Lassen

Superior Court of California
County of Lassen
BUDGET SNAPSHOT

February 2016

JUDICIAL COUNCIL
OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

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Court Service Highlights in the Current Year

- **Proactive implementation of traffic ticket/infraction amnesty program**
- **Obtained grant for Pretrial Services to provide options other than incarceration**
- **Obtained grant funding for Adult Drug Court to include residential service treatment program**

Court Service Highlights in Detail

Proactive implementation of the amnesty program
Our first quarter reporting shows that 113 people in our county have had their outstanding debt from tickets reduced, and 45 qualified to have the hold on their driver's licenses lifted.

Obtained grant for Pretrial Services
The pre-trial services grant provides the court with funding for a pre-trial services officer to aid in determining the potential success of pre-trial release of a defendant. Conditions of pre-trial release may include participation in drug and/or alcohol classes, periodic drug and/or alcohol testing, regular check-ins, electronic monitoring, mental health counseling, etc.

Grant for Adult Drug Court
The Adult Drug Court program provides funding for residential treatment. Until this grant, our rural remote county only had a small out-patient alcohol and drug treatment program, but no residential program. We are hopeful to be able to address long-term and ongoing treatment with this program.
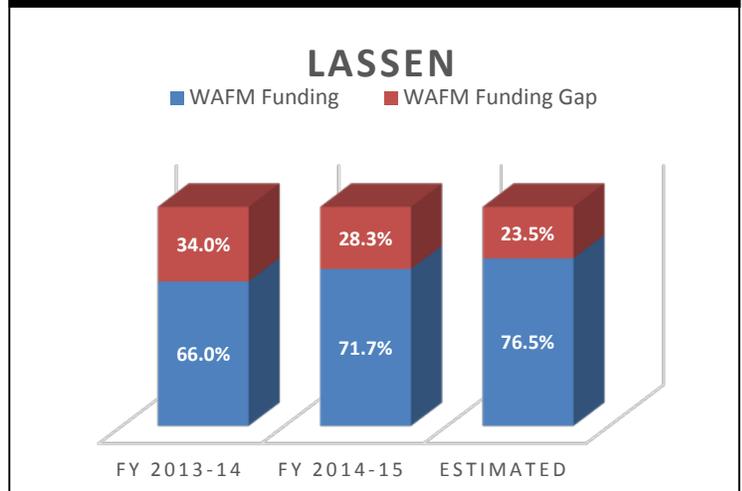
Other court services
- While the need for self-help services continues to grow, we are only able to provide monthly clinics through a contract attorney on a first come, first serve basis.
- The court's Teen Court Program continues to thrive and evolve; it has a strong educational component, and the mock trial competition has brought substantial energy and enthusiasm to the program, which also includes mentoring provided through the local bar association.
- We have streamlined the jury services experience by creating a juror assembly room. This allows for a streamlined jury check-in system, the separation of potential jurors from witnesses and others related to a case, and it allows for automated juror orientation.

Budget Challenges and Priorities

- Providing certified interpreters at reasonable rates continues to be a challenge especially in our remote rural location; the court is exploring virtual remote interpreting.
- Obtaining per diem court reporters at reasonable rates is extremely challenging for our small rural court.
- We are struggling to implement and maintain ever-changing and advanced technology; this is a priority, despite the lack of reliable funding, local resources, expertise, and statewide justice partner integration. Despite these challenges, the court is continuing the implementation of a new case management system.

Workload Allocation & Funding Gap (see reverse)

LASSEN
■ WAFM Funding   ■ WAFM Funding Gap

	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	ESTIMATED
WAFM Funding Gap	34.0%	28.3%	23.5%
WAFM Funding	66.0%	71.7%	76.5%

Court Demographics

Population Served	32,581
Square Miles Covered	4,720
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.