



# Superior Court of California County of Napa BUDGET SNAPSHOT

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JUDICIAL COUNCIL  
OF CALIFORNIA  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Mark Boessenecker, Presiding Judge

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## Court Service Highlights in the Current Year

- **Implemented a modern case management system for civil, family law, probate, and juvenile dependency cases that increases efficiency and access to justice**
- **Collaborated with our local justice partners to institute a Victim Restitution Court**
- **Eliminated three court closure days thereby restoring access to justice for the public**

## Court Service Highlights in Detail

### Modern case management system

In collaboration with Monterey and Santa Clara Superior Courts, Napa Superior Court launched a new case management system that provides expanded capability including access to online court case information, documents, and services including electronic filing. Collaboration among the three Northern California trial courts was extremely beneficial, substantially decreasing the system's development and implementation costs for all, and allowing shared operational and technical expertise, and standardized court operations and services.

### Victim Restitution Court

Recognizing that victim restitution is one of the most basic forms of justice rendered by courts, the Napa Superior Court entered into a partnership with our other local justice agencies to more effectively redress the financial damage to victims of crime. Under this program, the court works with the District Attorney and probation staff to identify offenders with adequate financial resources and significant victim restitution obligations. Direct and regular judicial review and intervention will help ensure compliance with court orders addressing victim of crime financial losses.

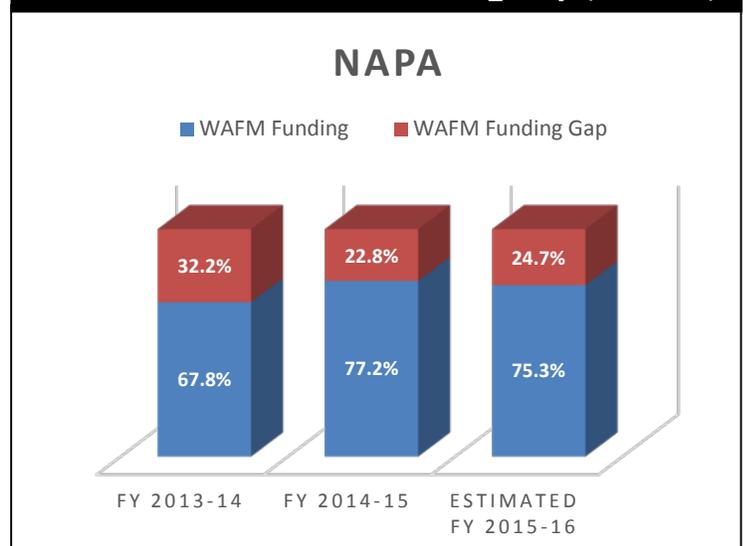
### Partial elimination of furloughs and court closures

The lingering effects of the Great Recession required the court to close the court three full days per month plus every Friday at 2:30 PM, furloughing all court employees two and a half hours per week. While the 2:30 PM Friday closures continue, the court has been able to eliminate the remaining three all-day closures and restore full court access and services on those days.

## Budget Challenges and Priorities

As noted in the chart below, although the FY 2015-16 budget act provided some fiscal relief, state trial court funding fell far short of the resources necessary to fully fund Napa Superior Court operations. As a result, the court will continue to close its doors every Friday. The court's primary fiscal priority for FY 2016-17 is the elimination of these weekly closures and associated furloughing of court employees. Additionally, the court will require a significant investment of resources in the expansion of our new case management system to the criminal and traffic case types.

## Workload Allocation & Funding Gap (see reverse)



## Court Demographics

Population Served	139,255
Square Miles Covered	788
Total Number of Court Facilities	3

## 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.