

# Superior Court of California County of Calaveras BUDGET SNAPSHOT



JUDICIAL COUNCIL  
OF CALIFORNIA  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

February 2015

## Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2015-16

- *Manage funding shortfall with the priority of maintaining current hours available to the public and that programs can continue at the same level of services throughout the fiscal year.*
- *Implement new case management system to provide greater access to the public and greater efficiencies for reduced court staffing levels*

### Staff Impacts / Furloughs / Layoffs / Unfilled Vacancies

- Entire staff is on 10 furlough days for FY 2014-15
- Court will leave 2.4 FTE's vacancies unfilled and implement voluntary furloughs
- Anticipated FY 2015-16 budget prevents filling any vacant positions

### Self-Help / Mediation / Facilitator Services

- Despite budget shortfall, we did not reduce self-help, mediation, or family law facilitator services in FY 2014-15
- Without additional funding in FY 2015-16, a reduction in self-help/mediation / family law facilitator services may be necessary to maintain balanced budget

### Court Reporters

- Reporters no longer used in family law or civil matters; only in statutorily mandated proceedings
- Reduced FTE's from 2.0 to 1.6 court reporter positions

### Counters / Clerks / Telephones

- Public counter hours have not been reduced in FY 2014-15.
- Projected FY 2015-16 budget allocation may require reduction in hours open to the public in order to maintain balanced budget

### New Court Facilities

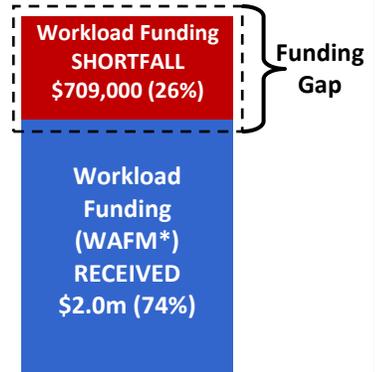
New expenditures for maintenance contracts on new IT infrastructure, and increased expenditures for janitorial services and products as a result of occupying a new Courthouse must be absorbed within the existing budget

### New Case Management System

- In FY 2014-15 over 1.0 FTE has been allocated to the implementation of a new case management system without any ability to backfill positions due to budget constraints
- Reduced budget prevents temporary staffing during the training and "go live" period of the new case management system
- Additional scanners and courtroom printers needed to support the new case management system, further impacting budget

## 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 Calaveras was calculated at \$2.7 million but the court received \$2.0 million. See reverse for a detailed explanation of how WAFM is calculated.**



## Court Demographics

Population Served	44,650
Square Miles Covered	1,037
Total Number of Court Facilities	1

## Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. Grant V. Barrett
Court Executive Officer	Dan Vrtis
Executive Office Contact	(209) 754-6144

## Budget Challenges for FY 2015-16

- *Managing the 1% cap on fund balances, which is insufficient to pay for any unplanned expenditures such as an increase in CalPers rates or planned expenditures such as employee payouts upon retirement*
- *Ensuring that the 2.4 vacant positions do not result in a backlog of work that affects court operations, which could likewise cause delays in bringing civil, family law, and small claim matters to final disposition by trial, motion or settlement*

## **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.