



Superior Court of California County of Marin BUDGET SNAPSHOT

February 2016



JUDICIAL COUNCIL
OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Kelly V. Simmons, Presiding Judge

James Kim, Court Executive Officer

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Court Service Highlights in the Current Year

- Increased local community outreach and education on traffic amnesty
- Innovative training program creates additional family court resources to help young children
- Rethinking 1% fund balance cap to plan for the future of the judicial system in California

Court Service Highlights in Detail

Increased local community outreach and education on traffic amnesty

To ensure that information about the amnesty program is widely shared in our local community, Marin County Superior Court has actively partnered with various community organizations in sharing information, and collaborated with local community leaders to help increase public awareness and education about the benefits of the amnesty program.

- We recently joined forces in conducting outreach with a local community group that provides art, music, theater and other enrichment opportunities to low income families and at-risk children.
- We worked with an organization that is currently dedicated to helping low-income Spanish-speaking immigrants. The goal by the Court was to actively get out to the community to widely, cross-culturally and effectively share information about the program to a variety of different groups and individuals.
- The Court will continue to look for more opportunities and partnerships to increase public awareness, as well as help educate the public about the amnesty program.

Innovative training program creates additional family court resources to help young children

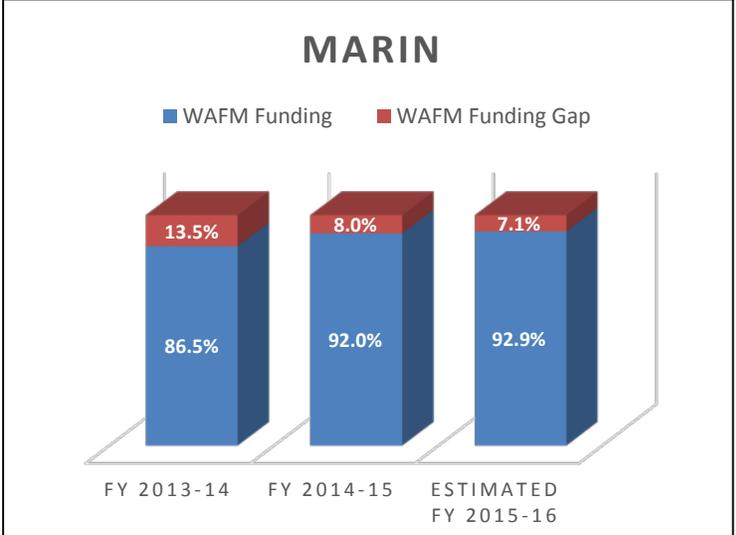
Marin Superior Court together with a dedicated committee of local attorneys, mental health experts, experienced professional supervisors, the Marin Family Law Facilitator and the two family law judges created a 24-hour course that meets the state standards for training of professional supervisors to help monitor parenting time for children in family court.

The course was offered over a three day period at the courthouse free of charge. In exchange for this free course, the graduates agreed to provide a significant number of free hours and/or low cost supervision for local families. Marin County went from having a handful of professional supervisors to over 20 individuals with hundreds of hours “in the bank” available to families in crisis. For more information, please visit: <http://www.marincourt.org/>

Budget Challenges and Priorities

For the current fiscal year, the most significant budget challenge for Marin County Superior Court is the 1% fund balance cap. Because of the WAFM distribution, Marin Superior Court will receive approximately \$500,000 less in our budget for at least the next two fiscal years. Since the 1% fund balance would directly cover this gap in funding, which pays for staff salaries and other operations, the Court not only has a funding problem, but also lacks the ability to save for future projects or increase staff positions that could greatly improve access to the justice system. Along with other courts in California, Marin supports more statewide conversations to rethink increasing the 1% fund balance so that courts can responsibly, consistently and proactively plan for the future of our justice system.

Workload Allocation & Funding Gap (see reverse)



Court Demographics

Population Served	255,846
Square Miles Covered	828
Total Number of Court Facilities	2

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.