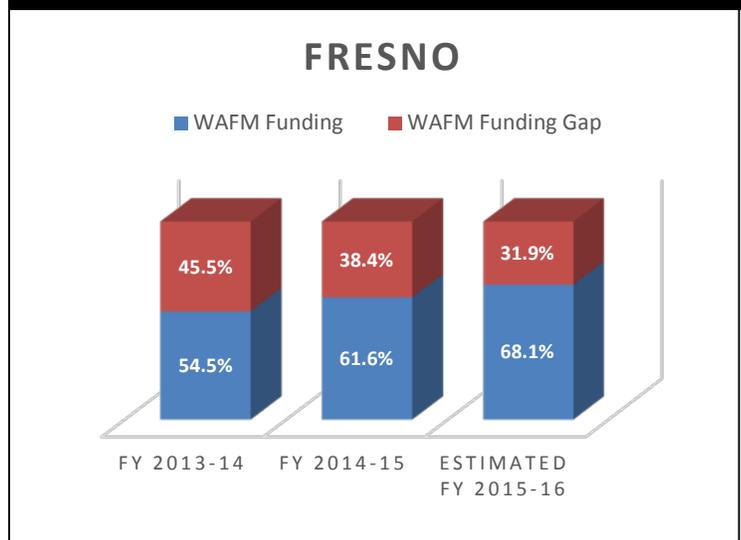
- **New guardianship workshop:** We have partnered with Central California Legal Services to provide much needed services to probate litigants.
- **Hybrid Drug Court/Prop 47:** We are reducing recidivism by connecting people to services quickly and maintaining their treatment through recovery.

Budget Challenges and Priorities

Ongoing Funding: As a result of reduced funding, it is extremely difficult to maintain consistent services for the public year to year. Also, it is difficult to responsibly balance the necessary number of employees needed to complete the work with the need to provide staff with adequate salaries and benefits.

1% Reserve: We are unable to build a reasonable reserve similar to what the Governor has done for the State. A reserve is desperately needed to implement unfunded legislative mandates and court projects to increase efficiencies and adequately serve the citizens of Fresno County.

Workload Allocation & Funding Gap (see reverse)



Court Demographics

Population Served	964,040
Square Miles Covered	6,018
Total Number of Court Facilities	6

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.