



Sierra



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE  
OF THE COURTS  
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

## Judicial Branch Budget Snapshot Superior Court of California County of Sierra

### Key Budget Challenges/Priorities

- Any further layoffs or vacancies would force court closures as the current staffing level of 3 staff and the court executive officer is below the minimum necessary to open and operate the court.
- Clients seeking self-help services must drive two hours roundtrip—over a 7,000 foot high mountain pass that is often closed due to snow and ice—from Loyaltown to Downieville for assistance.
- Court has a case management system that has reached the end of its shelf-life and must be replaced this year.

### Budget Impacts

#### General Budget Reduction Impacts to the Public

- Service to the public has been negatively affected by low staffing level, especially at the public counters and civil case processing functions

#### Reduced Public Access:

##### Self-Help/Mediator/Facilitator Services

- As of December 2012, shared family law facilitator's office and non-grant funded self-help services with Nevada Court were reduced by 25%
- Sierra is now unable to reach or rely upon regular business hours service by the facilitator's staff due to severe reduction in office hours
- Self-Help satellite office contract has been cancelled

#### Reduced Public Access: Court Reporters/Interpreters

- All court reporting is contracted; the Court reorganized its calendar of cases requiring a court reporter to achieve a 30% cost savings over prior years
- Any single felony case requiring an interpreter can exceed this small court's total annual budget for interpreter services

#### Reduced Public Access: Public Service Counters and Clerks

- Shared Traffic services court with Plumas Sierra Regional Courthouse has reduced counter/phone hours, closing at 4:00pm Monday thru Thursday and 3:00pm on Friday

#### Closures: Courtrooms and Courthouses

- Mandatory court closure per statute one day per month in FY 2009-2010

#### Staff Reductions: Furloughs, Layoffs, Unfilled Vacancies

- Staff reduced through retirement and voluntary separation
- Court has 33% vacancy rate, including 2 full-time clerks
- All staff furloughed one day per month from July 2009 through December 2010

#### Impacts: Court Security Services

- None at this time

#### Fewer Judicial Officers

- No reductions at this time

### Annual Allocation\*

Total Allocation FY 2008-2009	\$ 730,435
Est. Allocation FY 2012-2013**	\$ 556,401
Percentage change	-23.8%

\*Does not reflect unfunded cost increases

\*\*For comparison purposes only, includes court security funding

### Sierra Facilities Overview

Number of court facilities	1 + 1 shared facility with Plumas Superior Court
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### Judicial Workload/Employees as of Dec. 2012:

Population served	3,152
Judicial officers	2.3
Judicial officers needed	0.3
Filled staff positions FY 08-09	6
Filled staff positions FY 12-13	4

### Case Statistics (Fiscal Year 2010-11)

Felony filings	16
Misdemeanor filings (incl. traffic)	111
Infraction filings (incl. traffic)	612
Civil filings	54
Family and juvenile filings	70

### Court Leadership

Presiding Judge	Hon. John P. Kennelly
Court Executive Officer	Lee Kirby