



# Superior Court of California County of San Benito BUDGET SNAPSHOT

February 2016



JUDICIAL COUNCIL  
OF CALIFORNIA  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Hon. Harry J. Tobias, Presiding Judge

Gil Solorio, Court Executive Officer

(831) 636-4057

## Court Service Highlights in the Current Year

- Implementation of traffic ticket/infraction amnesty program
- Implementation of juvenile traffic ticket program
- Maintained court hours of public service

### Court Service Highlights in Detail

#### Implementation of traffic ticket/ infraction amnesty program

The Court was able to successfully implement the required traffic ticket/ infraction amnesty program. Dedicated existing staff assumed all new duties related to program, including providing relief to 20 people in the first quarter of the program.

#### Implementation of juvenile traffic ticket program

The Court was able to successfully transition the juvenile traffic ticket program from the County's Probation Department to the Court's traffic unit and case management system. Dedicated existing staff assumed all new duties related to program.

#### Maintained court hours of public service

Despite ongoing budget reductions, new additional layoffs were avoided which allowed us to maintain current hours of public service (e.g. public counter, self-help office, etc.).

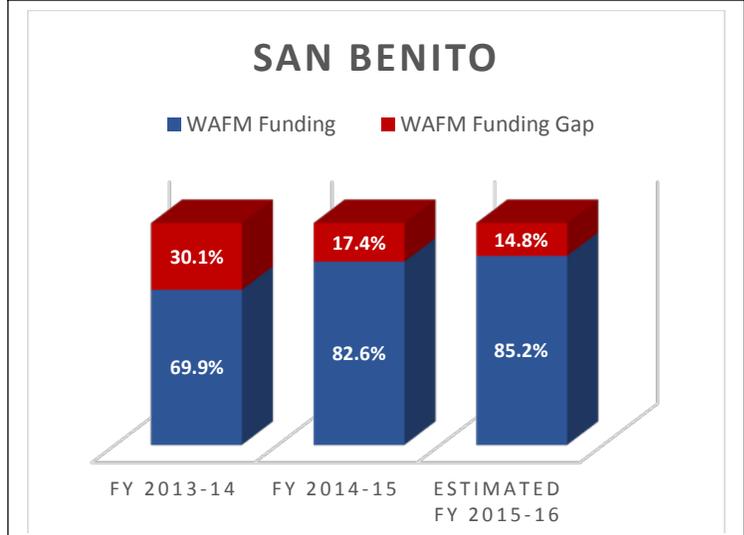
#### Other Court Services

The Court collaborated extensively with the County Sheriff and State Department of Finance to increase the amount of funding for security services at the courthouse. Notwithstanding that funds are allocated to the County, the primary recipients of security services are the Court's customers, staff and judicial partners.

### Budget Challenges and Priorities

- 1) Lack of funds to pay for new case management system.
- 2) Lack of funds to pay for hosting of existing case management system.
- 3) Lack of funds for sustainable COLAs / No COLAs since 2008.
- 4) Lack of funds to increase part-time Family Law Facilitator and Mediator to full-time for increased service hours to the public.
- 5) Due to 1% fund balance cap, we have no ability to save or budget for the items above.

### Workload Allocation & Funding Gap (see reverse)



### Court Demographics

Population Served	57,157
Square Miles Covered	1,391
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.