



Superior Court of California County of Placer BUDGET SNAPSHOT



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
OF THE COURTS
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

January 2014

Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2014-15

Despite the major reductions in resources over the past five years, the Placer Court has enhanced collaborative court services for veterans and mentally ill court users, modernized court records by eliminating paper from the Traffic Court, improved access via online scheduling and wait-time management in the Self-Help Center. The Court is improving juror communication with the ability to communicate via text messaging, improving quality of remote appearances to provide greater access opportunities in civil and family cases, modernizing its case management system to improve the availability of information and potential for electronic filing and data sharing, and undertaking a collaborative evaluation with justice partners to enhance public safety, improve services, reduce recidivism, and ensure incarceration is used appropriately.

Reduced Self-Help / Mediation / Facilitator Services

Operating hours for the Self-Help Center significantly reduced to 4 hours per day on most days. Telephone services remain unavailable.

Reduced Service Via Counters / Clerks / Telephones

- In prior years, reduced Clerk's Office hours on Fridays, and implemented limited service days (only emergency matters are handled and all but one clerk's office is closed). **The funding provided in the FY 13-14 Budget enabled the court to restore hours on Fridays and avoid limited service days in FY 13/14.**
- Impacts remain as a result of the significant staffing reductions. Criminal records searches require 90 days for responses; and, in-person waits are 3 hours or more to file domestic violence restraining orders, requests for child custody modifications, and other family law matters.

Closed Courtrooms

- Two courtrooms remain closed; a third courtroom's use has been significantly reduced resulting to significant trial delays, particularly in civil cases.
- If additional funding is made available, above the Governor's Proposed Budget, priority will be given to additional courtroom staff to support reopening a courtroom to reduce trial and case processing delays.

Staff Impacts / Furloughs / Layoffs / Unfilled Vacancies

- Reductions of non-judicial positions of more than 40% since FY09 remain in place.
- All employees pay full share of retirement costs and pay an increasing share of health benefit costs.
- Recently negotiated labor contract contains no COLAs and step increases have been frozen for two years.
- Employee furloughs were avoided in FY13-14 as a result of supplemental funding provided in the Budget Act, for the first time since 2009.

Reduced Availability of Judicial Officers

The continued reduction of the use of assigned judges has resulted in a decrease in access to justice and an overall delay of processing of cases county-wide.

Budget Considerations

Budgeted Revenues* FY 2013-2014	\$15,943,855
Total Revenues* FY 2008-2009	\$19,628,478
Five-Year Revenue Reduction	-\$3,684,623
<small>*Excludes Sheriff-Provided Security</small>	
Current Year Unfunded Employee Health Benefits and Retirement Costs	-\$635,904
Share of \$60 million augmentation	\$536,650

Court Demographics

Population Served	355,325
Square Miles Covered	1,503
Total Number of Court Facilities	6
Filled Staff Positions FY 2013-2014	107
Filled Staff Positions FY 2008-2009	185
Lost Positions in 5 years	-78 (42% reduction)

Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. Alan V. Pineschi
Court Executive Officer	Jake Chatters
Executive Office Contact	(916) 408-6186

Budget Challenges for FY 2014-15

Placer Court's ability to provide adequate and efficient access to justice to the public has been significantly impaired due to staffing reductions of more than 40% and the closure of courtrooms necessitated by years of funding shortfalls. Funding proposed in the Governor's Proposed Budget is appreciated, but is not sufficient to maintain staffing and service levels in place for FY 13/14 into the Budget Year FY 14/15. If additional funding is made available above that proposed in the Governor's proposed Budget, priority will be given to additional courtroom staff to support reopening courtrooms to reduce trial and case processing delays and to avoid further degradation of self help and clerk's office services.