



# Superior Court of California County of Los Angeles BUDGET SNAPSHOT



JUDICIAL COUNCIL  
OF CALIFORNIA  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

February 2015

## Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2015-16

- Sufficient funding for a fully functioning court
- State funding to cover unavoidable costs and statewide fee revenue shortfalls
- Expansion of adjudicative services to reduce delays in access to justice
- Automation improvements, operating efficiencies, and redeployment of existing resources to reduce backlogs and delays

Since the Court began closing courtrooms in 2012, the average wait for a motion hearing in the Stanley Mosk Courthouse has increased by 50%, or 40 days.

### Reductions in judicial officer positions forced by budget shortfall

- 5 Commissioner positions
- 28 Juvenile Referee positions

### Closed Courtrooms and Court Houses

- 2012: eliminated court staff from 56 courtrooms
- 2013: closed 8 courthouses, 23 courtrooms
- Current-year increases support incremental expansion of courtroom services

### Staff Impacts

- No court-employed reporters are provided in the civil courts
- Budgeted staff positions reduced by 25% to offset state reductions; incremental increases are addressing the worst backlogs

### Programmatic reductions

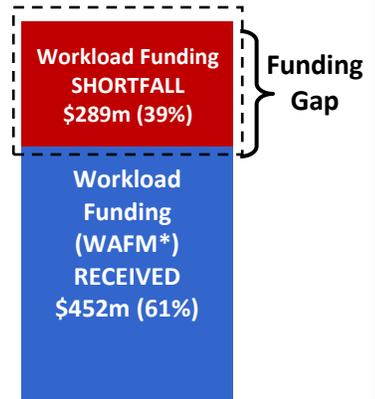
- Court-supported ADR eliminated in 2013
- Eliminated all Informal Juvenile Traffic Courts

### Court Security / Safety / Facilities

- Inadequate funding of statewide realignment threatens the adequacy of courthouse security

## 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 Los Angeles was calculated at \$741 million but the court received \$452 million. See reverse for a detailed explanation of how WAFM is calculated.



## Court Demographics

Population Served	10,041,797
Square Miles Covered	4,752
Total Number of Court Facilities	38

## Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. Carolyn B. Kuhl
Court Executive Officer	Sherri R. Carter
Executive Office Contact	(213) 830-0805

## Budget Challenges for FY 2015-16

- Hearings in civil, family law and traffic courts suffer intolerable delay
- Staffing shortages cause significant backlogs across the Court
- Caseloads in many courtrooms are unmanageably high
- Staffing shortages due to Proposition 47 workload
- Innovation is hampered by the inability to maintain more than a 1% fund balance

## **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.