

Superior Court of California County of San Diego



JUDICIAL COUNCIL
OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

February 2015

Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2015-16

- Maintaining the already reduced level of public access continues to be a challenge.
- Addressing failing Case Management Systems that are preventing the court from expanding online access to the public.

Self-Help / Mediation / Facilitator Services

- Program staffing for the family law facilitator program cut.
- Small Claims Advisors office reduced to a telephone bank and one attorney for the entire County.

Family Court

- Family court parties have to wait approximately 3-4 months to have a Request for Order heard. This includes custody, visitation and support.
- Judgments are backlogged approximately 4 months due to understaffing of Family Business Offices.

Counters / Clerks / Telephones

- Appeals office closed in branch locations for Civil and Family; only served in two locations for Criminal and Infraction.
- Civil Judgments backlogged one year and Writs and Abstracts are four months behind due to staffing levels.

Closed Courtrooms (11) and Court Houses (1)

- Closed local Small Claims offices and relocated these services to the Central Courthouse. Litigants must wait four months for a trial and may have to drive over 40 miles; find paid parking or use public transportation.

Court Reporters

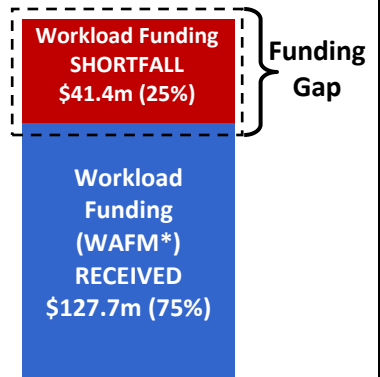
- Total number of court reporters has been reduced by 38%.
- No longer provide court reporters in civil, probate and family cases.

Staff Impacts / Unfilled Vacancies

- FY 2014-15 and FY 2015-16 budget reductions require cutting an additional 90 positions on top of the 470 vacancies from previous years' reductions.

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 San Diego was calculated at \$169.1 million but the court received \$127.7 million. See reverse for a detailed explanation of how WAFM is calculated.



Court Demographics

Population Served	3,194,362
Square Miles Covered	4,526
Total Number of Court Facilities	9

Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. David J. Danielsen
Court Executive Officer	Michael M. Roddy
Executive Office Contact	(619) 450-5478

Budget Challenges for FY 2015-16

- *Since FY 2007-08, the Court has not received permanent and ongoing funding for benefit increases totaling \$11.1 million.*
- *Backlogs are increasing; lines and wait times are longer because of fewer clerks and reduced services.*
- *Family court parties have to wait approximately 3-4 months to have child custody issues heard.*

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.