Superior Court of California
County of Plumas
BUDGET SNAPSHOT

JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

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Court Service Highlights in the Current Year

- **Proactive implementation of traffic ticket/infraction amnesty program**
- **Expansion of services for criminal litigants under criminal realignment and Prop. 47**

Court Service Highlights in Detail

Proactive implementation of traffic ticket/infraction amnesty program
The Court worked with the County of Plumas to develop the traffic amnesty program. Both agencies have shared responsibility for implementation of the program. Both have trained staff on the mechanics of the program, and what each agency's role is. And, we both have added web pages to our web sites regarding the amnesty program for the benefit of our customers.

Expansion of services for criminal litigants under criminal realignment and Prop. 47
The Court is actively working with its criminal justice partners to expand services for criminal litigants in both felony and misdemeanor cases to increase positive outcomes for those defendants. The Court successfully applied for a Recidivism Reduction Program grant, which is providing funds for education for our criminal justice partners, and to allow for planning for increased services. The County currently operates a day reporting center which provides a centralized location to assess defendants and direct them to appropriate services.

Among the features of our program, the pretrial release program has been agreed upon and should be implemented by the end of March 2016. A new and expanded collaborative justice court is also in the planning stages – this court will provide services for defendants who are veterans, and for those who have substance abuse issues and mental health challenges.

Budget Challenges and Priorities

The Plumas Court continues to work with reduced funding as WAFM is implemented. We estimate that our court will reach its funding floor in FY 2016-17. The Court's priorities are as follows:
1) Reduce technology costs while improving technology capabilities; and,
2) Begin the search for a new case management system that will provide court customers with greater access.

The Court faces challenges with reduced funding. The Court continues to provide the only self-help for litigants in the County of Plumas. Based on the available funding, self-help services have been reduced to just 16 hours per week. With a staff of only 10, the Court also faces challenges in keeping pace with the workload. We also continue to have challenges with space. The Plumas Superior Court currently occupies approximately a third of a historic courthouse, and we store many of our files and supplies off site. The Court is negotiating with the County for additional space within the courthouse.

Court Demographics

Population Served	19,140
Square Miles Covered	2,613
Total Number of Court Facilities	1

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.