

Superior Court of California County of Mono BUDGET SNAPSHOT



JUDICIAL COUNCIL
OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Stanley L. Eller, Presiding Judge

Hector Gonzalez, Court Executive Officer

(760) 924-5444

Court Service Highlights in the Current Year

- **Additional funding has ended the need for court closures and court employee furloughs**
- **Implemented a collaborative drug court program**
- **Implemented a supervised visitation program**

Court Service Highlights in Detail

Additional funding ended the need for court closures and court employee furloughs

Due to significant budget reductions in fiscal year 2014-15, Mono County Superior Court implemented 20 mandatory furloughs which resulted in closing the court 17 business days over a 9-month period. Additional funding provided in the current fiscal year through the Trial Court Trust Fund has allowed our court to remain open for all regular business days and avoid furloughing court employees.

Implemented a collaborative drug court program

In collaboration with our County District Attorney's Office and Probation Department, Mono County Superior Court was able to establish a drug court program for adult offenders.

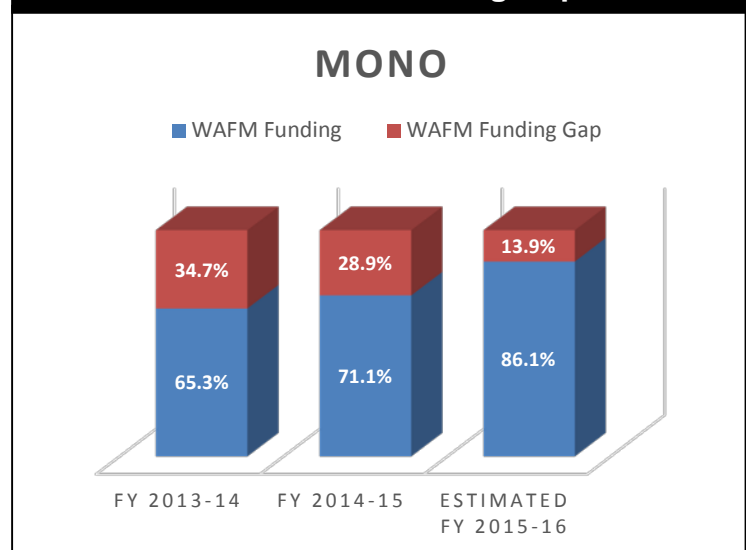
Implemented a supervised visitation program

In collaboration with neighboring Inyo County Superior Court, we established a supervised visitation program. The program was established with grant funding from the Judicial Council.

Budget Challenges and Priorities

Additional Trial Court Trust Fund allocation in the current fiscal year made it possible for Mono County Superior Court to avoid court closures and court employee furloughs. However, the funding was not sufficient to allow our court to fill positions left vacant due to budget reductions. This has resulted in a nearly 49% vacancy rate in our deputy clerk positions, positions that are essential to serving the public. To compensate for the lack of court staff due to budget reductions, our court has reduced services to the public by eliminating assistance by phone. The public is required to submit questions or seek assistance by email.

Workload Allocation & Funding Gap (see reverse)



Court Demographics

Population Served	14,143
Square Miles Covered	3,132
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.