



# Superior Court of California County of Modoc BUDGET SNAPSHOT



JUDICIAL COUNCIL  
OF CALIFORNIA  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Francis W. Barclay, Presiding Judge

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## Court Service Highlights in the Current Year

- **Successful implementation of traffic ticket/infraction amnesty program**
- **Maintain all court services previously in place**
- **Preserve court operation hours without reduction in services to the public**

### Court Service Highlights in Detail

#### Successful implementation of traffic ticket/infraction amnesty program

This was a collaborative effort with our staff, CCTC, Judicial Council, and the State Controller’s Office to ensure that all requirements were met and implemented by the launch date for the amnesty program. Having the pertinent information readily available at the front counter and on our website helped in the distribution of information for the citizens of Modoc County.

#### All court services maintained if not improved

In spite of our continually shrinking budget, Modoc has continued to provide the full range of services needed for the successful administration of justice.

Modoc County citizens continue to have access to our Self-Help Center, our website, and counter staff anytime during our normal hours of operation. Our website continues to improve and development of additional self-help portals are in the works.

### Court Demographics

Population Served	9,023
Square Miles Covered	4,203
Total Number of Court Facilities	1

### Court Service Highlights in Detail (cont.)

#### Preservation of court operation hours

By reducing work hours for some employees, not filling vacancies, and reassigning other employees, Modoc was able to avoid reducing clerk hours, thereby preserving full access to court functions.

### Budget Challenges and Priorities

While the funding floor, which provides a minimum level of funding for California’s smallest courts, is helpful, Modoc remains insufficiently funded for full operations. Two of the biggest challenges facing Modoc are IT hosting and updating the current case management system. Adding to these financial challenges is the problem of finding qualified personnel to help implement these improvements.

Modoc is funded only to the point of maintaining the status quo without flexibility to improve. Additionally, our court facilities are in need of repairs and improvements to increase the safety and utility of our court building (seen below in both front and rear views) for the public and staff.



Left and above – photos of Modoc Courthouse in need of repair (2016).

## 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.