



# Superior Court of California County of Mendocino BUDGET SNAPSHOT

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JUDICIAL COUNCIL  
OF CALIFORNIA  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Hon. John A. Behnke, Presiding Judge

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## Court Service Highlights in the Current Year

- Reorganized court calendar and workload to better utilize judicial and staff resources
- Implemented new behavioral health courts in Ukiah/Fort Bragg, and enhanced Adult Drug Court
- Jury improvements

## Court Service Highlights

### Reorganized Court Calendar and Workload

Consolidated all misdemeanor cases and instituted vertical calendaring in criminal courtrooms to more efficiently process cases, better utilizing reduced clerk staff resources and streamlining court services for the court and public.

Added video capability to three courtrooms (for total of 4 of 8, including in Fort Bragg) to enable video arraignments from the jail and appearances by in-custody defendants in other types of hearings where legally permissible.

### Implemented New Behavioral Health Courts (BHC), and enhanced Adult Drug Court

With grant funds, the court implemented formal BHCs to address the issue of criminal defendants who repeatedly come in contact with the criminal justice system due to behavioral health issues, both to help reduce recidivism and to support positive integration into the community. With other grant funds, the court is implementing several enhancements to Adult Drug Court to ensure participant success both during and after the program.

### Jury improvements

The court improved the experience of jurors by installing express jury check-in kiosks and new interactive phone and web response systems, and implementing more efficient juror summoning policies and procedures.

### Other court services

- Progress continued in implementing a new case management system, to go live in May 2016.
- Completely revamped public website to make it much more user-friendly.
- Renewed and refreshed focus on employee training.
- Implemented the traffic ticket/infraction amnesty program including expansion to selected misdemeanors.
- Avoided service reductions in Night Court for small claims and unlawful detainers, walk-in traffic cases, and in general phone service to the public.

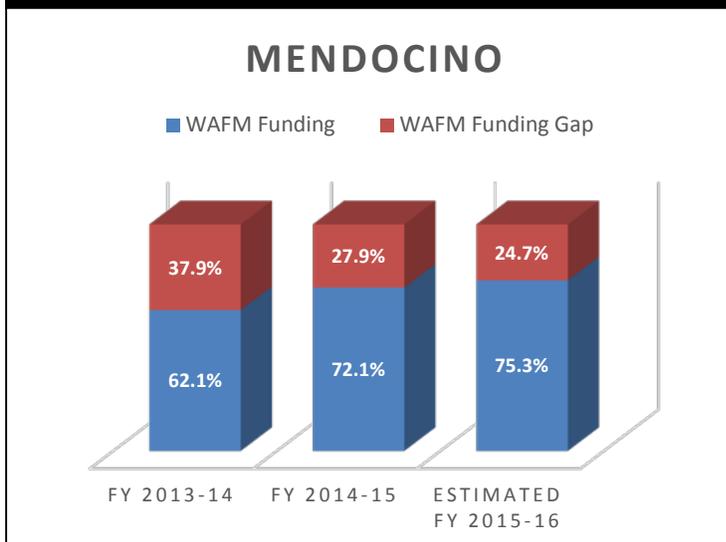
## Budget Challenges and Priorities

The Court's staffing resources remain extremely thin, with supervisory and managerial staff regularly backing up courtroom and clerk staff to cover absences, creating an ongoing backlog.

Benefits costs – especially retirement and health insurance – remain an inordinately high percentage of employee costs, and prevent the Court from hiring desperately needed staff.

The 1% fund balance restriction continues to inhibit innovation due to the Court's inability to generate the necessary capital for innovative projects, specifically migration to a paperless/paper-on-demand operational environment.

## Workload Allocation & Funding Gap (see reverse)



## Court Demographics

Population Served	89,029
Square Miles Covered	3,878
Total Number of Court Facilities	2

## 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.