



Superior Court of California County of Santa Barbara BUDGET SNAPSHOT

February 2016



JUDICIAL COUNCIL
OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Hon. James E. Herman, Presiding Judge

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Court Service Highlights in the Current Year

- Implemented mandatory e-filing in civil, family law, and probate
- Introduced evidenced-based risk assessment in pretrial/own recognizance decision making
- Call service center access expanded to traffic case and general information

Court Service Highlights in Detail

Implemented mandatory e-filing in civil, family law, and probate

In moving towards a paperless court system, the Court introduced a new case management system in 2015. Following the successful implementation of that system, the court introduced mandatory electronic filing to our legal community in early 2016. The automation will expand access to justice and gain efficiencies in court operations as we struggle with a 26% reduction in workforce.

Introduced evidenced-based risk assessment in pretrial/own recognizance decision making

The Court introduced evidenced-based risk assessment into the judge's pretrial release decision through a collaborative partnership that includes the local justice community and the University of California at Santa Barbara. Work continues in reviewing the increased use of supervised pretrial release and its impact on jail overcrowding.

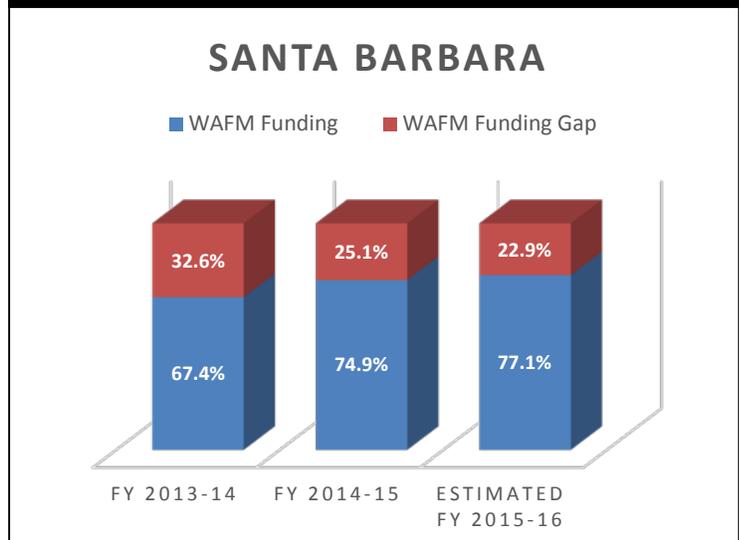
New call service center

After years of reduced office and telephone hours, the court employed a call service and payment process center as we expanded public access hours. Phones previously left unanswered after 3:00 p.m. are now answered by a live attendant until 9:00 p.m. seven days per week. Public access to assistance by the Court improved over 80% with the addition of this feature.

Budget Challenges and Priorities

- The Governor's proposed increase to trial courts would largely offset our court's revenue reduction under the WAFM model, but the Court still endures reductions under that method.
- There is no means of addressing salary increases for employees, whose wages have fallen behind those of neighboring courts.
- Backlogs in critical areas have mounted, leaving default dissolutions unprocessed for over 8 months.
- Thousands of court events have yet to be logged into the case management system, contributing to confusion and the risk of over detention of inmates.

Workload Allocation & Funding Gap (see reverse)



Court Demographics

Population Served	433,398
Square Miles Covered	3,789
Total Number of Court Facilities	8

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.