



# LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT

# ANNUAL REPORT 2015

April 2015





## **LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT MISSION STATEMENT**

*The Los Angeles Superior Court  
is dedicated to serving our community by providing equal access to justice  
through the fair, timely and efficient resolution of all cases.*

# Table of Contents

Los Angeles Superior Court  
Annual Report 2015 Edition

Message from the Presiding Judge and the Executive Officer .....	4
Looking to the Future: Stabilize • Reassess • Move Forward .....	6
Moving Forward—What We Are Doing .....	8
Making it Easier to Handle Traffic Tickets .....	10
Taming the Paper Monster .....	12
Expanding Language Access .....	13
Settlements Save Time and Money .....	13
Court-Community Partnerships .....	14
Assisting Litigants without Attorneys .....	15
Helping Veterans .....	17
Help for the Homeless and the Mentally Ill .....	18
Workload and Financial Data .....	19
Workload-based Allocation and Funding Methodology (WAFM) .....	21
Los Angeles Superior Court by the Numbers .....	22
Court Districts and Courthouse Locations .....	23
Revenues and Expenditures .....	24



# Message from the Presiding Judge and the Executive Officer

The Honorable Carolyn B. Kuhl, Presiding Judge  
Sherri R. Carter, Executive Officer/Clerk

A dynamic economy, diverse and vibrant communities, and safe and secure streets are core elements of the California dream—each of which is sustained by the rule of law.

Access to justice is a fundamental expectation of all Californians. People expect that judges following the law will punish wrongdoers, resolve family disputes in a fair and just manner, enforce contracts, protect children, the elderly, and others who cannot protect themselves, and ensure people’s civil rights as they do so.

The ability of the California courts to fulfill these expectations has been challenged by the state’s fiscal crisis. For the Los Angeles Superior Court (LASC), the Great Recession has meant reducing annual spending by \$187 million and reducing its staff by one-quarter in response to severe state budget reductions.

Committed to preserving the rule of law in all areas, LASC responded in 2012 and 2013 with a radical restructuring of how it makes justice accessible. That restructuring allowed the Court to continue to offer a hearing to those who need to be heard. The Court recognizes that the compromises that had to be made—centralization of services, elimination of other services, and growing delays in getting before a judge—are simply unsustainable. Too many litigants must travel too far to pursue their cases. Some must wait four months or more for the next hearing in a family law case that will determine who will raise their children. When people must wait more than six months to resolve a traffic ticket, the deterrent effect of traffic laws is lost.

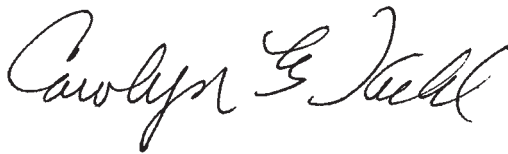
While the past two years of modest fiscal recovery have provided some relief, the judges and staff were not idle. Having fully implemented prior cuts, the Court embarked upon an aggressive reengineering effort. Resources recaptured through internal operating efficiencies allow the Court to begin to repair the budget damage. With these resources, the Court is currently:

- Implementing automation throughout the Court, gleaning additional efficiencies;
- Expanding geographic access in the most-impacted case types;
- Increasing its capacity to hear backlogged family law cases;

- Adding a desperately needed courtroom to hear foster care cases;
- Opening two new criminal courtrooms;
- Expanding hearing capacity in probate; and
- Beginning to break the logjam of civil cases.

There is more work ahead: clerical backlogs continue to delay the implementation of judicial rulings; geographic challenges remain; staggering caseloads in some of the centralized courtrooms frustrate lawyers and litigants. However, we are moving forward, out of the budget crisis.

LASC's ability to rebuild a court system worthy of the California dream is limited only by funding constraints. Over the past several years, the Court has shown remarkable creativity and resilience. Having successfully restructured its operations to fit the new economic realities it faces, the Court is now turning toward finding efficient ways to enhance access to justice. LASC shows that justice is a good investment.



Carolyn B. Kuhl  
Presiding Judge



Sherri R. Carter  
Executive Officer/Clerk



# Looking to the Future:

## Stabilize • Reassess • Move Forward

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These are the three principles the Court is following to assure its ability to provide service to the community. The first principle, establishing stability, is critical to rebuilding a structure that can be maintained well into the future.

The Great Recession caused unprecedented cuts in funding for government agencies across California. Cuts in state support for the California trial courts were as severe as any. Despite creative ways of mitigating more than \$1 billion of state General Fund cuts, the trial courts sustained \$475 million in annual budget reductions. Combined with unfunded local cost increases, these cuts meant that the Los Angeles Superior Court needed solutions to an annual operating shortfall of approximately \$187 million.

The solutions came in many forms. The first solutions involved aggressive reductions in purchases of supplies. However, since approximately 80% of the Court's expenditures are labor-related, it was inevitable that staffing levels would suffer. Indeed, roughly one quarter of the Court's 2008 workforce has been lost to state funding reductions. This has left the Court with significantly less staffing than its workload-based staffing need.

The reductions made by the Court over the previous five years reduced spending by \$110 million; however, that still left a projected shortfall for Fiscal Year 2013-2014 of approximately \$80 million.

*"...Despite the huge cuts already imposed, we have implemented significant operating efficiencies that have allowed us to keep intact our ability to provide access to justice, but we have run out of options..."*

David S. Wesley  
Presiding Judge, Los Angeles Superior Court  
January 11, 2013

With these words, then-Presiding Judge David S. Wesley announced that the Court would begin implementing a Consolidation Plan that would close courthouses and courtrooms, and would significantly change the distribution of adjudicative services across Los Angeles County.

In the spring of 2013, following months of work by a group of judges and staff, the Court implemented a Consolidation Plan designed to save an additional \$56 million and, in Presiding Judge Wesley's words, "provide an opportunity for the Court to reinvent how it does business."

The Consolidation Plan was guided by the following core principles:

- Meet constitutional requirements and statutory obligations;
- Maintain access to justice in all litigation types;
- Make effective use of judicial officers;
- Distribute resources fairly and evenly within case types; and
- Invest in technology.

The most dramatic aspect of the plan was the closure of eight courthouses located throughout the county. Following the 2000 unification of the municipal and superior courts, LASC was proud to be the largest “neighborhood court” in the nation: a court that provided a wide range of services tailored to the needs of the diverse communities that make up Los Angeles County. Unfortunately, reductions in state funding eliminated that vision.

Closed Courthouses	Filings FY 2011/2012
Beacon Street Courthouse	33,653*
San Pedro Courthouse	
West Los Angeles Courthouse	82,581
Malibu Courthouse	45,670
Huntington Park Courthouse	34,941
Kenyon Juvenile Justice Center	1,203
Whittier Courthouse	40,494
Pomona North Courthouse	71,334
<b>Total</b>	<b>309,876</b>

\* filings combined

To make the best use of its reduced resources, the Court could not continue processing a wide range of case types in so many locations. An operations consolidation effort was the only way to remain functional.

The Consolidation Plan created specialized case-processing hubs in select courthouses to handle specific case types. Specialized hub courts were created for collections, personal injury, small claims, limited civil and unlawful detainer matters.

Establishing the hub concept was critical to the Court’s ability to function with a reduced workforce and resulted in major efficiencies. However, the impact on the community was significant:

- Courthouses hearing small claims matters were reduced from 26 locations to 6
- Courthouses hearing unlawful detainer (eviction) cases were reduced from 26 to 5
- Courthouses hearing collections cases were reduced from 24 to 2
- Courthouses hearing personal injury cases were reduced from 12 to 2
- Courthouses hearing limited civil cases were reduced from 24 to 1

The implementation of the Consolidation Plan in 2013 resulted in a savings of \$56 million. An increase in state funding provided an additional \$17.5 million. Together, these two events allowed LASC to balance its budget for the first time in five years. State funding increases for Fiscal Year 2014-2015 yielded a small increase to local funding, which is being used to restore and enhance services.

*The Court is building upon the Consolidation Plan: Stabilizing, Reassessing and Moving Forward.*

## Responsible planning requires locally held reserves

The impact of the budget cuts that began in 2008 might have been more sudden and severe, but were mitigated by locally held reserve funding. When state funding was restored after its first-ever layoffs in 2002, the Court saved some of the new funding, banking it against the inevitable next budget downturn. That strategy proved wise when the Great Recession suddenly eradicated a quarter of the state’s General Fund revenues in a single year. When those losses were passed along to the trial courts, LASC had a rainy day fund that it could use to blunt and delay the impact.

Having a reserve fund allowed the Court to implement the state cuts in phases, readjusting operations after each phase, and implementing new efficiencies in order to reduce the impact on litigants and the public. Such fiscal stewardship, unfortunately, is no longer possible: changes in state law now prevent the Court from maintaining more than 1% of its annual expenditures in reserve—barely enough for a single payroll. This measure cripples the Court’s ability to plan responsibly for inevitable future funding cycles.



# Moving Forward: What We Are Doing

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*Beginning with Fiscal Year 2013-2014, Los Angeles Superior Court has had a balanced budget, which now allows it to build for the future.*

For the first time in seven years, the Court did not face the prospect of layoffs. This allowed the Court to turn its attention to rebuilding rather than dismantling. The Los Angeles Superior Court in Fiscal Year 2014-2015 is improving access to justice and saving money while doing so.

## Improving Access to the Courtroom

Some 16 months after eight courthouse closures and the implementation of the hub system, the Court began an analysis to determine if staffing resources were being used effectively, and if and where changes should be made.

At the end of December 2014, the Court began the process of opening additional courtrooms:

- Two new probate courtrooms were opened at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse.
- Two new criminal courtrooms were opened—one each at the Governor George Deukmejian and San Fernando courthouses.
- Four new family law courtrooms were opened—one each at the Chatsworth, Compton, Pasadena, and Stanley Mosk courthouses.
- Two new individual calendar courtrooms were opened at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse.

In addition, the Court opened two new unlawful detainer (eviction) hubs—one each at the Norwalk and Van Nuys courthouses.

## Do-It-Yourself Scheduling Saves Litigants and Attorneys Time and Also Saves Court Resources

### Court Reservation System

The Court continues to improve and to roll out the online Court Reservation System (CRS) utilized in civil courtrooms.

Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, CRS allows real-time scheduling of law and motion hearing dates. Parties are charged the applicable motion filing fee and/or first paper fee at the time the reservation is made. After using CRS, the reserving party receives an e-mail confirming the transaction.

CRS not only assists litigants and attorneys in scheduling law and motion hearings, but it also helps the Court save money.



# Get online, not in line!

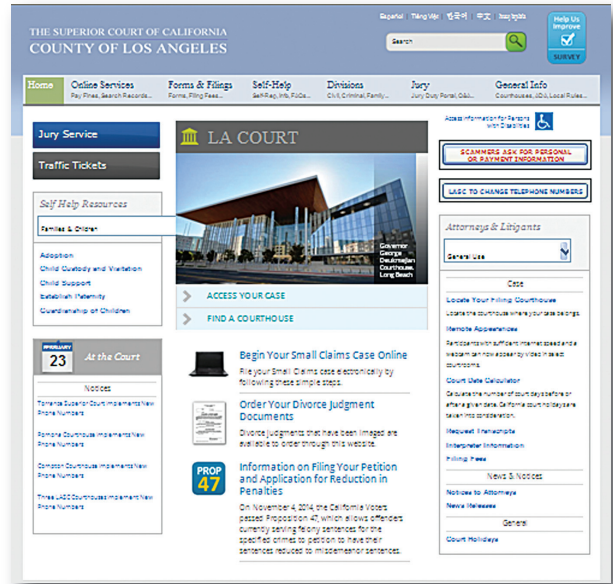
## Website Redesign

Litigants, attorneys and others can do many things using [www.lacourt.org](http://www.lacourt.org), saving them the time, expense and inconvenience of going to a courthouse.

Last fall, the Court launched its redesigned website using a new web address: [www.lacourt.org](http://www.lacourt.org).

This new, simplified address was just one of many improvements to make the website more user-friendly.

A new home page highlights the most-frequented website sections, especially jury service and traffic tickets, and displays all of the site's options in an easy-to-navigate format.



Online services available at [www.lacourt.org](http://www.lacourt.org) include:

- The ability to complete a variety of traffic ticket transactions, such as making payments, scheduling a court date, and registering for traffic school;
- A Jury Portal where potential jurors can register for jury service; request an excuse, postponement or new court location; and complete the required juror orientation (thus making reporting for jury duty easier);
- An online service to file small claims cases electronically;
- An extensive self-help section to assist self-represented litigants with their cases;
- The ability to view a detailed summary of civil, family and probate cases, which includes future court dates;
- A new Criminal Case Summary, which also includes detailed case information and future court dates;
- A Filing Court Locator where litigants and attorneys can easily find the appropriate courthouse for filing new civil cases;
- Detailed listings of the services available at every courthouse;
- The Court Reservation System (CRS), which allows attorneys to reserve court dates for certain civil hearings; and
- A process for ordering court reporter transcripts electronically.

*The website's redesign is ongoing, with new features being added regularly.*

# Making it Easier to Handle Traffic Tickets

More than a million traffic citations are processed by the Los Angeles Superior Court annually. This results in nearly a million courthouse visits made by traffic litigants each year—many of them unnecessary. The Court is going to change that.

LASC is working to expand the services it provides via its website, including a new process that will enable those with traffic citations to create a payment plan, potentially eliminating the need for a court appearance.

LASC has created exterior walk-up windows at several courthouses so that traffic litigants with simple transactions—such as paying a ticket or requesting an extension—will not have to enter the courthouse, thus eliminating the need to stand in time-consuming lines at weapons screening.

These measures help relieve crowded courthouses and make it easier for the Court to serve those litigants who need to see a judge or who need to discuss their case with a clerk.

The LASC website, [www.lacourt.org](http://www.lacourt.org), offers the following options for managing traffic matters:

- Checking the status of a ticket using the citation number or a California driver's license number;
- Paying a traffic ticket;
- Requesting traffic school;
- Requesting a 30-day extension to complete traffic school;
- Requesting a 60-day extension from the court appearance date for the ticket;
- Requesting a 90-day extension to make a fine payment; and
- Requesting a court date.

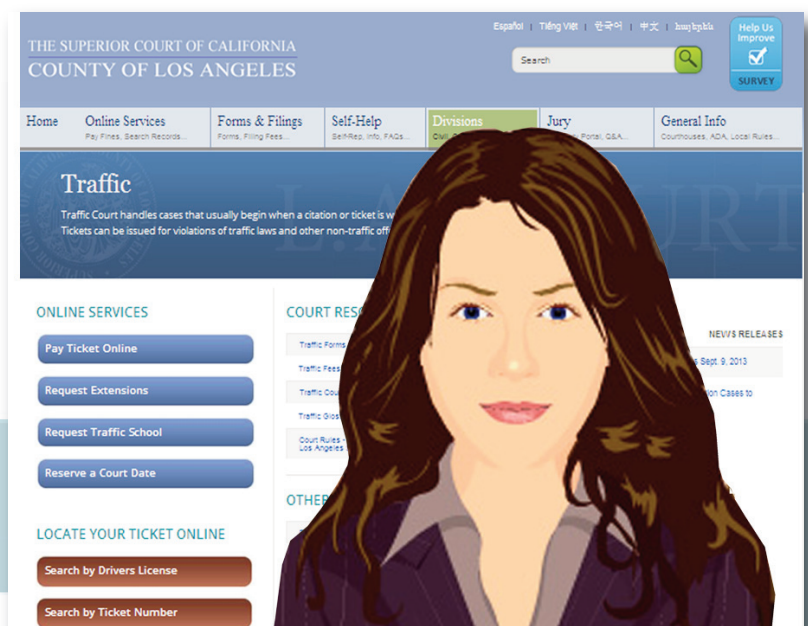


## May I Help You?

*This spring, the Court will add a new feature to the traffic online services pages. Traffic users will have the option of utilizing the assistance of online interactive help to determine the type of traffic transaction they need and how to proceed.*

*Through a series of questions, a virtual assistant will help users make the correct selection utilizing a citation or California driver's license number, resulting in printed directions for completing the process.*

*Initially, the service will provide assistance in English and Spanish. Service in other languages will be coming soon, along with new and expanded features.*



# Handle your traffic matter online,

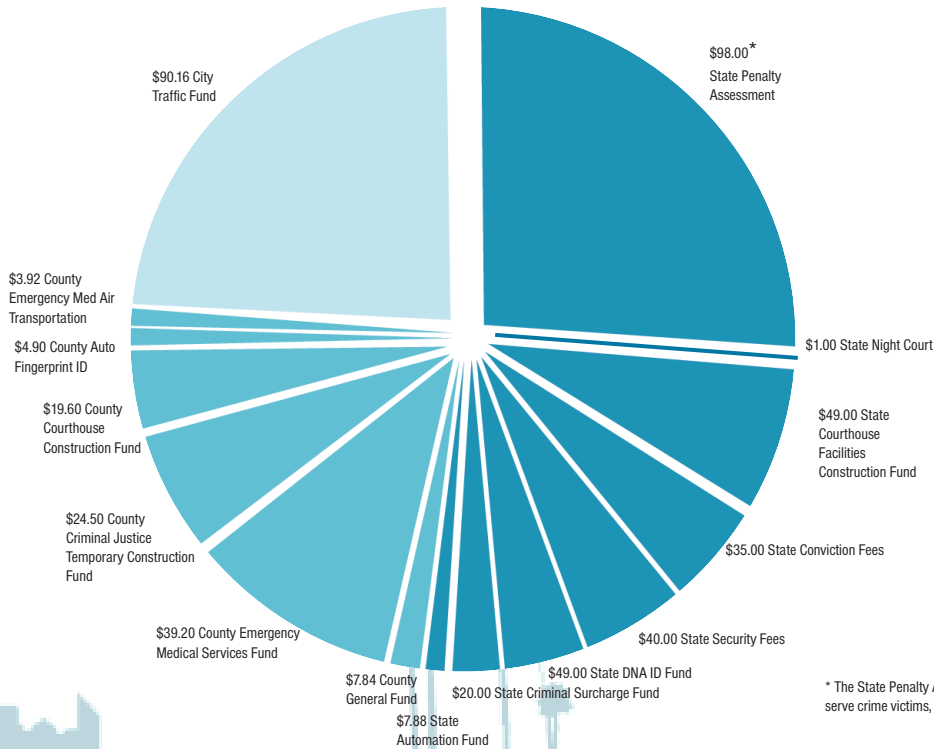
# not in line...



On some days, lines for traffic windows wrap around the Metropolitan Courthouse.

Last year, the Los Angeles Superior Court conducted a one-week survey of every person entering a courthouse to address a traffic matter. Approximately 41% of them were there to make a traffic payment. Many were unaware that they could transact their traffic matter online, saving them time and eliminating the need to make a trip to the courthouse.

## Where do the fees and fines from your traffic ticket go?



For a speeding violation with a base fine of \$100, the penalty assessments and fees (which are set by the California Legislature) are added to the base fine and result in a typical total of \$490.

This chart illustrates how the \$490 is distributed.

\* The State Penalty Assessment Fund supports various statewide programs that serve crime victims, provide training for criminal justice agencies, and other needs.



# Taming the Paper Monster

The raw material of the justice system is information, often in the form of written motions, pleadings, declarations, and other legal documents. Currently, most of these writings are in paper form. LASC manages hundreds of thousands of linear feet of paper records, which grows by 60,000 linear feet per year. If stacked up, these files would be 13 times as high as Mount Everest.

Not only is this mountain of paper a drain on staff time—putting papers into files, moving files around, and finding storage space for them — but it also creates a barrier to public access of case information. For most people, accessing information using the Internet is vastly easier than coming to a courthouse to read a paper file.

Years of budget cuts and other events stood in the way of the Court’s taking advantage of technological solutions to the problem of information management—until now.

LASC has two initiatives underway that will help cut the Court’s mountain of paper down to size. First, the Court will increase its efforts to digitize paper files so they can be managed electronically, rather than physically. Second, LASC has embarked on an ambitious plan to replace all of the Court’s aging case management systems.



*...if stacked up, the files would be 13 times as high as Mount Everest.*

Case management systems process data, schedule hearings, generate notices, calculate fees, and provide public access to the register of actions and documents filed in each case. LASC’s current case management systems are antiquated and cumbersome, and do not effectively support the work of judges and staff. Replacing them with new, technologically innovative systems will greatly increase the Court’s efficiency.

A major advantage associated with the new case management systems is that they will allow for digital case files, which will make it easier and less expensive for litigants and attorneys to submit and receive documents, and will also make it easier for the public to access case information. Digital case files will also save significant clerical time, thus allowing the Court’s limited clerical staff to focus attention away from shuffling paper and toward other necessary tasks.

LASC recognizes that some people will always rely on paper filings, and the Court will always accept them. However, a day is envisioned when these submitted paper documents will be handled just once. These documents will be imaged and then be readily available to all court users. Relying on digital images, rather than on paper copies, will result in a tremendous cost savings related to storage, staff time, and supplies.

# Expanding Language Access

The Court provides non-English speaking litigants with language assistance in over 86 languages with the assistance of more than 380 certified or registered interpreters and 200 independently contracted interpreters.

In 2014, LASC expanded the services of court interpreters to provide assistance with unlawful detainer (eviction) cases, guardianships, and conservatorship matters at no cost without a fee waiver. It has also expanded the services of court interpreters to include family law and civil harassment matters, also at no cost to the parties.

The Court continues to provide court interpreters in criminal, juvenile delinquency, juvenile dependency, mental health, domestic violence, elder abuse and traffic matters, also without cost to the parties.



The Court spends \$32 million on the services of certified interpreters annually, and also provides bonuses to 7% of the Court's workforce to provide language assistance to the public outside of the courtroom. The Court also provides language assistance through its JusticeCorps volunteers, who speak some 15 different languages.

Besides English, the five most commonly spoken languages in Los Angeles County are Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and Armenian.

## Settlements Save Time and Money

The Court continues to offer a variety of civil settlement programs to help attorneys and litigants resolve cases in a timely manner instead of going to trial. This saves the parties money and also saves court time, which helps to move all cases through the system.

Some of the programs involve a judge working directly with attorneys and their clients to settle lawsuits. Other programs rely on experts from bar associations whose legal specialization and many years of experience litigating complicated cases make them ideal mediators for disputes in a particular litigation type.

Perhaps the best known of the civil volunteer programs is CRASH (Civil Referee-Assisted Settlement Hearings). In recent years, CRASH has focused particularly on employment cases; however, there are other settlement programs for personal injury and other business cases as well.

In probate, over 100 volunteer settlement attorneys with at least five years of full-time probate experience help litigants and their attorneys settle a variety of probate matters, including trusts, estates, guardianships, and conservatorship matters. Although any probate case is eligible, a primary objective is to provide assistance to parties who cannot afford private mediation.

The program is administered by the San Fernando Valley Bar Association and depends on a highly skilled and experienced panel of volunteer attorneys, instead of relying on limited court resources.

# Court-Community Partnerships

*The Los Angeles Superior Court is proud of the programs and services it offers to educate, guide, and assist the community.*

## Community Outreach Initiative

Judges are active in providing access to justice not only on the bench, but also outside the courthouse in a variety of community settings.

LASC historically has sponsored innovative programs that encourage broad community participation in the justice system. These programs foster connections that are maintained and strengthened by the various community outreach efforts initiated by the Court.



- **Teen Court**—This program allows young people who commit non-serious offences to be questioned, judged and sentenced by a jury of their peers instead of by juvenile court judicial officers.
  - 60 judicial officers preside over Teen Courts
  - 24 high schools participate, with 5 more pending
  - Approximately 500 cases are heard annually
  - Approximately 10,000 students participate annually, mostly as jurors
- **SHADES**—In collaboration with the Museum of Tolerance, SHADES (Stopping Hate and Delinquency by Empowering Students) is a specialized Teen Court that focuses on crimes rooted in hate and bias. SHADES was honored as one of the Top Ten projects and Best Teamwork projects by the Los Angeles County Quality and Productivity Commission, and was also recognized by the National Association of Court Management.
- **Power Lunch**—In collaboration with various local bar associations, the Power Lunch program provides local high school students with a civic education, mentorship, and exposure to the judicial branch of government. In previous years, the Power Lunch program was honored by the County's Quality and Productivity Commission.
  - 32 Power Lunches have been offered since 2007
  - Up to 8 Power Lunches are conducted annually
  - Over 1,500 students, 265 judicial officers, and 279 attorneys have participated since the program's inception
- **Mock Trial**—LASC partners with the Constitutional Rights Foundation to promote students' understanding of the legal system. In the Mock Trial program, teams of students present hypothetical legal cases in real courtrooms. Students represent both the prosecution and the defense, and gain an important working knowledge of the judicial system. Many of LASC's judicial officers act as coaches for the teams, while others preside over the competitions.
  - Over 2,200 students participate annually
  - Over 380 members of the bar and bench participate annually



- **Court-Clergy Conference**—Discussions among judges and faith leaders improve the faith community's understanding of the legal system and help faith leaders help others.



# Assisting Litigants without Attorneys

*Many of the programs offered to assist self-represented litigants depend on outside resources and partnerships, without whom these innovative services would not be available.*

## **JusticeCorps**

Developed and introduced in the Los Angeles Superior Court in 2004, the JusticeCorps program is comprised of undergraduate students providing assistance to self-represented litigants. As part of the federal AmeriCorps effort, JusticeCorps members receive 30 hours of training and then commit to providing 300 hours of service, over the course of one year, in the Court's self-help centers. A volunteer who successfully completes the program receives a \$1,000 education award.

The program grew from 100 college students in 2004 to over 150 today. Easily identified by their "official" blue oxford cloth shirts, JusticeCorps members answer questions, help litigants complete court paperwork, and assist at workshops that address the requirements of the various stages of family law, probate and some civil cases.

The JusticeCorps program also sponsors JusticeCorps Fellows. The Fellows are alumni graduates of the JusticeCorps program who work full-time for one year and receive a monthly stipend of over \$1,600.

Upon completion of 1,700 service hours, they also qualify for an education award of \$4,725 from the National Service Trust to be applied to tuition or the payment of student loans.

## **JusticeCorps 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrated with Chief Justice's Award and Graduation Ceremony**

In May, 2014, JusticeCorps celebrated a decade of service with California Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye presenting the Los Angeles Superior Court's program with an Award for Exemplary Service and Leadership. In addition, the Chief Justice presided over the graduation of 118 members of the JusticeCorps program.

Through the AmeriCorps National Service program, JusticeCorps annually recruits and trains 250 California college students to support legal self-help centers in seven counties in the Bay Area and Southern California.

More than 110,000 self-represented litigants are assisted annually by JusticeCorps in California, whose efforts contribute significantly to the Judicial Branch. Because approximately 70% of the JusticeCorps members are bilingual, they are especially helpful in serving a diverse and multilingual population.



### Self-Help Centers

Nearly 80% of all family law cases have at least one party without a lawyer, and many litigants proceed without a lawyer in civil, guardianship and other matters. To help unrepresented litigants understand the court process, Los Angeles Superior Court hosts a variety of self-help programs. Supported in part with funding provided by the County of Los Angeles, regional legal aid organizations provide courthouse-based self-help services at the Antelope Valley, Compton, Inglewood, Long Beach, Norwalk, Pasadena, Pomona, San Fernando, Santa Monica, Stanley Mosk, Torrance and Van Nuys courthouses.

These programs provide self-represented litigants with assistance ranging from one-on-one help to workshops on many aspects of court procedures in family and civil matters. In addition, LASC provides Family Law Facilitator offices at nine courthouses throughout the county, providing assistance with child support and spousal support matters. Each year these programs fulfill more than 200,000 requests for assistance.

Specific information about these services can be found at <http://www.lacourt.org/selfhelp/selfhelp.aspx>.

### Restraining Order Center

Located at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse in Los Angeles, the Restraining Order Center (ROC) is a filing window and self-help assistance center developed to provide a centralized, convenient location for county residents who are filing Temporary Restraining Orders (TROs).



The ROC handles four types of restraining orders: civil harassment, domestic violence, elder abuse and workplace violence. The inception of the ROC eliminated the need for individuals to maneuver around the Stanley Mosk courthouse to multiple locations while attempting to file TROs, depending on which type of TRO they wanted. Many people who come to court to request restraining orders are quite vulnerable; therefore, creating a process and environment that minimizes obstacles while providing assistance is critical.

To make the filing process easier for litigants, self-help staff who can assist the litigants with their paperwork are also located in the ROC.

Although the Stanley Mosk Courthouse is the only courthouse with a Restraining Order Center, TROs can also be filed at many other courthouses throughout the county. Assistance in locating these courthouses can be found under the Abuse & Harassment section of the following webpage: <http://www.lacourt.org/selfhelp/selfhelp.aspx>.



*There are approximately 345,000 military veterans living in Los Angeles County.*

According to a recent study by the Rand Institute, “The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been hard on military marriages, with the risk of divorce rising directly in relation to the length of time enlisted service members have been deployed to combat zones.”

Even forty years after the end of the Vietnam War, many veterans of that era still struggle with the physical and emotional scars borne of their service.

Recognizing that this is a population with unique issues that impact their familial relationships in physical and emotional ways, the Court is working to develop programs and provide services that address those issues.

## Helping Veterans

### **Veterans Court**

The Veterans Court program offers alternative sentencing options to former military personnel. This program is a partnership between the Los Angeles Superior Court and the District Attorney, the Public Defender, the Alternate Public Defender, the nonprofit law firm Public Counsel and the federal Department of Veterans Affairs. Similar to the Drug Court model, Veterans Court brings services such as mental health, substance abuse and medical treatment to criminal defendants in need of them.

### **Patriotic Hall Self-Help Clinic for Veterans**

The Family Law Department’s most recent collaboration with the Los Angeles County Department of Military and Veterans Affairs provides self-help legal clinics at the historic Bob Hope Patriotic Hall in downtown Los Angeles. These no-cost legal assistance clinics are offered on the fourth Friday of every month. The LASC’s Family Law Facilitator’s Office assists current and former members of the armed services with legal issues regarding child support, custody and visitation, as well as with divorce, paternity and spousal support matters.

### **Battle Buddies**

At the Metropolitan Courthouse in downtown Los Angeles, the Court is partnering with Volunteers of America-Los Angeles (VOALA) to deploy “Battle Buddy Squad Leaders.” These “Squad Leaders” are veterans who are also social workers who can identify with the special needs of veteran defendants. Additionally, they can conduct a professional assessment of the defendant’s needs, and then provide credible counseling and program referral recommendations for judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys.



# Help for the Homeless and the Mentally Ill

The Los Angeles Superior Court is a pioneer in the creation of problem-solving courts, and provides the following alternative sentencing programs that aim to address the specific needs of criminal defendants in the hope of changing their behavior through targeted care and assistance:

- Drug Court
- Co-Occurring Disorders Court
- Women’s Reentry Court
- Veterans Court
- Homeless Court
- Juvenile Mental Health Court
- Dependency Drug Court

In addition, LASC also offers a Diversion and Alternative Sentencing program and a Mental Health Linkage program.

## **Diversion and Alternative Sentencing Program**

Last September, then-Presiding Judge David S. Wesley joined then-Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, District Attorney Jackie Lacey, and Los Angeles City Attorney Mike Feuer at the Van Nuys Courthouse to announce the county’s Third District Diversion and Alternative Sentencing Program for seriously mentally ill offenders. This court-based effort diverts qualified defendants from incarceration and into mental health treatment programs and additional medical and social services. Designed for chronically homeless and mentally ill adult defendants, this pilot program offers defendants a path to permanent housing and consistent mental health treatment rather than traditional punishments such as fines, incarceration and probation.

San Fernando Valley Mental Health Services oversees the treatment while participants live in transitional housing and receive mental health and various other services, including vocational and employment counseling.

The long-term program goal is to reduce recidivism rates among nonviolent offenders and minimize the drain on scarce justice system resources, while simultaneously helping the chronically homeless and seriously mentally ill population acquire permanent housing linked to other supportive services.

## **Mental Health Court Linkage Program’s Court Liaison Program**

An estimated 2,000 adults in Los Angeles County jails suffer from a mental illness. Fortunately, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health’s Linkage Program operates a Court Liaison Program that assists mentally ill defendants. One of the program’s goals is to link such defendants with voluntary mental health treatment instead of jail.

Traditional problem-solving court models, which address the problems of designated populations in a single courtroom, are most effective when the number of defendants is low. The court liaison program expands the model to work in conventional courtroom settings throughout Los Angeles County.

The liaisons arrange a needs assessment for recommended defendants and then coordinate their linkage to mental health treatment. The broad-based support from the Los Angeles Superior Court incorporates the proven methods of successful collaborative courts and expands their problem-solving methodology across the county.

Any judge may request a mental health evaluation for a defendant, and clinical staff are on call to conduct a needs assessment. Judges are the program’s linchpins in referring misdemeanor and felony defendants to the court liaison staff and in garnering support from defense attorneys and prosecutors for alternative sentencing.



# LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT

## Workload and Financial Data

Fiscal Years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015

***The Los Angeles Superior Court is the  
only trial court for the county of  
Los Angeles, an area which encompasses  
88 cities and 46 police departments.***

***More than 500 judicial officers in 38  
courthouses serve a population of  
10 million, spread across Los Angeles  
County's 4,742 square miles.***



# The Workload-based Allocation and Funding Methodology (WAFM) for the California Trial Courts

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For years, the funding allocations made to the 58 California trial courts reflected historical accident, rather than need. In 2013, the California Judicial Council changed that. It implemented the Workload-based Allocation and Funding Methodology (WAFM), which calculates each court's share of the available statewide funding on the basis of its workload relative to the workloads of all other California trial courts.

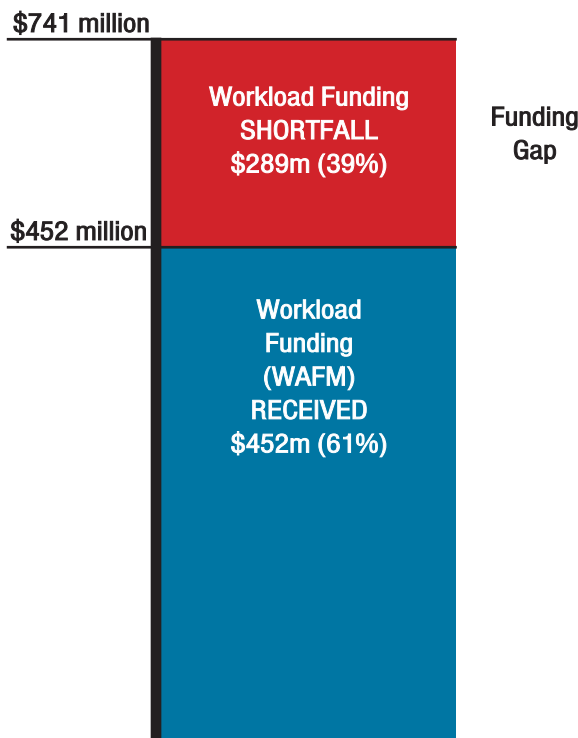
Recognizing that it takes more time and resources to handle different types of filings, WAFM weights each case category differently, based upon empirical studies of case-processing times. First, WAFM generates an estimate of total staff need from those weighted filings. Second, the total estimated staff need for each court is converted to dollars, recognizing local labor market conditions. Third, the need for funding other expenses is calculated based upon standardized ratios of non-salary expenses to staff. The result is, for each court, an estimate of the core operations funding required to adequately process its workload.

The total projected WAFM funding need for all 58 superior courts exceeds the state funding currently available. Thus, each court's actual allocation is determined by its share of the total projected need for all courts: its WAFM share, as applied to the total available appropriation. A court's WAFM share is typically different from its historical share. Some courts have a higher share under WAFM, some lower.

The Judicial Council decided to apply the model incrementally, and to use it more aggressively on new funding than on historical funding. The rules of application adopted by the Judicial Council are as follows:

- Each of the first five years, more and more of the historical base (funding for FY2012-2013) will become subject to WAFM, until 50% of the FY2012-2013 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.

## Workload-based Allocation Need



**Los Angeles Superior Court faces a 39% Funding Shortfall in Fiscal Year 2014–2015**

# Los Angeles Superior Court by the Numbers

## Fiscal Year 2013-2014

Authorized Judicial Positions .....	483
Authorized Subordinate Judicial Officers .....	103
Courthouses .....	38 Locations

## Annual Case Filings Summary

## Fiscal Year 2013-2014

General Civil .....	64,729
Limited Civil .....	87,823
Unlawful Detainers (Evictions) .....	56,354
Small Claims .....	54,504
Misdemeanors .....	318,376
Felonies .....	55,666
Habeas Corpus .....	954
Family Law .....	92,500
Adoptions .....	2,202
Juvenile Dependency .....	20,756
Juvenile Delinquency .....	9,047
Mental Health .....	7,532
Probate .....	10,952
Traffic Infractions .....	1,360,395
Non-Traffic Infractions .....	40,843
Appellate Division Appeals .....	993
<b>Total Filings .....</b>	<b>2,183,626</b>

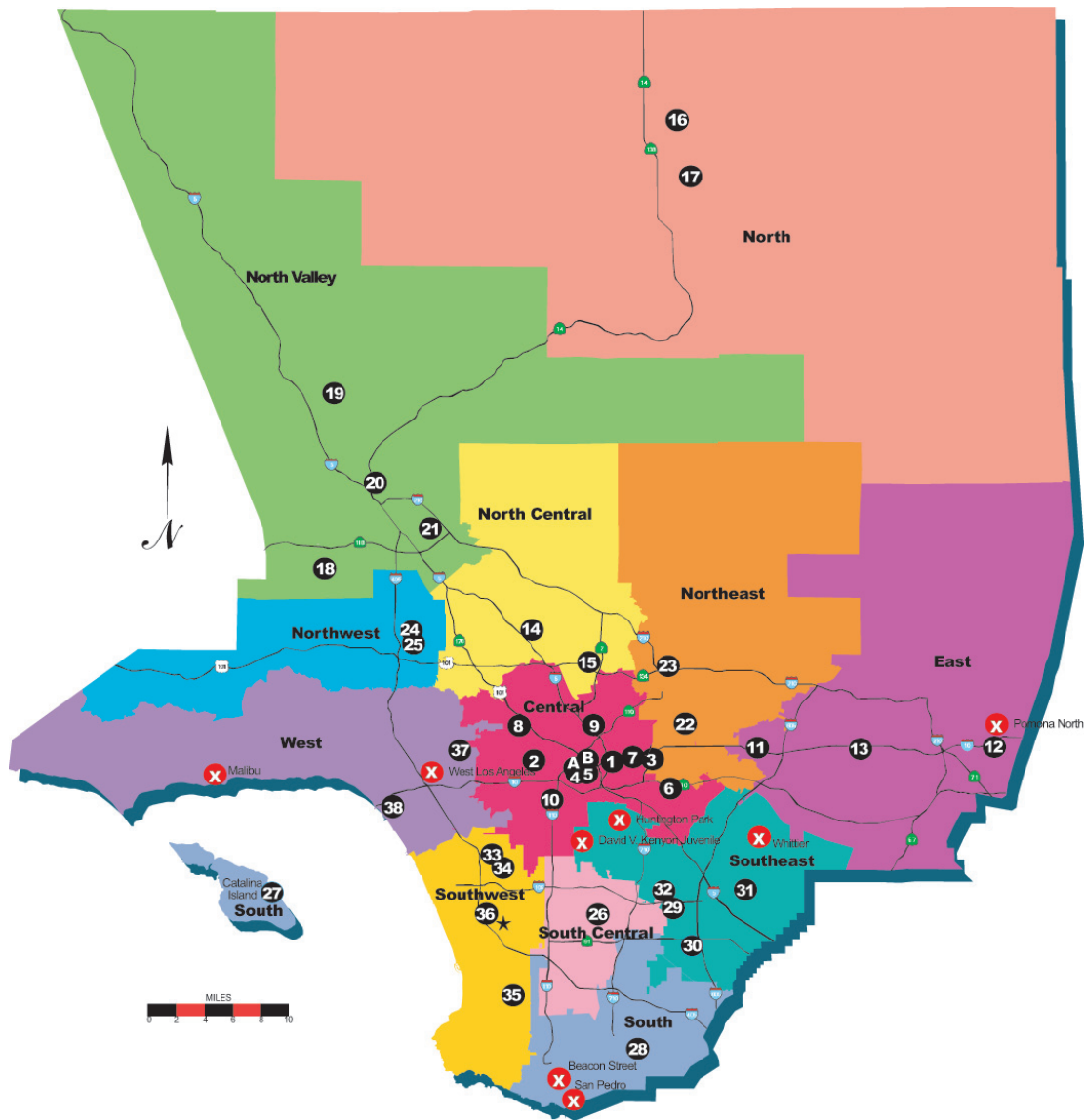
*In January, 2014, the Los Angeles Superior Court implemented changes to improve the accuracy of its filings and disposition data. Comparisons with filings and disposition data taken from previous Annual Reports should be made with caution.*

## Juries

Jury Trials .....	2,683*
Juror Summonses Mailed .....	2,010,439
Jurors Responding .....	1,049,168
Average Days Served .....	1.39

\* Reflects the number of trials where a jury verdict was reached

# Court Districts and Courthouse Locations



## Central District

Central Arraignment Courts .....	1
Central Civil West .....	2
Edmund D. Edelman Children's Court .....	3
Stanley Mosk Courthouse .....	4
Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center .....	5
East Los Angeles Courthouse .....	6
Eastlake Juvenile Court .....	7
Hollywood Courthouse .....	8
Mental Health Courthouse .....	9
Metropolitan Courthouse .....	10
Court Archives and Records Center .....	A
Hall of Records (CTS, Jury Services) .....	B

## East District

El Monte Courthouse .....	11
Pomona Courthouse, South .....	12
West Covina Courthouse .....	13

## North Central District

Burbank Courthouse .....	14
Glendale Courthouse .....	15

## North District

Lancaster Juvenile Justice Center .....	16
Michael D. Antonovich Antelope Valley Courthouse .....	17

## North Valley District

Chatsworth Courthouse .....	18
Santa Clarita Courthouse .....	19
San Fernando Courthouse .....	20
Sylmar Juvenile Court .....	21

## Northeast District

Alhambra Courthouse .....	22
Pasadena Courthouse .....	23

## Northwest District

Van Nuys Courthouse, East .....	24
Van Nuys Courthouse, West .....	25

## South Central District

Compton Courthouse .....	26
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## South District

Catalina Courthouse .....	27
Governor George Deukmejian Courthouse .....	28

## Southeast District

Downey Courthouse .....	29
Bellflower Courthouse .....	30
Norwalk Courthouse .....	31
Los Padrinos Juvenile Court .....	32

## Southwest District

Inglewood Courthouse .....	33
Inglewood Juvenile Court .....	34
Torrance Courthouse .....	35

## West District

Airport Courthouse* .....	36
Beverly Hills Courthouse .....	37
Santa Monica Courthouse .....	38

\* Geographically located in the Southwest District

**X** Indicates Courthouse closed in 2013

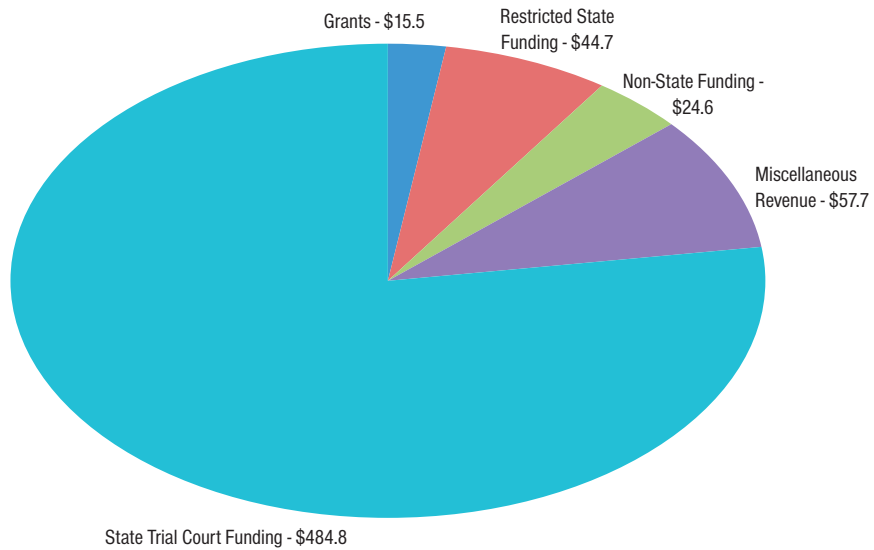
# Revenues and Expenditures

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## Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Total Budget \$627.3 Million

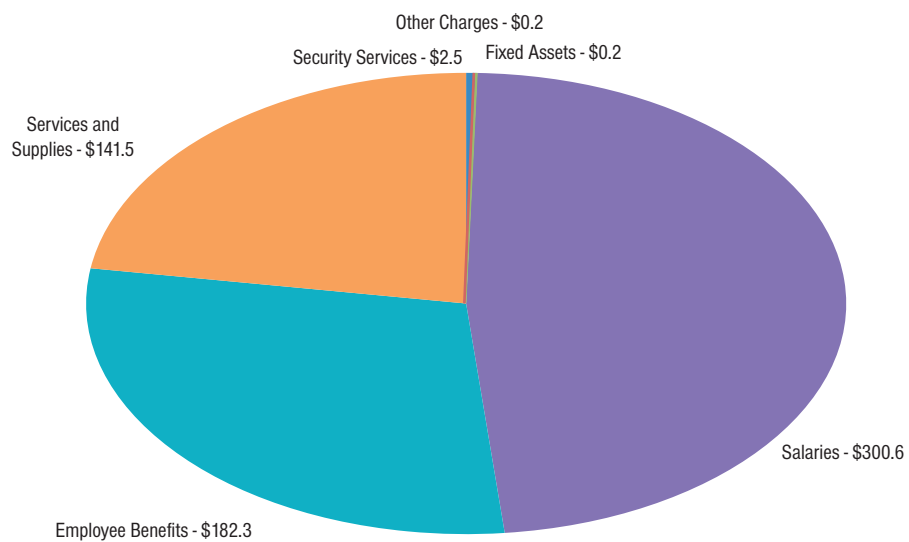
### Revenues

(All figures are in millions of dollars)



### Expenditures

(All figures are in millions of dollars)









This Annual Report was produced by the Los Angeles Superior Court to increase public understanding of the justice system. For additional copies, please contact:

Los Angeles Superior Court  
Public Information Office  
111 N. Hill Street, Room 107  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
(213) 830-0801

Or visit the Court Web site: [www.lacourt.org](http://www.lacourt.org)