



Superior Court of California County of Shasta BUDGET SNAPSHOT



JUDICIAL COUNCIL
OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

February 2015

Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2015-16

Shasta's priorities for increased funding are two-fold: 1) restore as many court employee positions as possible in order to become current with demands/workload and adequately compensate them, and 2) restore services to the public (office hours, telephone access) that have been reduced due to years of budget reductions. Restructuring and business re-engineering will be necessary to ensure the most efficient use of scarce dollars since the court will still be 34% underfunded.

Self-Help / Mediation / Facilitator Services

- The Small Claims Advisor contract was reduced by 50% in FY 2014-15 and the contractor chose to terminate the contract effective 9-30-14. There is currently no court assistance provided to these litigants.
- The court has historically had only one staff attorney in the Self-Help Center. The current attorney has resigned so the Self-Help Center is closing until the position can be filled. Due to the nature and volume of the work placed on the attorney, recruitment and retention are problems.
- The Court is carrying vacancies in the Family Court Services Division (child recommending counselors and court investigators) due to budget reductions/layoffs, which impacts the timeliness of court reports on child custody, guardianships, and conservatorship matters.

Court Reporters

Court reporters are provided in criminal and juvenile cases only; in all other case types parties must provide their own reporter or no record is made. Appeals in unreported matters are problematic because no records exist that the Court of Appeal can review.

Closed Branch Courts

All branch courts have been eliminated in Shasta County. The closure of the last remaining branch court in FY 2014-15 now requires people to travel over 100 miles roundtrip to obtain services in Redding.

Staff Impacts / Layoffs / Unfilled Vacancies

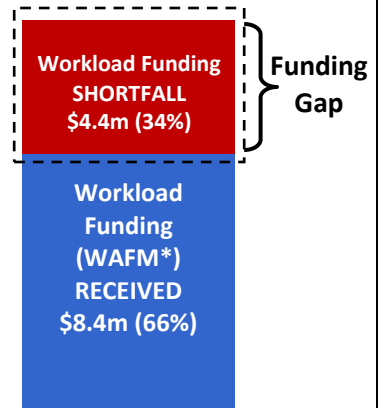
- An already understaffed court, Shasta was forced to lay off employees at the end of October 2014 in order to balance the budget. Combined unfilled vacancies and layoffs, the court has 46 fewer employees today than it did one year ago. The court is paying high EDD costs each month as a result.
- We use the Marshal's Office for security, which has had to absorb the same reductions as other court divisions. Shasta is one of two courts that do not receive annual security funding increases from the trial court security subaccount because the Government Code excludes these two courts.
- There are a number of Information Technology (IT) improvements that could be made, which would result in cost savings or efficiencies but the court does not have the ability to employ sufficient IT staff to do the job.

Criminal Caseload

Shasta continues to experience significant increases in criminal case filings since AB 109, Criminal Justice Realignment. Court staff cannot keep up with the volume. The community continues to be victimized since offenders cannot be held in custody due to an overcrowded jail and probation caseloads are too high to be effectively supervised. Over half of the current felony caseload is rated high risk to reoffend.

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 Shasta was calculated at \$12.8 million but the court received \$8.4 million. See reverse for a detailed explanation of how WAFM is calculated.**



Court Demographics

Population Served	177,412
Square Miles Covered	3,847
Total Number of Court Facilities	4

Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. Gregory S. Gaul
Court Executive Officer	Melissa Fowler-Bradley
Executive Office Contact	(530) 245-6761

Availability of Judicial Officers

Shasta continues to provide a Child Support Commissioner to assist Trinity Superior Court under a resource sharing arrangement.

Budget Challenges for FY 2015-16

Shasta provides court ordered debt collection services for this court and county, as well as for Glenn, Yuba, Sierra, Tehama, Lassen, Colusa and Trinity courts. These efforts result in millions of dollars in revenue (criminal fines and civil fees) to the State each year. We receive no trial court funding for Collections employees, so the court must use funding provided for other purposes in order to keep the Collections Unit in operation. This situation was created by the 1% fund balance restriction, which limits our ability to carry forward funds from one fiscal year to the next to pay collection expenditures.

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.