



# Superior Court of California County of Santa Cruz

## BUDGET SNAPSHOT



JUDICIAL COUNCIL  
OF CALIFORNIA  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

February 2015

### Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2015-16

- Restore collaborative courts such as Mental Health Court, Drug Court, Serial Inebriate Program and Veteran's Treatment Court
- Complete the replacement of the outdated and antiquated Case Management System with the installation of the new Case Management System (Tyler Technologies Odyssey Case Manager)
- Restoration of Court Reporters Services to Domestic Violence and Family Law Hearings

#### Self-Help / Mediation / Facilitator Services

Discontinued Self-Help and Family Law Facilitator services at Santa Cruz Courthouse

#### Court Reporters / Interpreter Services

- In 2010, five of twelve court reporters were laid off
- Permanent removal of court reporters from civil, probate, and family law courtrooms

#### Counters / Clerks / Telephones

- Clerk office hours reduced by one hour each day
- Telephone hours reduced to 4 hours each day

#### Closed Courtrooms (1)

- One full courtroom closed on July 1, 2010
- Removed criminal and traffic calendars and services from Watsonville
- Closed juvenile courtroom in Felton; transferred caseload to Watsonville
- Reduced the use of the juvenile hall courtroom from a full-time courtroom to using it two half-days each week

#### Staff Impacts / Furloughs / Layoffs / Unfilled Vacancies

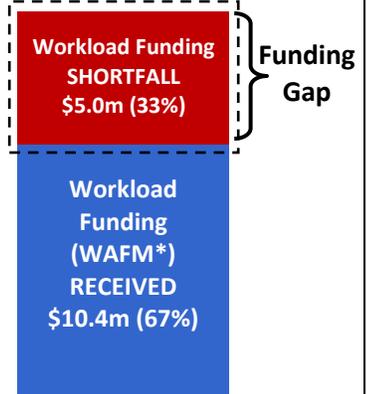
- Reduced staff by 58 FTE positions
- Furloughed employees at all levels
- Current vacancy rate from FY 2007-08 level is 34%

#### Availability of Judicial Officers

- Judges voluntarily reduced their own salaries
- One full time commissioner laid off resulting in increased workload for remaining judges and delays in case processing

### 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 Santa Cruz was calculated at \$15.5 million but the court received \$10.4 million. See reverse for a detailed explanation of how WAFM is calculated.



### Court Demographics

Population Served	271,595
Square Miles Covered	607
Total Number of Court Facilities	3

### Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. Paul M. Marigonda
Court Executive Officer	Alex Calvo
Executive Office Contact	(831) 420-2401

### Budget Challenges for FY 2015-16

*Increased demands for services from the public combined with fewer court staff and lower compensation for court employees is causing a decline in morale and difficulties in attracting and retaining high-quality court employees. The consolidation of court services that occurred in 2010 resulted in increased commute times for the public and public agencies in outlying cities and communities.*

## **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.