

SAN MATEO

Population: 745,193 • Authorized Judges: 26 • Staff: 261 FTE

Civil Filings: 7,438 • Criminal Filings: 138,644 • Family/Juvenile Filings: 7,313 • Other Filings: 1,344

OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

Ensure court clerks are available when and how people need them.

- **Clerk's Offices are closed at 2:00 pm, congested throughout the day, causing significant inconvenience to the public especially in Civil/Family/Probate and Traffic Divisions.**
- **We have had to reduce phone hours from full day service to hours of 10:00am – 2:00pm.**

Restore local court services and reopen courtrooms.

- **Consolidation of filing locations and courtroom closures in all case types has resulted in limited access for court users, who must negotiate Bay Area traffic and limited parking to file important documents, obtain restraining orders, report for jury duty, or appear in court.**

Reduce wait time for criminal record searches and disposition processing to help people get jobs and housing and protect public safety.

- **2 week backlog in processing juvenile out of court orders.**
- **Backlogs of up to 2 months in processing certifications/criminal records searches; and current backlog of 2-3 months in disposition reporting, both which fluctuate depending on workload and availability of staff.**

Help more self-represented litigants in family and housing cases at the Self Help/Facilitator's Office.

- **Self-Help Center hours have been reduced by 50% at the two court locations, where these services are offered.**
- **Range of services significantly limited; we can no longer assist litigants in unlawful detainer, guardianship, conservatorship, small claims, and general civil litigation cases.**

Protect families with emergency orders and restore family stability with mediated custody agreements.

- **1 week to 2 months wait time for custody and family dispute mediations due to availability of staff.**
- **Staffing shortages have resulted in backlogs in finalizing judgments, ranging from as little as a few days to as long as 3 - 4 months.**

PRIORITIES FOR REINVESTMENT

Assuming an additional investment in operations funds, we intend to restore or enhance the following:

- Court-wide, restore open public office and phone service hours back to normal (8 AM – 4 PM).
- Reopen courtrooms and restore some criminal calendars at the South San Francisco Branch (SSF) to relieve overcrowded calendars at the Southern Branch in Redwood City (RWC) and restore convenient services to the residents of Northern San Mateo County.
- Reduce by 90% all case processing backlogs, including delays in judgments, dispositions, criminal record searches and certifications, and court orders; and ensure that criminal cases are disposed of and timely reported according to State Law.
- Restore self-help services to serve at least 50% more constituents (additional 2,500 people per year). Includes restoration of family law restraining order services at SSF, assistance with conservatorships and guardianships, and enhanced adoptions assistance.
- Ensure that custody/family dispute mediations and family law judgments are completed with minimal wait time.
- Provide staff with a cost-of-living adjustment that is commensurate with what State employees and County of San Mateo employees have received. This would address recruitment and retention issues that have resulted from the high cost of living associated with the Bay Area and San Francisco Peninsula in particular.