



Superior Court of California County of Tuolumne BUDGET SNAPSHOT



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
OF THE COURTS
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

January 2014

Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2014-15

Public has been impacted by reduced and interrupted service delivery caused by inadequate staffing levels in every court division. We were forced to give up our leased space which served as the Jury Assembly Room; there is no waiting area for jurors. We are unable to remain current with CCPOR entry. Restraining orders are no longer returned the same day. Backlogs are growing.

Self-Help / Mediation / Facilitator Services

- Family law facilitator is contracted for only 12 hours per week and available only Thursday afternoons and Fridays, resulting in a frustrated public that experiences increased wait times for assistance and appointments that are scheduled weeks out.
- We have had to cut by ½ our contract with providers of our Children of Divorce workshop, resulting in the formerly monthly workshop now being offered only every other month, resulting in delays for hearings and final dispositions for families with children.

Court Reporters / Interpreter Services

- One court reporter position was vacated due to retirement in FY2011-12 and remains unfilled due to budget reductions.
- The unfilled court reporter position has resulted in the bench having to wait to start a calendar because multiple court departments are sharing a reporter.
- Court reporter transcripts are late to the 5th District Court of Appeal; reporters must frequently request extensions of time to complete and send transcripts.
- Court has no interpreters on staff and no resources to certify staff; interpreters must be brought in from out of county at a premium cost that is often non-negotiable.

Counters / Clerks / Telephones

- Public hours reduced by two hours daily in order for clerk staff to work on processing court paperwork to meet court deadlines and calendars; there is a significant delay for documents/orders.
- Documents do not always make it to the court files in time for the next hearing.
- Criminal Division staff struggles to complete data entry of new complaints received from the DAs office in time for Criminal Arraignment calendar.
- Mental Health review hearings are set further out to allow time for processing and scheduling of evaluations and placement recommendations due to fewer available evaluators.
- Criminal case dispositions involving Vehicle Code violations are not consistently reported to DMV within 10-day timeframe, impacting the public and resulting in priors not promptly appearing on defendant's driving records.

Budget Considerations

Budgeted Revenues* FY 2013-2014	\$3,549,867
<u>Total Revenues* FY 2008-2009</u>	<u>\$4,813,630</u>
Five-Year Revenue Reduction	-\$1,263,763
<small>*Excludes Sheriff-Provided Security</small>	
Current Year Unfunded Employee Health Benefits and Retirement Costs	-\$41,851
Share of \$60 million augmentation	\$92,130

Court Demographics

Population Served	53,834
Square Miles Covered	2,274
Total Number of Court Facilities	2
Filled Staff Positions FY 2013-2014	36
<u>Filled Staff Positions FY 2008-2009</u>	<u>43</u>
Lost Positions in 5 years	-7 (17% reduction)

Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. Eleanor Provost
Court Executive Officer	Jeanine D. Tucker
Executive Office Contact	(209) 533-5556

Budget Challenges for FY 2014-15

- *In spite of operational efficiencies that have been implemented, a structural deficit exists and staffing levels will be reduced via layoffs in FY 2014-2015 if funding is not restored or additional labor concessions cannot be negotiated.*
- *All projects to improve delivery of service and enhance efficiencies have stalled where there is a cost attached. Court cannot fully automate minute orders in all courtrooms, upgrade the phone system, or contract for payroll services.*

Additional Impacts on Access to Justice

Staff Impacts / Furloughs / Layoffs / Unfilled Vacancies

- We've had to reduce court operations staff by 30%, resulting in backlogs.
- Over the past 5 years, 12.5 vacant positions have not been filled due to budget reductions.
- All staff members were furloughed 10 days in FY 2009-10, 12 days in FY2010-11, 18 days in FY2011-12, and 5 days in FY2012-13.

Court Security / Safety / Facilities

- For 4 years, the County Sheriff has been unable to assign the perimeter security deputies provided for in the Court-County MOU due to funding and/or recruitment/retention issues
- Elimination of the Jury Assembly Room means the court no longer provides amenities to the public while they wait (water, coffee, magazines, internet access).
- When the court needs to go on the record outside the presence of the jury, the jury often must be removed to the public hallway. Potential jurors are often in proximity to defendants, attorneys and law enforcement.

Availability of Judicial Officers

- The Court is still setting hearings within statutorily required timeframes, but calendars are increasing in size, causing longer wait times in court; court hearings go beyond 5:00 PM.
- Jury "failure to appear" notices have been eliminated to save money.

Technology

- The court is unable to replace its case management system with one of the three identified master contract systems due to lack of funding. However, without such a system (and the funds to pay for it), our court will not be able to interface with the systems of the other 57 trial courts.
- The court has had to postpone:
 - 1) Replacing/upgrading servers, computers and uninterruptable power supplies (UPSs) for its server room, placing the court at risk for equipment failure due to aging hardware, and interruption of service.
 - 2) Upgrading operating systems and key business applications, stifling attempts to modernize, and potentially resulting in security vulnerabilities.
 - 3) Replacing an aging network, which puts the court network at risk of failure.
 - 4) Upgrading or replacing digital storage, limiting the court's ability to store documents electronically and potentially crippling disaster recovery plans.