



Superior Court of California County of Orange BUDGET SNAPSHOT



JUDICIAL COUNCIL
OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

February 2015

Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2015-16

- *Open South County Service Center to provide self-help programs and a place to file documents or pay fines;*
- *Reopen Call Center to help litigants with questions about their case;*
- *Begin to replace case management system for civil, probate, and mental health cases;*
- *Maintain fairness and equity of staff compensation relative to other courts, the county, and the state.*

Closed Courtrooms (11) and Court Houses (1 with 4 courtrooms)

- Closed South County Courthouse permanently on July 5, 2013
- Consolidated limited civil, small claims, and traffic calendars to fewer courthouses
- Family law consolidated to one courthouse and closed one courtroom in 2012

Counters / Clerks / Telephones

- Reduced Clerk's office hours by 12.5% as of July 30, 2012
- Closed Call Center on July 1, 2013, thus eliminating the public's ability to telephone the court with questions about their cases
- Closed information desks at all courthouses resulting in reduced service levels to the public

Self-Help / Mediation / Facilitator Services

- Self-help services closed at one branch court
- Longer waits for child custody mediation services
- Fewer positions conducting conservatorship investigations involving elderly and/or disabled persons

Staff Impacts / Furloughs / Layoffs / Unfilled Vacancies

- 5-year cumulative net reduction of 353 positions
- No ongoing salary increases since 2011

Court Security / Safety / Facilities

- Regular failure of building systems, especially water leaks, resulting in temporary loss of courtrooms and office space
- Closed multiple entrances and weapons screening areas at four courthouses increasing lines and wait times, especially for disabled persons
- Replaced Sheriff's deputies serving as bailiffs with less-experienced and unarmed court attendants in civil courtrooms

Court Reporters

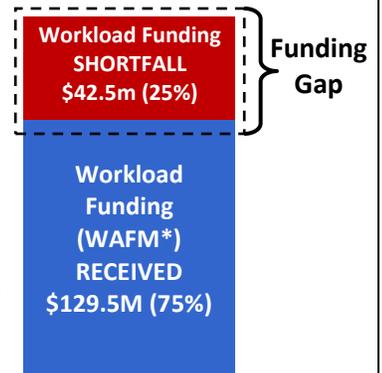
- Court reporters pooled and now report only trials, no law and motion, in civil and probate cases in FY 2014-15
- Reduced all full-time reporters to 35-hour work week in 2012
- Eliminated 20 court reporters in FY 2012-13 through attrition

Availability of Judicial Officers

Reduced use of assigned judges by five

Funding Shortfall

*WAFM is the Workload-based Allocation & Funding Methodology. It describes how much funding courts need based on their workload. In the current year, the workload-based allocation *needed* in Orange was calculated at \$172.1 million but the court received \$129.5 million. See reverse for a detailed explanation of how WAFM is calculated.



Court Demographics

Population Served	3,113,991
Square Miles Covered	948
Total Number of Court Facilities	10

Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. Glenda Sanders
Court Executive Officer	Alan Carlson
Executive Office Contact	(657) 622-7017

Budget Challenges for FY 2015-16

- *Inability to accumulate reserves to fund projects which would save money in the long run.*
- *Court users must travel farther a) for hearings in certain case types due to consolidation of calendars to fewer courthouses, b) to pay fines, and c) to file documents, especially in family law cases.*

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' historical share of the statewide funding. The WAFM calculation tells us what the trial courts need to function based on current filings, whereas the historical share was based on the amount each court received from its county.)

Unfortunately, the total WAFM funding needed for all 58 courts exceeds the funding currently appropriated in the state budget by as much as \$800 million. (This is the WAFM funding gap.) 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 to each court's historical share of statewide funding, applying it 100% only to "new" money appropriated in the budget. New money is any undesignated general court operations funding increase above the FY 2012-13 State funding level.

The rules of application adopted by the Judicial Council are as follows:

- Each year beginning in FY 2013-14, and through/including 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 2012-13 base is distributed according to WAFM;
- All undesignated court operations state funding increases after FY 2012-13 are 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.