



Judicial Branch Budget Snapshot Superior Court of California County of Merced

Key Budget Challenges/Priorities

- Service is delayed requiring people to wait longer for assistance via Clerk's Offices/Telephone
- Due to reduced office hours, 15-20 individuals are turned away from the Self Help Center per week

Budget Impacts

General Budget Reduction Impacts to the Public

- Ceased printing traffic courtesy notices in Spanish
- Increased use of drop boxes has created backlogs for staff
- Experiencing delays in family, civil due to staff reductions

Reduced Public Access: Self-Help/Mediator/Facilitator Services

- Combined Self Help Center and Family Law Facilitator Hours into one office, which reduced service hours from 46 hours per week to 26 hours per week, with the court considering further reductions in the future

Reduced Public Access: Court Reporters/Interpreters

- No reduction in court reporters. The court will be using electronic recording equipment in authorized case types effective 4/13 in order to save costs.
- Merced County has a very high non-English speaking population, so reducing interpreters is not being considered.

Reduced Public Access: Public Service Counters and Clerks

- As of October 2011, all clerks' offices close at 3:00 pm, allowing staff time to process documents
- May have to reduce hours at a branch location if there are further budget cuts

Closures: Courtrooms and Courthouses

- Discontinued hearing court in two small cities, where predominately traffic and small claims cases were heard in city council chambers; citizens who utilized this service now must drive 20 miles to the main branch court

Staff Reductions: Furloughs, Layoffs, Unfilled Vacancies

- Last year, laid off three regular status employees and four interns; eliminated four more interns via attrition
- Froze most vacant positions and instituted a voluntary separation incentive program; current vacancy rate is 23.7%
- Furloughs instituted in FY 09/10 and 10/11 (12 days) and in FY 11/12 (9-13 days)

Impacts: Court Security Services

Fewer Judicial Officers

Annual Allocation*

Total Allocation FY 2008-2009	\$ 16,425,737
Est. Allocation FY 2012-2013**	\$ 13,164,324
Percentage change	-19.9%

*Does not reflect unfunded cost increases

**For comparison purposes only, includes court security funding

Merced Facilities Overview

Number of court facilities	6
Capital construction projects	2 (1 complete)

Judicial Workload/Employees as of Dec. 2012:

Population served	258,736
Judicial officers	14
Judicial officers needed	19
Filled staff positions FY 08-09	144
Filled staff positions FY 12-13	137

Case Statistics (Fiscal Year 2010-11)

Felony filings	2,803
Misdemeanor filings (incl. traffic)	11,533
Infraction filings (incl. traffic)	45,129
Civil filings	6,275
Family and juvenile filings	5,425

Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. Brian McCabe
Court Executive Officer	Linda Romero Soles