

Superior Court of California County of Nevada BUDGET SNAPSHOT

February 2016



JUDICIAL COUNCIL
OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Hon. B. Scott Thomsen, Presiding Judge

G. Sean Metroka, Court Executive Officer

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Court Service Highlights in the Current Year

- Proactive implementation of traffic ticket/infraction amnesty program
- Expanded comprehensive collection program
- Beginning implementation of case management system enhancements

Court Service Highlights in Detail

Proactive implementation of traffic ticket/infraction amnesty program

In collaboration with our primary collection service, we have widely advertised the amnesty program and the response has been significant. Additionally, our amnesty program includes specific misdemeanor violations, broadening its impact.

Expanded comprehensive collection program

With the addition of staff dedicated to our collections programs in Nevada City and Truckee, we are better able to collect delinquent debt more quickly, which reduces the penalties and assessments that some people would otherwise have to pay. Our efforts also have resulted in the increased collection of older cases.

Case management system enhancements

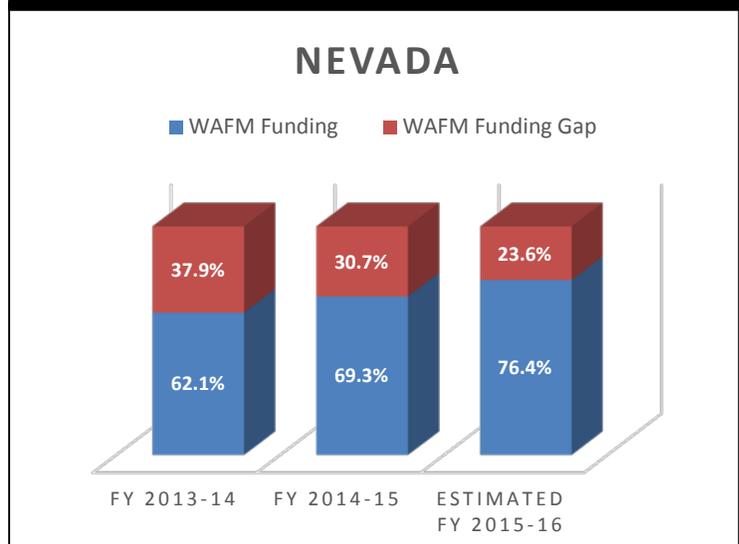
This year we have begun work to enhance our case management system in three areas: electronic filing, document management interface, and automated traffic case initiation. In concert with these improvements, we have contracted with an electronic payment processing service that will enable us to reduce the cost of processing payments to and otherwise managing traffic cases.

The document management interface project will facilitate a transition away from paper files reducing our costs for records creation, management, and storage. It will also facilitate access to case files in courtrooms.

Budget Challenges and Priorities

Because we have experienced a reduction in filings the last few years, we also have experienced a reduction in our WAFM distribution (i.e., in our operating revenue). However, the normal cost increases associated with employees, services, and supplies continue to far outpace our efforts to reduce expenditures. While we have decreased staff to adjust to reductions in our funding, we have necessarily had to reduce many important public services as a result. As we balance the court budget, our first priority is to maintain access to justice in our county.

Workload Allocation & Funding Gap (see reverse)



Court Demographics

Population Served	97,225
Square Miles Covered	974
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.