

Superior Court of California County of Imperial BUDGET SNAPSHOT



JUDICIAL COUNCIL
OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Christopher J. Plourd, Presiding Judge

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Court Service Highlights in the Current Year

- The Court launched a 24/7 online and phone payment service for criminal and traffic violations, improving access for the public, enhancing customer service, and reducing workload in the Court’s phone center.
- The Court made a county-wide media push to encourage people to appear for jury duty after experiencing a 10% response rate to jury summonses.

Court Service Highlights in Detail

Interactive Web and Voice Payment Service

Imperial went live on an upgraded web and voice program. The service is bilingual and provides 24 hour access and payment options for traffic and criminal cases. In the first month, 3,448 transactions were processed, doubling the volume from the legacy system. The service improves public access to the court, and streamlines court processes.

Juror Participation

In Imperial County, requests for jury hearings have increased while juror participation has plummeted. To improve civic participation for jury service, the Court holds hearings for potential jurors who failed to respond to jury notices. These hearings provide quality education about the importance of the jury system in California, which we hope will translate into more robust public participation.

Other Court Services

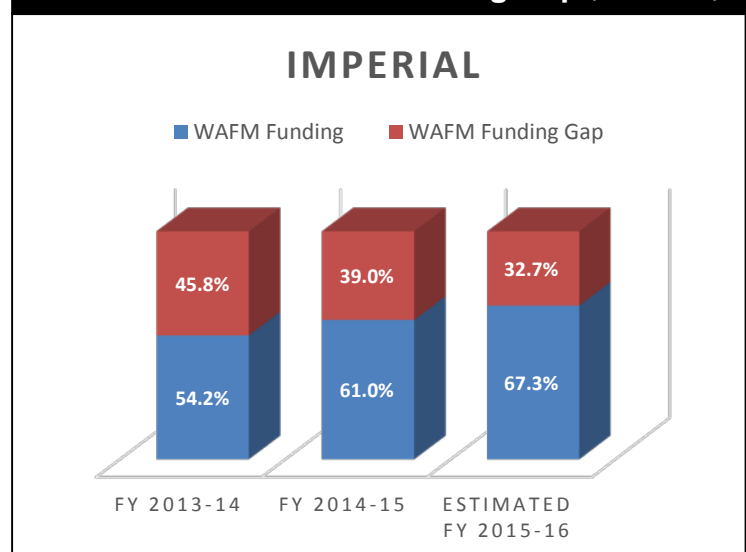
Amnesty Outreach

To get a head start on amnesty, the Court reviewed past due cases and physically marked all that were eligible for amnesty, and provided that list to the agency contracted to implement the amnesty program. Now, when a customer calls or visits the court, the cashiers know to inform him/her of the amnesty program. In addition, notices publicizing amnesty were printed in English and Spanish and posted in the Court. During the first quarter of the program, the Court released holds on 779 driver licenses and reduced 369 fines. There has been a positive response from members of the public who received the 80% discount to their fine amounts.

Budget Challenges and Priorities

- Requests for Court services continue to exceed our capabilities.
- Staff compensation has remained substantially flat over the last five years, impacting staff retention and morale.
- Amnesty program costs exceed the revenue collected, in addition to a first quarter default rate of 34%.
- The reduction in collected fine and fee revenue, due in part to the amnesty program, has caused a funding shortage for 4.5 (3%) of staff, reducing our ability to provide customer service.

Workload Allocation & Funding Gap (see reverse)



Court Demographics

Population Served	180,672
Square Miles Covered	4,482
Total Number of Court Facilities	4

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.