



Superior Court of California

County of Lake

BUDGET SNAPSHOT



JUDICIAL COUNCIL
OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

February 2015

Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2015-16

- The number one priority for the court is to maintain access to the court and avoid additional reductions to service levels, which will only be possible with significant additional funding in FY2015-16 (above what the Governor has proposed in the January Budget).
- We will complete our technology project this year, which will provide the capability of real-time court minutes and eliminate many duplicative data entry steps. This project will save significant staff time. This project was only possible with the use of one-time funds from reserves.

Public Access: Counters / Telephones

- Reduced public counter and phone hours to 8:00 am to 1:00 pm each day
- Wait times can be over an hour to speak to a clerk on the phone

Impacts to Court Users

- Lost employment opportunities due to delays in processing of background checks
- Defendants not being supervised on Probation for up to 6 months due to delays in processing cases transferred from another court
- Individuals arrested on a warrants that should have been recalled

Closed Courtrooms and Court Houses

- Closed one courtroom 3 days per week, which reduced the number of courtrooms available to hear long cause hearings/trials by 20%
- Judges cannot hold court at times because they do not have courtroom staff available
- We may be forced to close satellite courthouse in FY 2015-16
- Court-wide closures are a possibility in FY 2015-16.

Staff Impacts / Furloughs / Layoffs

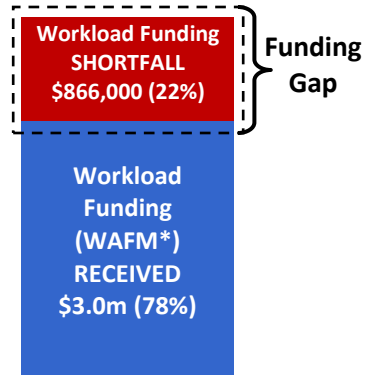
- Reduced overall staff levels by 33%; reduced management staff levels by 57%
- Instituted furloughs of up to 14 days in FY 2009-10 through FY 2012-13
- Additional furloughs or layoffs likely in FY 2015-16 without additional funding above the Governors' January Budget

Judicial Officers

Reduced subordinate judicial officer to part-time (0.6 FTE)

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 Lake was calculated at \$3.8 million but the court received \$3.0 million. See reverse for a detailed explanation of how WAFM is calculated.



Court Demographics

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------|
| Population Served | 64,699 |
| Square Miles Covered | 1,330 |
| Total Number of Court Facilities | 3 |

Court Leadership

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Presiding Judge | Hon. Stephen Owen Hedstrom |
| Court Executive Officer | Krista LeVier |
| Executive Office Contact | (707) 263-2575 |

Budget Challenges for FY 2015-16

- Reinvestment in trial courts has provided some relief. However, the reinvestment has not covered cost increases. Despite reducing operating expenses by 40% and not providing salary or benefit increases to staff in 8 years, the court still faces a structural budget deficit in FY15/16.
- Technology. The 1% cap on fund balances eliminates the court's ability to invest in new, more efficient technology which could provide improved public access.
- Without additional funding, the court will likely face additional staff reductions, court-wide closures, closure of a branch courthouse, reduction in self-help services, and/or other reductions which will add to the delays and impacts to the public listed above.

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.