



Superior Court of California County of Humboldt BUDGET SNAPSHOT

February 2016



JUDICIAL COUNCIL
OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Joyce D. Hinrichs, Presiding Judge

Kim Bartleson, Court Executive Officer

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Court Service Highlights in the Current Year

- **Implementation of traffic ticket/infraction amnesty program.**
- **Availability for credit card payments at the public windows.**
- **Establishment of information services by courtrooms when public windows are closed.**

Court Service Highlights in Detail

Implementation of traffic ticket/infraction amnesty program

The Court and County have implemented the traffic ticket/infraction amnesty program. To date, participation has been moderate but consistent. In the program's first quarter, 93 people received discounts in their delinquent fines, and 52 people had the court holds lifted on their driver's licenses.

Credit card payments at the public windows

We soon will be able to accept credit card payments at the public windows. Previously, in order to pay with a credit card, court users had to use an online or telephone option through a third party vendor. This in-court process will increase our ability to better serve the public and also decrease the fees passed on to the public.

Establishment of information services

The Court has established information services at the courtrooms for the public. This means services are available at times when Court is in session but the public windows are closed due to staffing shortages.

Impacts on court operations

Increased Homicide Filings: Homicide filings are 200% of normal, without slowing. The homicide cases strain clerical staff who are already stretched thin and fatigued.

Office Closure: Staff shortages continue to cause problems. We had to eliminate clerical staff at our Garberville location. Previously, people could make monthly payments at that facility, but now must send payments in the mail.

Court Interpreters: We continue to struggle to provide language services. Our remote location and lack of local resources subjects us to exorbitant fees from contract interpreters.

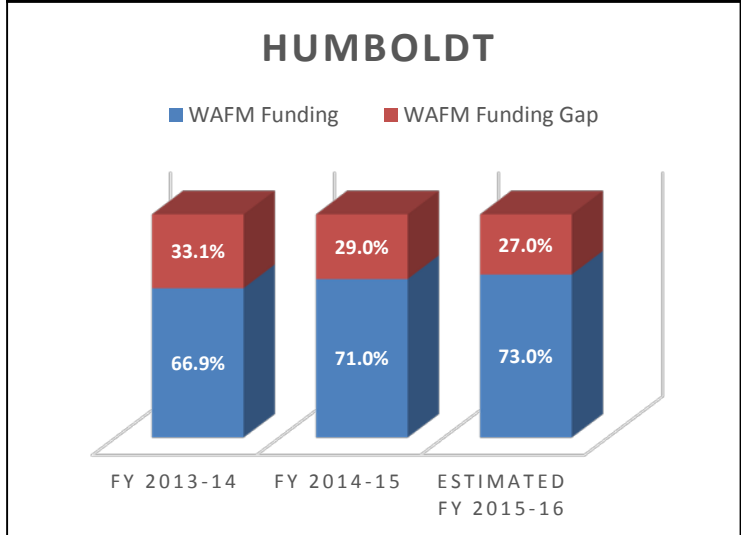
Budget Challenges and Priorities

Turnover: Low salary levels continue to make hiring and retaining employees extremely difficult. Entry level recruitments that used to draw 50-70 applicants before the recession now draw fewer than 10. Employees often find better-paying employment after a short period of time.

CMS: Case management system (CMS) support will terminate in 3 years. A new CMS with electronic records and public access is required. With no fund balance, we need funds to replace it.

I.T. Planning: Lack of financial resources, including a fund balance of only 1%, makes it almost impossible to plan for technology improvements to increase public access.

Workload Allocation & Funding Gap (see reverse)



Court Demographics

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

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.