



# Superior Court of California County of Inyo BUDGET SNAPSHOT

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JUDICIAL COUNCIL  
OF CALIFORNIA  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

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## Court Service Highlights in the Current Year

- **Proactive implementation of traffic ticket/infracton amnesty program**
- **Plan for additional Collaborative Courts**
- **Update computer software for better access for all court stakeholders**

## Court Service Highlights in Detail

### Proactive implementation of traffic ticket/infracton amnesty program

As Inyo County is a tourism-based economy that features the Owens Valley and the eastern access to Mt. Whitney and the Sierras, there are many travelers who visit Inyo, and, as a result, many traffic tickets. Despite no start-up resources, we have fully prepared for the mandated traffic amnesty program.

### Plan for additional Collaborative Courts

Inyo Superior Court operates a Drug Court in collaboration with the County Health and Human Services and Probation Departments. This court has been highly successful in helping users change their lives in a positive way while living in their communities.

We are researching opportunities for a Reentry Court, where newly released probationers can receive the services and support they need with proper oversight from the Court and other service providers, in a group setting. With a goal toward reduced recidivism, the addition of this Court will augment the current court services, while providing expanded services to the community.

### Update computer software for better access for all court stakeholders

Inyo will be making updates and improvements to our jury services and case management software applications, thereby making court operations more efficient for the public, prospective jurors, and our court personnel.

## Budget Challenges and Priorities

The current Workload Allocation and Funding Methodology calculation suggests that Inyo Court is nearly fully funded. Unfortunately, we are not fully funded. In fact, we have, like other small courts, suffered a substantial reduction from our historical funding allocation, leaving the court with a reduced staff and limited resources.

Despite these reduced resources, the Court will continue to provide excellent service in the administration of justice to the citizens of Inyo County.



Our classic 1921 courthouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998, and today would be incredibly costly to repair or replace if it should be damaged by fire or earthquake. Our more pressing concerns, however, are the costs of ongoing technological upgrades and additional court personnel, both of which are vital to preserving public access to justice.

## Court Demographics

Population Served	18,590
Square Miles Covered	10,227
Total Number of Court Facilities	3

## 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.