



# Superior Court of California County of San Joaquin

## BUDGET SNAPSHOT



JUDICIAL COUNCIL  
OF CALIFORNIA  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

January 2015

### Budget and Program Priorities for FY 2015-16

*The Court's top priority is investment in technology designed to improve access to justice, to realize efficiencies and cost savings, and to provide a broader range and higher quality services to court users. Included in this effort is research and consideration of remote video technology for court appearances in routine or short hearings, including arraignments. Reopening the Tracy Court Branch is a priority. Reopening this branch will better serve the residents in the populous South County area and also relieve some of the overcrowding (and corresponding long waits and security issues) currently experienced in the main Stockton Courthouse. Finally, in FY 15-16, the Court plans to hire a commissioner to fill the remaining commissioner vacancy that has existed for many years. This hire will help alleviate heavily impacted court calendars in many areas including traffic, small claims, unlawful detainers, and civil harassments and thereby improve services for all residents.*

#### New Case Management System

Since February 2014, the Court has been working with Justice Systems, Inc. (JSI) to deploy a new case management system for all case types. We will deploy FullCourt Enterprise on June 22, 2015. We will continue to work with JSI to deploy additional enhancements during FY 2015-16.

#### Restored Services in FY 2014-15

After nearly two years of being closed, we reopened our Lodi Court Branch on January 5, 2015, restoring criminal, traffic, civil, small claims, unlawful detainer, civil harassment, and passport services for north San Joaquin County.

#### Clerk's Offices

We reduced Clerk's office hours in October 2011, closing at 3:00 p.m. Wait times have increased significantly due to branch court closures.

#### Courtrooms and Courthouses

Tracy Court Branch – 1 courthouse with 2 courtrooms – was closed October of 2011 and remains closed.

#### Staff Impacts / Furloughs / Layoffs / Unfilled Vacancies

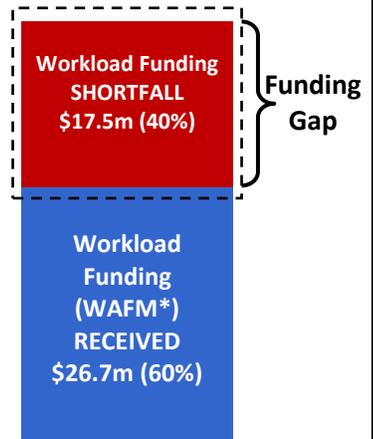
- FY 2009-10 through FY 2013-14: Mandatory furloughs were instituted at various levels and hiring freezes existed in all five fiscal years. Layoffs occurred in FY 2011-12 and FY 2012-13.
- FY 2014-15: Eliminated mandatory furloughs and hiring freeze. Increased staff levels by 20 positions.

#### Availability of Judicial Officers

- There are 23 judicial officers and 22 courtrooms at the main Stockton Courthouse.
- Two commissioner positions remain vacant due to lack of funds. One commissioner vacancy will be filled in the third quarter of FY 2014-15.

### 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 San Joaquin was calculated at \$44 million but the court received \$26.7 million. See reverse for a detailed explanation of how WAFM is calculated.**



### Court Demographics

Population Served	710,731
Square Miles Covered	1,426
Total Number of Court Facilities	6

### Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. Lesley D. Holland
Court Executive Officer	Rosa Junqueiro
Executive Office Contact	(209) 992-5216

### Budget Challenges for FY 2015-16

- *Re-establishing staffing levels to provide access to all court services and programs 8 hours a day, 5 days a week.*
- *Increases in employee benefits are not within the court's control and remain unfunded.*
- *Restriction of fund balances to 1% threatens the court's ability to effectively plan for future needs of the court.*

## 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.