

# Superior Court of California County of Stanislaus

## BUDGET SNAPSHOT



JUDICIAL COUNCIL  
OF CALIFORNIA  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

February 2015

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

- *Automation/Access - Continued implementation of a paperless document management system as part of our solution to staffing shortages and also for increased access to justice with future online access to non-confidential documents*
- *Facility Needs - Renewed Lease of space for multi-defendant trials at the cost of approximately \$145,000 per year (including utilities) for trials with more than three defendants*
- *Knowledge Base Training – Implementing a Training & Development program to ensure existing staff have the knowledge and skills to assist the public as efficiently as possible (fallout of knowledge drain due to separation/layoffs over recent years)*
- *Automation/Access - Civil E-Filing*

#### Self-Help / Mediation / Facilitator Services

- Staff reduced from 7 to 4; average wait time has doubled; funding reduced overall by 33% since FY 2008-09
- Self Help closed on Fridays; staff works in courtrooms for outreach.
- Four months to mediation from time of filing.

#### Court Reporters / Interpreter Services

- Down 3 FTE Court Reporters since 2011-12.
- Absorbing Interpreter Coordinator duties and cost as of February 2015. Vacancy must be held elsewhere to fund court expense.

#### Counters / Clerks / Telephones

- Public counters and telephones close at 4:00 pm daily except Fridays, when public counters and telephones close at 12:00 pm.
- Staffing shortages do not allow processing of daily workload and keep many clerks at the counter for up to half of their work day.

#### Closed Courtrooms (2) and Court Houses (2)

- Branch court operations closed in Turlock and Ceres
- Closed one civil and one traffic/small claims courtroom

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

- Mandatory furloughs in FY 2009-10 and voluntary furloughs in FY 2012; 5% furlough for all employees effective June 2, 2013 through August 9, 2013.
- Twelve positions eliminated
  - Filled Staff FY 2014-15    220
  - Filled Staff FY 2008-09    265
  - Lost Positions (6 Years)    -45 (-17%)

#### Court Security / Safety / Facilities

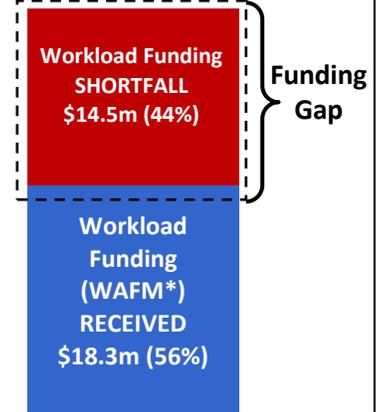
- County Board of Supervisors will not sign Security MOU, as court security is not adequately funded.
- Sheriff has given court verbal notice they will run out of funds the last quarter of 2014-15 and will scale back services.
- Routine multi-defendant trials now requiring extra security on a regular basis.

#### Availability of Judicial Officers/Courtroom Staff

- One court commissioner position was eliminated (1/3 of SJO's).

### 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 Stanislaus was calculated at \$32.8 million but the court received \$18.3 million. See reverse for a detailed explanation of how WAFM is calculated.**



### Court Demographics

Population Served	526,042
Square Miles Covered	1,515
Total Number of Court Facilities	7

### Court Leadership

Presiding Judge Court Executive Officer Executive Office Contact	Hon. Marie Sovey Silveira Rebecca Fleming (209) 530-3111
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### Budget Challenges for FY 2015-16

- *Adequate court security; including funding & availability of sheriff personnel to secure judicial officer, staff and the public during multi-defendant trials held at an off-site leased facility; loss of security coverage at main courthouse when these trials are in progress*
- *17% reduction in staff has severely impacted court services and has created a caseload inventory which will take years to clear; forces the court to handle only those cases deemed mandatory and high priority*
- *Lack of health, retirement and technology funding; decision made to forego staffing to try to automate manual processes*

## **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.