

# Superior Court of California County of Stanislaus BUDGET SNAPSHOT



JUDICIAL COUNCIL  
OF CALIFORNIA  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Marie Sovey Silveira, Presiding Judge

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## Court Service Highlights in the Current Year

- Proactive implementation of traffic ticket/infraction amnesty program October 2015
- Re-opened Turlock Branch Court January 2016 (closed since October 2009)
- Judicial and administration staff fully participating in design phase of new courthouse project
- Continued implementation of document management system (DMS) for paperless files
- Permissive Unlimited Civil e-filing to be implemented March 2016

## Court Service Highlights in Detail

**Proactive implementation of traffic ticket/infraction amnesty program.** Costly re-programming of cashing system and case management system was needed to meet reporting requirements. Reporting statistics for 1<sup>st</sup> quarter include: 1,921 applications; 756 defendants assisted; 830 cases granted reduction; and 386 driver's licenses released

**Reopened Turlock.** Closed since 2009 due to budget constraints, we recently reopened the court facility in Turlock, helping to serve thousands of residents in that area

**New courthouse project.** A team of judges and staff are currently working on a multitude of responsibilities required in the detailed court planning process to ensure functionality of the future building which will consolidate 7 courthouse locations into one building consisting of 27 courtrooms and all case types except juvenile delinquency

**Document management.** The Court has implemented DMS in child support cases, family law and traffic, and is working to implement DMS for misdemeanor criminal cases, as well

**E-filing is coming.** Permissive unlimited civil e-filing is anticipated to begin on or before March 1, 2016

### Other court services

- Although we have a Mental Health Court, we have not made adjustments specific to Laura's Law.
- A Veteran's Treatment Court began February 1, 2016 after months of planning with the VA, District Attorney, Public Defender, Probation and Behavioral Health Services in order to serve qualified veterans
- Implemented Spanish and English online orientation for mediation services, and online orientation for non-professional supervisors (re. supervised visitation)
- Continued implementation of Language Access Plan expansion to civil case types

## Budget Challenges and Priorities

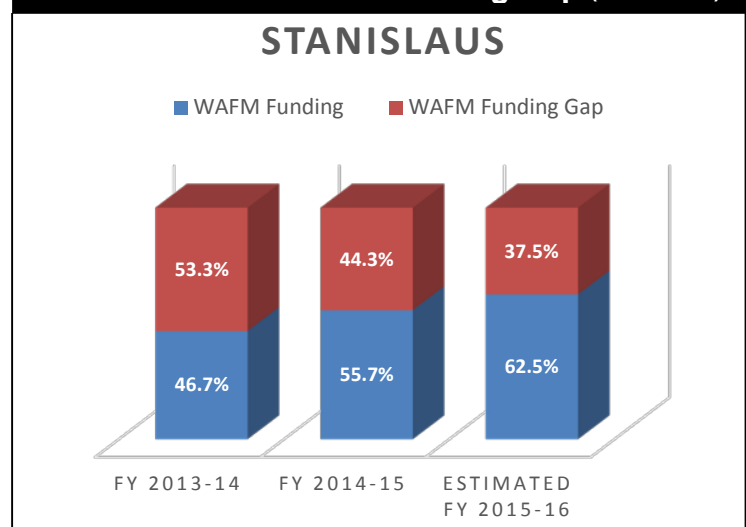
**Lack of Judgeships** Three (3) unfunded at this time

**High Security/Multi-Defendant Courtroom** Lack of space to hold multi-defendant trials (currently hearing an 8-defendant murder prelim) forces the court to continue leasing off-site court space

**Technology Funding** Lack of dedicated funding stream makes it difficult to plan the purchase of an IT system

**Cash Flow/Lack of Reserves** 1% reserve neither allows for implementing technology needs nor planning for future projects

## Workload Allocation & Funding Gap (see reverse)



## Court Demographics

Population Served	526,042
Square Miles Covered	1,515
Total Number of Court Facilities	8

## 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.