



Superior Court of California County of San Luis Obispo BUDGET SNAPSHOT

February 2016



JUDICIAL COUNCIL
OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Barry LaBarbera, Presiding Judge

Michael Powell, Court Executive Officer

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Court Service Highlights in the Current Year

- **Implementation of mandatory e-filing in some civil case types**
- **Effective rollout of attorney portal**
- **Increase in Family Law Facilitator availability**

Court Service Highlights in Detail

Implementation of mandatory e-filing in some civil case types

As of January 1, 2016, San Luis Obispo (SLO) Superior Court began requiring e-filing for attorneys filing cases in probate and limited civil cases. This has been effective in decreasing the wait times and volume at the counters significantly. In fact, e-filing is so popular that we have decided to roll out mandatory e-filing in unlimited civil cases as of January 1, 2017. The significant number of e-filings has greatly lessened the volume of clerk time required for paper processing and document management in the civil department.

Effective rollout of attorney portal

Attorneys in San Luis Obispo now have access to an online court-attorney portal where they can access cases and documents online from any computer as a registered user. This has significantly diminished attorney traffic to the customer service windows in all areas of the court and has increased the level of access for attorneys to their cases and the public record.

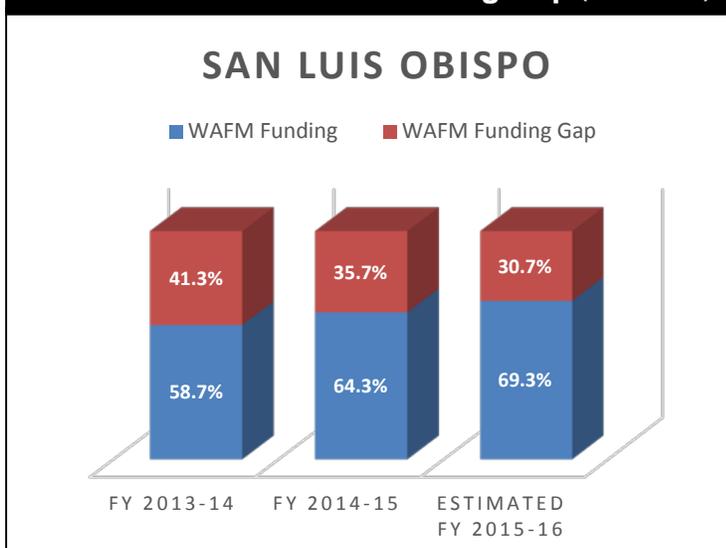
Increased Family Law Facilitator hours

SLO Court has increased the hours and availability of the walk-in clinic for the Family Law Facilitator, affording access four half-days per week without an appointment. This was done in part through the use of well-trained interns and improves access to justice.

Budget Challenges and Priorities

We continue to have concerns about the 1% cap on trial court fund balances, which inhibits our ability to maintain a more significant reserve for the purposes of managing unexpected and variable expenses, and planning for large and longer term modernization projects.

Workload Allocation & Funding Gap (see reverse)



Court Demographics

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| Population Served | 272,357 |
| Square Miles Covered | 3,616 |
| 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.