



# Superior Court of California County of Humboldt BUDGET SNAPSHOT



JUDICIAL COUNCIL  
OF CALIFORNIA  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

February 2015

## Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2015-16

- Restore hours of operation to the public by keeping the Clerk's Office and telephones open until 4pm instead of 2pm.
- Unfreeze all frozen positions to adequately serve the bench and public.
- Address pay equity issues within specific classifications to recruit and retain competent employees.
- Replace the aging case management system for lack of functionality.
- Pursue giving staff a much needed cost of living adjustment since they have not had one in 6 years.

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

- Humboldt Court has an 8% vacancy rate.
- We eliminated 36% of mid level management and management positions since 2009.
- In 2010 we did not fill the management position over Family Law/Juvenile and assigned the function to the manager responsible for Civil/Appeals.
- We have not provided cost of living adjustments since FY 2008-09.
- Pay equity gaps between the classifications are making it difficult to recruit and retain employees.

### Self-Help / Mediation / Facilitator Services

- We laid off one attorney in 2010 and now the Self-Help Center is staffed with one attorney and a part-time paralegal. Assistance is available on a first come, first serve basis and people are frequently turned away. When the attorney is unavailable, services are greatly limited.
- There are 2 full-time mediators and, presently, litigants wait 4-6 weeks for a mediation appointment.

### Counters / Clerks / Telephones

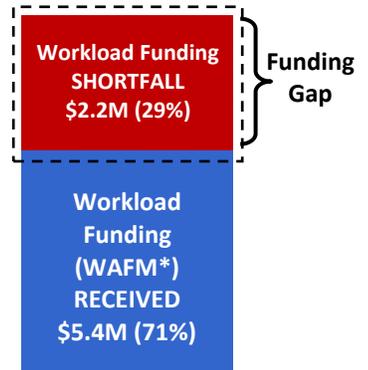
- Counters and telephones close every day at 2pm instead of 4pm due to our inability to unfreeze positions.
- The Court was understaffed prior to freezing positions. This has resulted in operational backlogs which directly impacts the public.

### Availability of Judicial Officers

Humboldt should have two additional judges: one in civil and one in family law and juvenile. Lack of adequate judicial resources results in delays, and a cumbersome calendar management system to ensure mandatory matters are heard within statutory timeframes.

## 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 Humboldt was calculated at \$7.6 million but the court received \$5.4 million. See reverse for a detailed explanation of how WAFM is calculated.**



## Court Demographics

Population Served	134,648
Square Miles Covered	4,052
Total Number of Court Facilities	1

## Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. Joyce D. Hinrichs
Court Executive Officer	Kerri L. Keenan
Executive Office Contact	(707) 269-1201

## Budget Challenges for FY 2015-16

- Continuing to absorb unfunded increases to retirement, health and retiree health. To date \$206,612 is still unreimbursed over the past 5 years.
- Balancing our budget so we do not finish the fiscal year with a deficit, as we are projecting to in FY 2014-15.
- Trying to implement more electronic access for the public, which includes e-filing, with no capital to invest in such projects.
- Restoring and increasing self-help services to pro per litigants. This is particularly vital in Humboldt where there are limited resources in the community.

## **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.