



Superior Court of California County of Napa BUDGET SNAPSHOT



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
OF THE COURTS
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

January 2014

Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2014-15

If appropriate baseline restoration funding is made available to the trial courts, Napa Superior Court is dedicated to reinstating court services to pre-budget reduction levels, particularly as they relate to curtailed courthouse hours and court services.

- *Our first priority is returning to full-service all courthouses, which are now closed to the public each Friday, as well as on Christmas and New Years Eves. The funding will restore clerk's office hours, mediation and self-help services.*
- *Our second priority is to expand electronic access to court services through a new case management system, which is desperately needed because our existing technology is outdated. Specifically, our new system will provide web access and court information, allow for electronic filing and searching of court documents, and other critical services for all case types.*

Restore Full Availability of Court Services from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday

- A continuing hiring freeze coupled with layoffs in FY 2011-12 and 2012-13 eliminated 15.5 FTEs, reducing court staff from 93.5 to 78 FTEs.
- Five years of budget reductions have resulted in a reduction of our staff's work week, from 40 to 37.5 hours, representing a furlough of 6.25 percent.
- Longer waiting lines and delayed services are the norm due to staffing shortages.
- All non-courtroom court services and self-help services close at 4:00 pm Monday through Thursday, and at 2:00 pm on Friday.
- All three courthouses and their 10 courtrooms close every Friday at 2:30 pm, and all day on both Christmas and New Years Eves.
- Restoration funding is needed to eliminate the reduction in employee hours, thereby restoring the full range of court services to 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday.

Restore Self-Help / Mediation / Facilitator Services

- Family court mediation, facilitator, and self help staff has been reduced by 33%.
- Longer waits for child custody, visitation, and support mediation services, as well as delayed dissolution judgments, affect families and children.
- Appointments are scheduled for a week or more in the future; we can offer no immediate services.
- Once basic services have been restored in all courthouses, the court will focus on restoring public access to critically needed mediation and self-help center services.

Restore Court Reporters Services

- We laid off 3.5 full time court reporter positions.
- We eliminated court reporting in all civil, family law, misdemeanor, and traffic matters, which means no written record for 50-75% of all civil, probate, adoption and family law cases.
- We need funding to restore court reporting services in civil and family law matters in order to provide an adequate court proceeding record to citizens utilizing court services.

Budget Considerations

Budgeted Revenues* FY 2013-2014	\$8,998,204
<u>Total Revenues* FY 2008-2009</u>	<u>\$10,664,656</u>
Five-Year Revenue Reduction <small>*Excludes Sheriff-Provided Security</small>	-\$1,666,452
Current Year Unfunded Employee Health Benefits and Retirement Costs	-\$315,005
Share of \$60 million augmentation	\$209,052

Court Demographics

Population Served	138,255
Square Miles Covered	788
Total Number of Court Facilities	3
Filled Staff Positions FY 2013-2014	72
<u>Filled Staff Positions FY 2008-2009</u>	<u>87</u>
Lost Positions in 5 years	-15 (18% reduction)

Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. Rodney G. Stone
Court Executive Officer	Richard D. Feldstein
Executive Office Contact	(707) 299-1111

Budget Challenges for FY 2014-15

The state's economic downturn has forced the court curtail critical public services over the past five years. These actions were unavoidable due to the need to operationalize consecutive years of state trial court budget reductions, and equalize the court's ongoing expenditures with its available revenue. Unfortunately, the court's level of funding for FY 2013-14 will only support a level of reduced operations and services, inadequate to provide the full range public access that our communities deserve.

A restoration of \$1.6 million in Napa's baseline budget to restore our courthouses to full operations and ensure that the range of judicial services is readily available.

Additionally, the cap of 1%, on local court reserves, which normally would be used to maintain a current and effective technological infrastructure, forces the court to both spend down any reserves that will be in excess of the cap while simultaneously seeking additional funds to replace our dated case management system. We estimate conservatively that an additional \$550,000 is required to establish the electronic interfaces and data interchanges necessary to provide technological access such as electronic case filing, document management, web-base case information, fine and fee payments, and other public web services.