

# Superior Court of California County of Yolo BUDGET SNAPSHOT

February 2016



Hon. David Rosenberg, Presiding Judge

Shawn C. Landry, Court Executive Officer

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## Court Service Highlights in the Current Year

- **Successfully completed construction and moved to the new courthouse under budget and on time.**
- **Increased hours at service windows and Family Law Facilitator/Self Help Center by 1 hour.**
- **Transitioned to new case management system.**

## Court Service Highlights in Detail

**Yolo successfully completed new courthouse construction under budget and on time, and we have now moved our court operations to the new 163,000 sq. ft. courthouse.**

The new facility allows for greater public access through physical layout and technology. The new courthouse features critical technology improvements that increase public access including:

- Kiosks for quicker, more efficient service at Public Windows.
- Public Service Announcements (PSA) including court calendar changes and other pertinent information.

**We increased hours at service windows and in the Family Law Facilitator/Self Help Center by 1 hour.**

Although public access is still reduced by one hour daily in each division, Yolo was able to increase public service hours one hour per day in all divisions including the Family Law Facilitator’s Office/Self Help, and the walk-up payment windows.

- Self-Help services are provided on a first-come, first served basis. We served 6,017 people in person, 3,065 by phone, and 1,403 for brief consultation and referral in 2015.
- Agency referrals increased from 350 calls in 2014 to 785 calls in 2015.
- FLF/SH still turned away approximately 80 people a week, an increase of 20 people; and the average wait time is still 1-2 hours.

**We went live with a new case management system which allows for scanning of documents upon filing.**

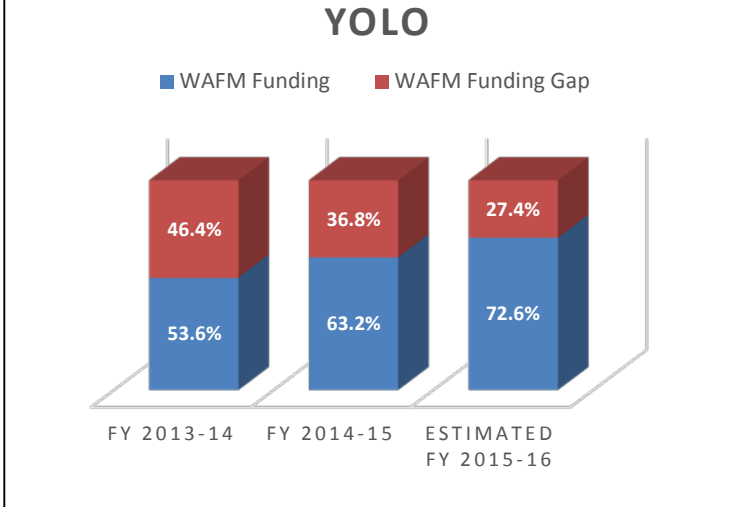
The new system brings us one step closer to a paperless system. It also allows the public to access their case and other court information online.

## Budget Challenges and Priorities

Staff Impacts: Yolo remains 28% understaffed for case processing, and 18% of our case processing staff is hired on a limited term basis. Understaffing has resulted in the court not being able to fully serve the public or keep pace with case filings and backlogs. Low pay and high turnover due to funding restrictions also make staffing and training difficult. Increased funding and the elimination of the 1% cap on reserves would allow the court more flexibility to address staffing concerns and maximize public access.

Court Services: Yolo is only able to provide court reporters for mandated case types due to budget restrictions. Yolo has not been able to expand court interpreter services due to a shortage of certified and registered interpreters.

## Workload Allocation & Funding Gap (see reverse)



## Court Demographics

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

## 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.