Madera

Superior Court of California
County of Madera
BUDGET SNAPSHOT

JUDICIAL COUNCIL
OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2015-16

To eliminate layoffs, furloughs and the closing of courtrooms within our county. To provide consistency in the level of service to the public in an efficient manner.

Self-Help / Facilitator Services
Due to inadequate funding, court may be forced to explore contracting for limited services, reducing services to the public with only mandatory case types handled

Counters / Clerks / Telephones
Clerks' office hours expected to be reduced by 5 hours per week in FY 2015-16, resulting in longer lines and wait times for court users

Closed Courtrooms
Sierra Division (located in Bass Lake) reduced court sessions from five days per week to two days per week, and requiring customers to travel 50-75 miles each way to main courthouse in Madera for all traffic matters

Staff Impacts / Furloughs / Layoffs / Unfilled Vacancies
- Reduced one employee to part-time from full-time and reduced one employee to less than part-time from full-time
- All employees furloughed 8 hours per month which is expected to continue for the <u>third</u> year in FY 2015-16

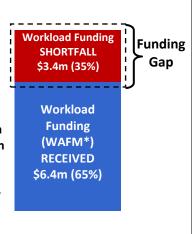**Court Security / Safety / Facilities**
- Eliminated one public security screening station; customers now wait outside in longer lines, often in inclement weather, to be screened
- Perimeter areas are unsecured resulting in one bomb scare in each year of the last two years

Availability of Judicial Officers
By reducing our Pro Tem Judge (Commissioner) to less than part-time, our Judges now have the added work load of handling all traffic cases. By reducing the number of days our Sierra Division hears cases to two days per week, our Judges in Madera now hear all jury trials previously heard in Bass Lake.

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 Madera was calculated at $9.8 million but the court received $6.4 million. See reverse for a detailed explanation of how WAFM is calculated.

Workload Funding
SHORTFALL
$3.4m (35%)

Funding Gap

Workload Funding (WAFM*) RECEIVED
$6.4m (65%)

Court Demographics

Population Served	153,897
Square Miles Covered	2,153
Total Number of Court Facilities	3

Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. Ernest J. LiCalsi
Court Executive Officer	Bonnie Thomas
Executive Office Contact	(559) 661-2896

Budget Challenges for FY 2015-16

We are faced with the inability to operate efficiently and provide an appropriate level of service with our current funding. We operate with limited staff due to years of flat salaries and furloughs, leading to separations and retirements. We have backlogs including four months behind entering criminal complaints. Self-help appointments are by referral only and set a month out. Collection referrals are years behind, hindering drivers from clearing holds on their licenses and delaying revenue collection.

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.