



# Superior Court of California County of Fresno BUDGET SNAPSHOT



JUDICIAL COUNCIL  
OF CALIFORNIA  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

February 2015

## Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2015-16

- *Secure ongoing funding to allow for meaningful access to our court.*
- *Maximize proven business and technology efficiencies.*
- *Rebuild appropriate staffing levels to reduce backlogs; keep clerk's office hours open full time; and implement new mandates.*

### Family Law Self-Help/Facilitator Services

- 80% of family law cases are pro per, yet our Self-Help Center is closed every Wednesday
- 400% reduction in serving the public that equates to turning away approximately 250-350 customers a week
- Language other than English spoken at home by 43% of population

### Family Law Record for Litigants

No court reporters in Civil. We need the ability to provide an electronic record to family law litigants to ensure orders are enforceable and to meet our goal of meaningful customer access.

### Counters / Clerks / Telephones

Civil clerk's office hours have been reduced two hours Monday through Thursday and four hours on Friday.

### Closed Courthouses and Courtrooms

- Closed 9 outlying courts and 1 downtown location.
- Closed 12 courtrooms as a result of the courthouse closures.
- Impact on Felony Home Courts daily calendar went from 80 to 140 cases per day.

### Proposition 47

Statutory mandate caused a significant increase in workload and the need to bring in additional staff.

### Staff Impacts

Since July 2009 when we had 524 employees we have had to restructure court operations to align with our current total of 376 employees. We are taking the cautious approach of using extra help employees to build back our workforce with the goal of converting to FTE positions should we receive more funding.

### Under Resourced: Judicial Officers

- With current allocation, we are facing 3 additional anticipated vacancies (one unfilled judgeship and two upcoming retirements).
- Delay in filling these positions will prevent cases being handled timely and will reduce meaningful access to the public.
- Need: 61 Current Judges: 49 Anticipated Judges: 46

## Funding Shortfall

**Workload-based Allocation & Funding Methodology (WAFM).** It describes how much funding courts need based on their workload. In the current year, the workload-based allocation needed in Fresno was calculated at \$63.5 million but the court only received \$39.1 million. See reverse for a detailed explanation of how WAFM is calculated.

Workload Funding  
**SHORTFALL**  
\$24.4m (39%)

Workload  
Funding  
(WAFM\*)  
**RECEIVED**  
\$39.1m (61%)

Funding  
Gap

## Court Demographics

Population Served	964,040
Square Miles Covered	6,018
Total Number of Court Facilities	6

## Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. Jonathan B. Conklin
Court Executive Officer	Sheran L. Morton
Executive Office Contact	(559) 457-2010

## Budget Challenges for FY 2015-16

- *Consistent and reliable annual funding allocation.*
- *One (1) percent reserve makes it difficult and impossible to implement proven business and technology efficiencies.*
- *Sufficient funding for statutory mandates.*

## 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.