



Superior Court of California County of Kings BUDGET SNAPSHOT



JUDICIAL COUNCIL
OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Steven D. Barnes, Presiding Judge

Jeffrey E. Lewis, Court Executive Officer

(559) 582-1010

Court Service Highlights in the Current Year

- **Eliminated mandatory furloughs after 6 consecutive years**
- **Consolidated all court services into the new courthouse**

Court Service Highlights in Detail

Eliminated mandatory furloughs after six consecutive years

Beginning in FY 2009-10 and through FY 2014-15, the Court mandated staff furloughs as a means of balancing the budget. The employees averaged 14 furlough (lost wage) days a year. This year (FY 2015-16), we have been able to avoid furloughs for the first time in seven years, providing some modest relief to our hard working and valued staff.

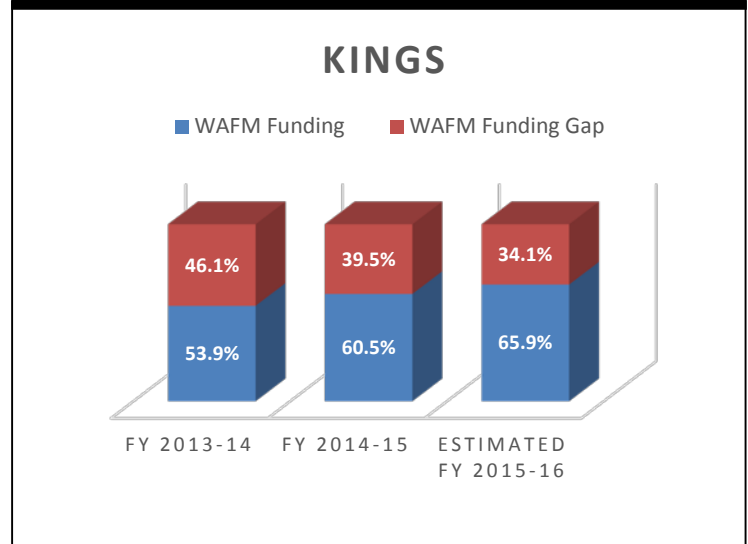
Consolidated all court services into the new courthouse

With the completion of the new courthouse in December 2015, we were able to consolidate court services from six locations into a single state-of-the-art courthouse. Consolidation of services to the new facility has enabled us to more efficiently and effectively utilize staff, and provide increased security for the bench and the public. We also believe the new court facility will reduce operational costs in the long run. We made the move over the course of a month with the final move occurring over a long weekend, which means neither the court nor the public experienced any interruption in services or access.

Budget Challenges and Priorities

- Restore hours to M-F 8:00 to 5:00
- Restore staffing levels, eliminating the need to rely on contract employees (CTSI/GCS) and volunteers. Utilization of contract employees and volunteers has assisted the court financially; however it has come with its own challenges i.e. training, productivity and turnover.
- Reduce backlog due to staffing shortage. Backlog (in all areas) is currently 60 – 120 days.
- Provide salary increases and restore/increase benefits to all employees. The employees have not had any increases in 7 years.
- Kings has lost several experienced employees due to stagnant salaries and benefits, making it extremely difficult to compete in the local job market.

Workload Allocation & Funding Gap (see reverse)



Court Demographics

Population Served	150,181
Square Miles Covered	1,392
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.