



Superior Court of California County of Yolo BUDGET SNAPSHOT



February 2015

Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2015-16

Yolo Superior Court will continue to mitigate the impacts of reduced budgets on public access by:

1. Hiring limited term staff and leaving positions vacant for targeted periods of time to gain salary savings during the fiscal year
2. Maximizing technology for improved public web access for court services and payment services.
3. Sharing resources with other courts, such as technology innovations and procurement.

Court Reporters / Interpreter Services

- Provides court reporter services for mandated hearings only
- Unable to expand interpreter services in non-mandated hearings because of shortage of certified/registered interpreters

Counters / Clerks / Telephones

- Continued reduced public filing and phone access in all divisions (hours of service reduced daily by 2 hours)
- Continued wait time for civil and traffic counters averages approximately 1 hour
- Traffic division turns away an average of 60-90 people per week

Self-Help / Family Law Facilitator (FLF) Services

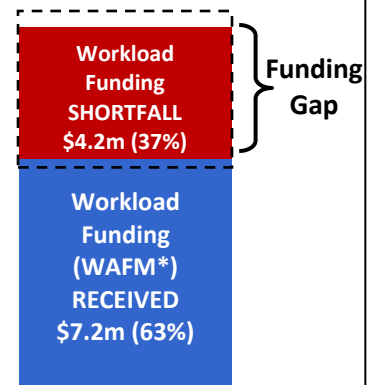
- Self-Help services are provided on a first-come, first-served basis; In FY 2014-15, FLF and Self Help served 6,684 in person, and 2,922 by phone and 1,201 through brief information and referral
- Agency referrals to the FLF/Self-Help Center for additional services have increased from 40-50 calls in 2013 to over 350 calls in 2014. Staffing remains at a reduced level
- FLF/Self Help services turn away an average of 60 people per week

Staff Impacts/Unfilled Vacancies/1% Fund Balance Restriction

- Yolo must maintain a 20% vacancy rate based on FY 2008-09 funding levels for budget management purposes
- Currently, 34% of staff are limited term, allowing the court greater budget flexibility in light of the 1% fund balance restriction
- The 1% limit on fund balances creates cash-flow problems and restricts our ability to develop cost-saving innovations, and limits our ability to replace old equipment and engage in long-term project development
- Because of low wages and benefits (as compared to the city, county, and other branches of government) Yolo is unable to retain qualified staff - resulting in significant turnover, morale issues and general inefficiencies because staff instability.

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 Yolo was calculated at \$11.4 million but the court received \$7.2 million. See reverse for a detailed explanation of how WAFM is calculated.



Court Demographics

Population Served	206,381
Square Miles Covered	1,023
Total Number of Court Facilities	6

Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. Kathleen M. White
Court Executive Officer	Shawn C. Landry
Executive Office Contact	(530) 406-6838

Budget Challenges for FY 2015-16

Inadequate funding continues to be the principal barrier to public access to justice. The court is unable to return to full window and phone hours, and public access remains at reduced levels (reduced access by 10 hours per week, per department). In addition, Prop. 109 and Prop 47 have put an additional strain on the court's limited workforce. Backlogs continue, with up to 2 months for non-mandated/low priority civil, family law, and probate filings.

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.