

Superior Court of California

County of Mono

BUDGET SNAPSHOT



February 2015

Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2015-16

Loss of fund balance and ongoing revenue shortfall have caused the most significant reduction in services ever experienced by our court. We were forced to implement 17 furlough days in FY 2014-15. In addition, our court ceased providing any customer service assistance to the public by phone, and reduced public access to the clerk's office to half days every day of the week. Our overriding priority is to get sufficient funding to eliminate furloughs and return services to normal.

Court Reporters / Interpreter Services

- Court has decreased its use of court reporters even more from previous years. We no longer provide reporters for all criminal courtrooms. Due to a lack of funding for court reporters, we have closed a criminal courtroom and consolidated cases into our sole remaining criminal courtroom with our last remaining reporter
- Court has one part-time employee interpreter; due to new funding available for interpreters in civil proceedings, we have increased the availability of court provided interpreters for civil matters

Counters / Clerks / Telephones

- Public counter hours at North County (Bridgeport) branch location reduced from 2 days per week to only 1 days per week, 9:00am-12:00pm
- Public counter hours at main Mammoth Lakes court location reduced to being open only 4 hours a day every day
- Phone hours to assist the general public have been completely eliminated. The general public has been directed to get assistance from the court by going to the court website, emailing the court, affecting the court or sending correspondence to the court

Closed Courtrooms and Court Houses

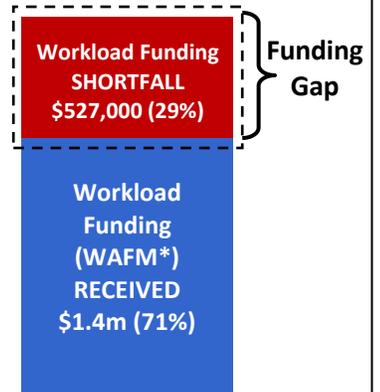
Court has only two courthouse locations. One courthouse location, Bridgeport, due to budget reductions is only open one day a week. Our main courthouse location, Mammoth Lakes, will be closed 17 days for furloughs in fiscal year 2014- 2015. We have closed one criminal courtroom due to a lack of funding for a court reporter

Staff Impacts / Furloughs / Layoffs / Unfilled Vacancies

- Budget shortfall required our court to take the drastic measure of imposing 17 days of furloughs. A added consequence of the budget shortfall is our court's inability to fill much needed deputy clerk vacancies; vacancy rate for deputy clerks is currently 47%
- The overburdened remaining staff at our court are dealing with very unhappy court customers and long-term, experienced employees are separating from court service. The inability to properly serve the public and our judges has significantly lowered staff morale

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 Mono was calculated at \$1.9 million but the court received \$1.4 million. See reverse for a detailed explanation of how WAFM is calculated.**



Court Demographics

Population Served	14,143
Square Miles Covered	3,132
Total Number of Court Facilities	2

Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. Stanley L. Eller
Court Executive Officer	Hector Gonzalez
Executive Office Contact	(760) 923-2330

Budget Challenges for FY 2015-16

Mono Court users are experiencing multiple detrimental effects caused by the court's revenue insecurity including 17 court closure days due to furloughs, elimination of assistance by phone, reduction of clerk office hours, high deputy clerk vacancy rate, lack of staff to input traffic citations into the case management system (backlogged for months), and inability to calendar cases for courtroom proceedings causing delays in cases being heard. Dissatisfaction is evidenced by the increased number of public complaints to court administration and local county government.

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.