



Superior Court of California County of Lassen BUDGET SNAPSHOT



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
OF THE COURTS
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

January 2014

Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2014-15

The flow and availability of information is a priority for our court. Our case management system allows the public to access case and calendar information online. Upgrading this system in order to meet the demands of growing technology, improve efficiencies and further improve public access is the next step. Lassen Superior Court utilizes reserves to fund grants while awaiting reimbursement, but we will no longer be able to do so with the 1% reserves cap. The result will be that the public will go unserved in vital areas such as child support filings and family law support.

Self-Help / Mediation / Facilitator Services

- Court combined the family law facilitator/self-help/research attorney positions, reducing self-help by about 50%.
- No longer offers individual appointments and only offers general informational self-help clinics monthly as funding is available.

Court Reporters / Interpreter Services

- Court does not have any staff interpreters.
- Interpreter access is limited due to remote, rural area and the need for travel of interpreters – costs are very high.
- Technology for interpretation services would promote improved access and keep costs controllable.

Counters / Clerks / Telephones

- The court has had to reduce public access and telephone hours to be able to provide basic services and process workload.
- The court installed a secure drop box for filings between 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. to mitigate most inconveniences after decreasing filing window staff related to ongoing budget reductions.

Staff Impacts / Furloughs / Layoffs / Unfilled Vacancies

- Since FY 2012-13, the court has eliminated three management positions, two limited-term positions, two analysts, one special programs position, three staff positions, and two unfilled staff positions, and reduced a limited term position to part-time.
- Six furlough days per year for two previous fiscal years.

Court Security / Safety / Facilities

- Court has reduced two contract security services position.
- Court security is on a very limited budget; the budget has not increased in years; security is a high priority given the changing climate and increased violence demonstrated in the daily news.

Availability of Judicial Officers

Lassen is a two-judge court.

Budget Considerations

Budgeted Revenues* FY 2013-2014	\$3,040,347
<u>Total Revenues* FY 2008-2009</u>	<u>\$3,627,125</u>
Five-Year Revenue Reduction	-\$586,778
<small>*Excludes Sheriff-Provided Security</small>	
Current Year Unfunded Employee Health Benefits and Retirement Costs	-\$13,577
Share of \$60 million augmentation	\$68,479

Court Demographics

Population Served	34,167
Square Miles Covered	4,720
Total Number of Court Facilities	1
Filled Staff Positions FY 2013-2014	31
<u>Filled Staff Positions FY 2008-2009</u>	<u>38</u>
Lost Positions in 5 years	-7 (20% reduction)
Positions lost since July 1, 2013	-8 (40% vacancy rate)

Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. Michele Verderosa
Court Executive Officer	Andi Ashby
Executive Office Contact	(530) 251-8205 x139

Budget Challenges for FY 2014-15

The reduction in staff negatively affects the flow of effective court services to the public. Worse, however, is the disallowance of reasonable court reserves. We anticipate a greater detrimental impact on services to families in our rural, remote area as we await reimbursements for programs that assist families rather than drawing from reserves. The court's biggest challenge is to provide clerks and other support staff appropriate time to manage case information, calendars, filing and courtroom support without reserve funding. It will be very difficult for this work to occur without interruption, backlogs and delays.