



# Superior Court of California County of San Mateo BUDGET SNAPSHOT

February 2016



JUDICIAL COUNCIL  
OF CALIFORNIA  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Hon. John L. Grandsaert, Presiding Judge

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## Court Service Highlights in the Current Year

- Proactive implementation of traffic ticket/infraction amnesty program
- Restored services incrementally or through improvements in efficiency

## Court Service Highlights in Detail

### Proactive implementation of traffic infraction amnesty program.

Through December, 2015, the Court received 1,160 amnesty applications and approved 825, including 623 driver's license suspensions lifted. The Court collected net revenue of \$58,120.

### Service restorations and efficiency

- Added 1-2 trials back per week at Northern Branch.
- Restored 2 staff positions to improve courtroom services to the public.
- Restored 2 hours of clerk's office public counter and phone services on Fridays, only.
- Negotiated agreements with unions to enable Court to be fully PEPPA compliant by October 2016.
- Digitized records and closed records warehouse saving \$250,000/yr.
- Implemented pilot monthly One-Day Divorce Program.
- Replaced obsolete and cost prohibitive criminal case management system for greater efficiency.
- Scheduled replacement of non-criminal case management system for June 2016.
- Improved process for public telephone call handling/queuing in criminal division.
- Reduced backlogs of incomplete judgments in civil and family law cases.

## Budget Priorities

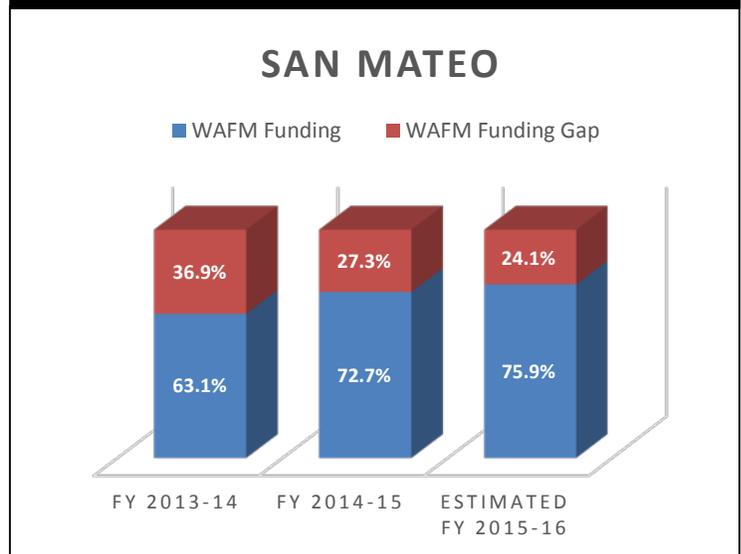
- Restore services incrementally.
- Improve Court efficiency through automation and innovation.
- Transform Court to paperless services and processes.

## Budget Challenges

The Court continues to be challenged by the WAFM funding gap, which has precluded adding back any significant levels of services:

- Backlog/delays in assigning civil and criminal trials continue due to lack of courtroom and support staff.
- Wait time can be up to 2 months to obtain traffic arraignment date.
- Public service and counter hours remain severely reduced, and only open between 8 AM and 2 PM.
- Wait times for self-help services still exceed 3 hours.
- ADR and Family Court services still curtailed by 50%.
- Wait times on phone can still be up to 60 minutes.
- Wait times in line can still be up to 20 minutes.

## Workload Allocation & Funding Gap (see reverse)



## Court Demographics

Population Served	745,193
Square Miles Covered	741
Total Number of Court Facilities	5 (2 substantially closed)

## 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 case weights (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.