



Superior Court of California County of Tulare BUDGET SNAPSHOT



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
OF THE COURTS
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

January 2014

Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2014-15

- *Closed courthouses require court users to travel further.*
- *Long lines and wait times cause loss of income by court users who must miss work to attend court.*
- *Public safety in jeopardy as law enforcement spending more time driving to courthouses and less time patrolling.*

Self-Help / Mediation / Facilitator Services

- Self Help attorney on staff replaced by paralegal to realize savings.
- Self Help/FLF space reduced by half to realize savings on lease.

Court Reporters / Interpreter Services

- Four (4) full time court reporters were terminated in FY 2012-13 and three (3) full time per diem court reporters are no longer utilized.
- Beginning November 2013, Tulare Court no longer provides court reporters for Misdemeanor, Probate and Civil Unlimited (if over 2 hours) matters.

Counters / Clerks / Telephones

- Moved into new South County Justice Center in October 2013 and took on significantly more work but was unable to hire additional staff.
- Staff morale is challenged by each person having too much work to do and not being able to complete work timely.
- Ten (10) counter staff have been laid off since FY 2008-09 causing significantly longer lines and wait times for court users (workload per clerk has increased due to layoffs).

Closed Courtrooms and Court Houses

- Moved into our new South County Justice Center in October 2013 and were forced to lock down completely the entire third (3rd) floor of the facility to save on janitorial expenditures.
- Tulare Court facility was closed in August 2012 requiring the public to travel to Visalia or Porterville to access court services
- Dinuba Court is open to public only 1 day a week to pay fees only.

Staff Impacts / Furloughs / Layoffs / Unfilled Vacancies

All court staff are subject to 12 mandatory furlough days per year.

Availability of Judicial Officers

One Court Commissioner was laid off in 2012 due to budget reductions.

Budget Considerations

Budgeted Revenues* FY 2013-2014	\$22,559,379
Total Revenues* FY 2008-2009	\$24,131,170
Five-Year Revenue Reduction <small>*Excludes Sheriff-Provided Security</small>	-\$1,571,791
Current Year Unfunded Employee Health Benefits and Retirement Costs	-206,332
Share of \$60 million augmentation	\$558,947

Court Demographics

Population Served	450,840
Square Miles Covered	4,839
Total Number of Court Facilities	4
Filled Staff Positions FY 2013-2014	222
Filled Staff Positions FY 2008-2009	255
Lost Positions in 5 years	-33 (13% reduction)
Positions Lost Since July 1, 2013	-11 (17% vacancy rate)

Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. Lloyd L. Hicks
Court Executive Officer	LaRayne Cleek
Executive Office Contact	(559) 730-5000 x 1113

Budget Challenges for FY 2014-15

- *How to manage court operations costs with an almost nonexistent local reserve. In the unfortunate event of a catastrophic emergency, if the server room and its contents are destroyed, Tulare Court would need to quickly access at least \$500,000 to replace the equipment and restore operations. Tulare Court historically maintained a reserve for such emergencies, however, this emergency reserve will no longer exist after July 1, 2014 as the current 1% cap will permit us to maintain no more than \$220,000 reserve (less than half of what's needed). In a significant emergency, Tulare Court will be helpless, and we will be unable to serve the public.*
- *How to deliver access to justice with a significantly understaffed work force. Work is simply not getting done as we do not have adequate staffing levels. This issue will exacerbate in FY2014-15 without reserves; the backlog will increase and staff morale will continue to decline.*