



Superior Court of California County of Inyo BUDGET SNAPSHOT



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
OF THE COURTS
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

January 2014

Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2014-15

Budget reductions have resulted in the voluntary resignation and retirement of several staff members that cannot be replaced due to costs. Loss of staff has created (a) a backlog in the processing of time-sensitive documents such as minutes and warrants; (b) detrimental impacts to courtroom calendars and workload; (c) overly stressed employees who are doing twice as much, working overtime to stay afloat, and filing more worker's compensation claims than ever before; and (d) reduced access to justice and customer service to Inyo County court users who are impacted from the Court's staffing shortfall and its inability to do the same amount of work with severely diminished resources.

Self-Help / Mediation / Facilitator Services

- Allocation currently received for self-help services is **inadequate**.
- Additional budget reductions will preclude the Court from subsidizing the self-help program and may result in the loss of qualified legal staff to provide services in rural Inyo County.

Court Reporters / Interpreter Services

- Reporters could possibly be reduced next year by case type, with the Court funding reporters for only those cases required by law.
- Inyo County lacks sufficient interpreter/reporter professionals, resulting in out-of-county contractors charging the Branch exceptional per diem rates and substantial mileage and hotel expenses for case types where interpreters or reporters are statutorily mandated.

Counters / Clerks / Telephones

- Clerk office hours were reduced one afternoon a week in both the Independence and Bishop facilities.
- Reduced hours means the public may drive up to 187 miles one way—or up to 8 hours—only to find the Court Clerk Counter closed. They do have the option of driving 42 additional miles to the other Courthouse location to file, as both locations are not closed at the same time. Drop boxes are available during closure.
- Telephone hours for traffic –related calls have been reduced to M-F 1-4:30 PM only. Customers phoning in the morning for information must call back in the afternoon for assistance.

Closed Courtrooms and Court Houses

- Planned expansion of Court services in Bishop and Independence to accept all case types has been curtailed as a result of staff reductions.
- Court users are currently required to travel great distances to file paperwork in one designated location/branch.

Staff Impacts / Furloughs / Layoffs / Unfilled Vacancies

- In the past five years, the Court has lost 5 Court Clerks, 1 Court Operations Manager, and an IT/Records Specialist.
- At this time, the Court has not had to layoff staff due to the budget savings created by the voluntary resignation and retirement of three clerks and one Court Operations Manager.
- The Court is operating, as of Jan. 2014, with 62% of needed staff. However, one Clerk is on an extended maternity leave, forcing us to operate at 57% of our need until her return.

Budget Considerations

Budgeted Revenues* FY 2013-2014	\$2,623,045
<u>Total Revenues* FY 2008-2009</u>	<u>\$2,903,592</u>
Five-Year Revenue Reduction	-\$280,547
<small>*Excludes Sheriff-Provided Security</small>	
<i>The reduction of allocated funds by over half required Inyo to redirect over \$1.2 m of Inyo's reserves to operations to keep business as usual. Inyo experienced an additional devastating sweep of \$1.56 million in funds that had been saved with intention to fund Courthouse capital projects.</i>	
Current Year Unfunded Employee Health Benefits and Retirement Costs	-\$64,786
Share of \$60 million augmentation	\$50,201
	Percentage reduction in allocation from FY 2008-09 to FY 2012-13 = -51.9%

Court Demographics

Population Served	18,461
Square Miles Covered	10,227
Total Number of Court Facilities	3
Filled Staff Positions FY 2013-2014	19
<u>Filled Staff Positions FY 2008-2009</u>	<u>20</u>
Lost Positions in 5 years	-1 (4% reduction)
6 additional positions have been lost since July 1, 2013 and 1 employee is out on long-term family leave	40% vacancy rate

Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. Brian J. Lamb
Court Executive Officer	Tammy L. Grimm
Executive Office Contact	(760) 872-6728

Budget Challenges for FY 2014-15

- *Court users will suffer tremendously by reduced access to justice and customer service if Inyo Court must continue to take staff reductions as a result of a budget shortfall. Overall, courtroom calendars and workload will be monumental.*
- *Service delivery to court users in the state's second largest geographically expansive county would be severely impacted and Court will not be able to meet its constitutional and statutory obligations.*