



Judicial Council of California

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REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Item No.: 25-062

For business meeting on February 21, 2025

Title

Trial Court Budget: Allocation for Partial Restoration of Trial Court Operations Funding for Fiscal Year 2024–25

Report Type

Action Required

Effective Date

February 21, 2025

Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected

None

Date of Report

February 7, 2025

Recommended by

Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee
Hon. Jonathan B. Conklin, Chair

Contact

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Executive Summary

The Budget Act of 2024 included an ongoing reduction of \$97 million General Fund to the trial courts, consistent with the statewide ongoing state operations reduction authorized by Control Section 4.05. The fiscal year (FY) 2025–26 Governor’s Budget included a partial restoration of \$42 million beginning in FY 2024–25, which will reduce the ongoing reduction to \$55 million. On a one-time basis, in FY 2024–25, the proposed restoration will use available reserves in the Trial Court Trust Fund for this purpose. The Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee recommends allocating the partial restoration in the current year consistent with the methodology that was used to allocate the initial \$97 million reduction. The increased allocation will mitigate the impact of the reduction on services provided to the public and increase access to justice.

Recommendation

The Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee recommends that the Judicial Council, effective February 21, 2025, allocate the \$42 million partial restoration using the methodology approved by the Judicial Council at its July 12, 2024, business meeting for the initial \$97 million reduction. This approach will recalculate the reduction to trial court operations using the initial methodology with the restored funding, which results in a revised \$55 million reduction for

FY 2024–25. Approval of this current year allocation is contingent upon approval of the Legislature.

Relevant Previous Council Action

The Judicial Council allocates funding to the trial courts through various methodologies including its approved Workload Formula allocation methodology. Currently, the Workload Formula policy states that allocations in fiscal years for which a budget reduction must be implemented will be addressed as needed, with special consideration toward those courts below the statewide average funding level. A methodology for applying a funding reduction will be determined in the year a reduction occurs.

At its business meeting on July 12, 2024,¹ the council approved a recommendation to apply the same methodology for the \$97 million reduction that was adopted at its business meeting on July 24, 2020,² to allocate a \$167.8 million reduction that occurred due to the projected budget deficit resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. When the \$167.8 million reduction was restored in the Budget Act of 2021, the funding was allocated back to the trial courts in the exact amounts of their initial reductions.

Analysis/Rationale

The Budget Act of 2024 included an ongoing reduction of \$97 million General Fund to trial court operations. To mitigate the impact of this reduction on access to justice, the FY 2025–26 Governor’s Budget included a proposed partial restoration of \$42 million beginning in FY 2024–25. On a one-time basis, in FY 2024–25, the restoration will be funded with available reserves in the Trial Court Trust Fund. The administration will reassess the condition of the Trial Court Trust Fund in the spring to evaluate the need for a General Fund backfill.

At its meeting on January 22, 2025,³ the Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee approved the allocation of the \$42 million partial restoration using the methodology approved by the Judicial Council at its July 12, 2024, business meeting for the initial \$97 million reduction. This approach will back the \$97 million reduction out of the formula and recalculate the current year reduction to trial court operations using the revised \$55 million reduction.

¹ Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Trial Court Budget: Allocations from the Trial Court Trust Fund and Trial Court Allocations for Fiscal Year 2024–25* (June 17, 2024), <https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=13077708&GUID=08C509A8-B264-4D66-AFDC-B3EC97A5D296>.

² Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Trial Court Budget: Allocations from the Trial Court Trust Fund and Trial Court Allocations for Fiscal Year 2020–21* (July 2, 2020), <https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=8651228&GUID=27A3B6D8-9783-4865-8C5A-F6697EB58734>.

³ Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee Meeting Materials (Jan. 22, 2025), <https://courts.ca.gov/system/files/file/tcbac-20250122-materials.pdf>.

The Judicial Branch Budget Committee approved this recommendation at its meeting on January 29, 2025.⁴

Under Item 0250-101-0932, Provision 4 of the Budget Act of 2024, the Judicial Council submitted a letter to the Department of Finance requesting a corresponding \$42 million increase in expenditure authority from the Trial Court Trust Fund in the current year. Additionally, a 30-day notification in writing to the chairpersons of the committees and appropriate subcommittees that consider the State Budget, and the chairperson of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee is required prior to adjusting the expenditure authority in this item.

The Judicial Council requested an expedited review period of 15 days, instead of the 30-day notification period. This will support the Judicial Council’s intent to allocate this partial restoration to the trial courts as expeditiously as possible to mitigate the impact of the reduction on core programs and services provided to the public, and improve access to justice.

Policy implications

None.

Comments

This proposal was not circulated for comment. However, this recommendation was considered at meetings that were open to the public and no public comments were received.

Alternatives considered

The Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee also considered an alternative methodology for FY 2024–25 to allocate the \$42 million partial restoration to the trial courts proportionally based on their initial reduction amounts for the \$97 million. This methodology would represent a 42.6 percent restoration of each court’s initial reduction.

$$\text{\$41,340,000} / \text{\$96,982,000} = 42.6\%$$

For example, Court A had an initial reduction of \$100,000 of the \$97 million. After the proportional restoration, the court will receive \$42,626 or $(\$100,000 / \$96,982,000 * \$41,340,000)$. Thus, the court’s revised reduction will be \$57,374 or $(\$100,000 - \$42,626)$.

This methodology was not recommended as it did not advance the goal of funding equity for the trial courts by using the Workload Formula model.

Fiscal and Operational Impacts

The partial restoration of \$42 million in the current year will provide additional resources for the trial courts and increase the statewide average funding level from 91.3 percent to 92.8 percent. This funding will mitigate the impact of the initial \$97 million reduction on core programs and

⁴ Judicial Branch Budget Committee Meeting Materials (Jan. 29, 2025), <https://courts.ca.gov/system/files/file/jbbc-20250129-materials.pdf>.

services and improve access to justice. Trial courts have indicated that this funding will allow them to expand access to the courts by reversing staff furloughs and hiring freezes and extend counter hours to the public.

Attachments and Links

1. Attachment A: Partial Funding Restoration for FY 2024–25

Partial Funding Restoration for FY 2024–25

Court	2024-25 Final Workload Formula Allocation	2024-25 Workload Formula	2024-25 Workload Formula Percentage (BEFORE Restoration)
	A	B	C
Alameda	88,446,403	94,645,177	93.45%
Alpine	978,500	549,681	178.01%
Amador	4,318,750	4,684,703	92.19%
Butte	13,707,099	14,689,951	93.31%
Calaveras	3,299,313	3,767,570	87.57%
Colusa	2,454,902	2,635,032	93.16%
Contra Costa	51,597,645	59,907,816	86.13%
Del Norte	4,483,485	3,875,339	115.69%
El Dorado	9,519,963	10,819,495	87.99%
Fresno	63,133,105	66,287,167	95.24%
Glenn	2,990,182	3,237,289	92.37%
Humboldt	8,900,393	9,318,361	95.51%
Imperial	10,163,038	8,073,327	125.88%
Inyo	2,512,390	2,676,571	93.87%
Kern	66,272,438	68,776,330	96.36%
Kings	10,774,613	12,025,488	89.60%
Lake	5,078,997	6,056,222	83.86%
Lassen	2,581,880	2,580,519	100.05%
Los Angeles	713,278,790	791,102,381	90.16%
Madera	12,659,634	13,875,025	91.24%
Marin	14,079,161	15,677,866	89.80%
Mariposa	1,860,977	1,846,094	100.81%
Mendocino	7,672,588	7,775,002	98.68%
Merced	16,500,078	18,264,043	90.34%
Modoc	1,372,099	1,480,959	92.65%
Mono	2,417,935	2,038,771	118.60%
Monterey	26,002,768	28,560,984	91.04%
Napa	9,487,748	10,740,134	88.34%
Nevada	6,570,957	7,425,652	88.49%
Orange	186,230,932	209,526,287	88.88%
Placer	24,862,554	27,355,659	90.89%
Plumas	1,897,592	1,629,248	116.47%
Riverside	134,884,127	155,691,163	86.64%
Sacramento	109,842,203	122,332,264	89.79%
San Benito	4,779,146	4,197,092	113.87%
San Bernardino	135,901,495	156,640,095	86.76%
San Diego	176,701,558	189,500,353	93.25%
San Francisco	64,458,077	55,305,114	116.55%
San Joaquin	49,951,911	53,533,653	93.31%
San Luis Obispo	18,523,163	19,492,482	95.03%
San Mateo	42,988,911	49,033,290	87.67%
Santa Barbara	26,681,819	29,058,002	91.82%
Santa Clara	93,382,508	97,354,039	95.92%
Santa Cruz	16,363,507	16,940,790	96.59%
Shasta	16,201,831	18,198,452	89.03%
Sierra	978,500	623,149	157.02%
Siskiyou	4,314,253	4,841,098	89.12%
Solano	28,669,037	31,445,139	91.17%
Sonoma	30,480,267	30,732,916	99.18%
Stanislaus	31,437,389	37,054,820	84.84%
Sutter	8,192,412	9,485,325	86.37%
Tehama	5,876,354	6,426,611	91.44%
Trinity	1,987,739	2,276,992	87.30%
Tulare	32,682,780	38,548,955	84.78%
Tuolumne	4,818,467	5,085,552	94.75%
Ventura	44,177,371	46,999,346	94.00%
Yolo	15,341,081	17,504,806	87.64%
Yuba	6,144,600	7,883,564	77.94%
Total:	2,481,867,415	2,718,089,203	91.31%

Reallocation of Reduction Restoration					
2024-25 Initial Reduction (\$96.982 million)	2024-25 Revised Reduction (\$55.642 million)	2024-25 Partial Restoration (\$41.34 million)	2024-25 Workload Formula Allocation (AFTER Restoration)	2024-25 Workload Formula Percentage (AFTER Restoration)	2024-25 Workload Formula Percentage CHANGE
D	E	F	G	H	I
(4,324,870)	(2,884,769)	1,440,100	89,886,503	94.97%	1.52%
-	-	-	978,500	178.01%	0.00%
(167,223)	(95,942)	71,281	4,390,031	93.71%	1.52%
(583,710)	(360,287)	223,423	13,930,522	94.83%	1.52%
(111,187)	(53,833)	57,354	3,356,668	89.09%	1.52%
(94,059)	(53,965)	40,094	2,494,996	94.69%	1.52%
(1,738,846)	(841,887)	896,959	52,494,605	87.63%	1.50%
(138,333)	(79,366)	58,966	4,542,452	117.21%	1.52%
(320,824)	(155,331)	165,492	9,685,455	89.52%	1.53%
(3,029,033)	(2,020,422)	1,008,611	64,141,716	96.76%	1.52%
(115,557)	(66,299)	49,258	3,039,440	93.89%	1.52%
(425,808)	(284,022)	141,786	9,042,179	97.04%	1.52%
(368,916)	(246,074)	122,842	10,285,880	127.41%	1.52%
(95,542)	(54,816)	40,726	2,553,116	95.39%	1.52%
(3,142,777)	(2,096,291)	1,046,485	67,318,923	97.88%	1.52%
(429,257)	(246,280)	182,977	10,957,590	91.12%	1.52%
(171,163)	(82,871)	88,292	5,167,289	85.32%	1.46%
(92,113)	(52,849)	39,265	2,621,145	101.57%	1.52%
(28,238,886)	(16,201,647)	12,037,239	725,316,029	91.68%	1.52%
(495,278)	(284,158)	211,119	12,870,753	92.76%	1.52%
(474,469)	(229,721)	244,748	14,323,909	91.36%	1.56%
(65,897)	(37,808)	28,090	1,889,067	102.33%	1.52%
(355,283)	(236,981)	118,303	7,790,891	100.20%	1.52%
(651,946)	(374,045)	277,902	16,777,980	91.86%	1.52%
(52,864)	(30,330)	22,534	1,394,633	94.17%	1.52%
(72,775)	(41,754)	31,021	2,448,957	120.12%	1.52%
(1,019,502)	(584,924)	434,578	26,437,346	92.56%	1.52%
(319,738)	(154,806)	164,932	9,652,680	89.87%	1.54%
(221,442)	(107,214)	114,228	6,685,185	90.03%	1.54%
(6,276,002)	(3,038,614)	3,237,387	189,468,320	90.43%	1.55%
(976,477)	(560,239)	416,238	25,278,792	92.41%	1.52%
(58,157)	(33,367)	24,790	1,922,382	117.99%	1.52%
(4,545,609)	(2,200,820)	2,344,789	137,228,916	88.14%	1.51%
(3,701,694)	(1,792,227)	1,909,467	111,751,670	91.35%	1.56%
(149,818)	(85,956)	63,862	4,843,008	115.39%	1.52%
(4,579,894)	(2,217,420)	2,362,474	138,263,969	88.27%	1.51%
(6,764,332)	(3,880,936)	2,883,396	179,584,953	94.77%	1.52%
(2,527,201)	(1,685,691)	841,510	65,299,587	118.07%	1.52%
(2,430,393)	(1,616,188)	814,205	50,766,116	94.83%	1.52%
(890,721)	(594,128)	296,593	18,819,756	96.55%	1.52%
(1,448,731)	(701,423)	747,307	43,736,218	89.20%	1.52%
(1,037,243)	(595,103)	442,140	27,123,960	93.34%	1.52%
(4,448,653)	(2,967,335)	1,481,318	94,863,826	97.44%	1.52%
(774,120)	(516,352)	257,767	16,621,274	98.11%	1.52%
(546,003)	(264,355)	281,648	16,483,479	90.58%	1.55%
-	-	-	978,500	157.02%	0.00%
(145,391)	(70,393)	74,998	4,389,251	90.67%	1.55%
(1,122,454)	(643,991)	478,462	29,147,499	92.69%	1.52%
(1,404,359)	(936,734)	467,625	30,947,892	100.70%	1.52%
(1,059,443)	(512,944)	546,499	31,983,888	86.32%	1.47%
(276,085)	(133,670)	142,415	8,334,826	87.87%	1.50%
(229,402)	(131,616)	97,786	5,974,139	92.96%	1.52%
(66,987)	(32,433)	34,554	2,022,293	88.81%	1.52%
(1,101,413)	(533,265)	568,148	33,250,929	86.26%	1.47%
(232,387)	(155,007)	77,381	4,895,848	96.27%	1.52%
(2,147,664)	(1,432,532)	715,132	44,892,503	95.52%	1.52%
(516,996)	(250,311)	266,685	15,607,767	89.16%	1.52%
(207,074)	(100,258)	106,816	6,251,416	79.30%	1.35%
(96,982,000)	(55,642,000)	41,340,000	2,523,207,415	92.83%	1.52%

Floor courts (2)
Cluster 1 courts (13)