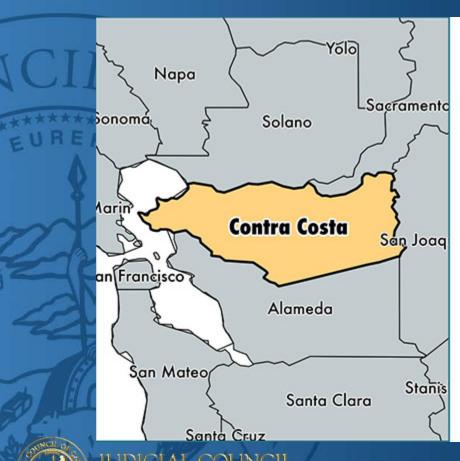
CONTRA COSTA SUPERIOR COURT Liaison Report

Presented by Judicial Council Member Hon. Rebecca L. Wightman September 24, 2019

Location

One of the "9 Bay Area Counties" Situated in the East Bay







Background

- Authorized Judicial Positions: 42
 - 38 judges; 4 commissioners (1 vacant)
- Population: 1.1 million (est.)
- Courthouses: 6
 - 3 in Martinez + Court Records building
 - Richmond
 - Walnut Creek
 - Pittsburg



Courthouses spread across County





Justice Wakefield Taylor Courthouse Martinez CA



A.F. Bray Courts Building Martinez CA



OF CALIFORNIA

Peter L. Spinetta Family Law Center Martinez CA



COURTHOUSES in Martinez...

Situated so closely, it's akin to a ...



Courthouse Campus





COURTHOUSES Judge George D. Carroll Courthouse Richmond CA



To enter must go to the back "front" entrance



COURTHOUSESSuperior Court - Walnut Creek





Richard E. Arnason Justice Center Pittsburg, CA







"The A Team"

Hon. Barry Baskin, PJ Kate Bieker, CEO









Budget Overview



- Sinking...
- 2013 let go staff; 2014: liaison visit reported
 \$52.9 million total revenue; \$58.3 expenditures
- Treading Water...



- 2016-2018 total revenue hovered ≈ \$56 million,
 and ≈ \$56-57 million expenditures
- Barely Treading...
 - 2018-2019 budget total revenue and expenses \$59,551,348 (excl. ≈ \$350K encumbered exp.)



Concerns, Challenges and Needs

- Legislative unfunded and underfunded mandates
- Employees' needs & staffing issues: 324 employees
 - years of no raises; creative alternatives; small raises
 - work absorbed when positions eliminated; stressful



Concerns, Challenges and Needs

Maintenance – IT, facilities, equipment

Which brings us all back to: Funding

and the need for more discretionary funds,
 especially funds to help employees



Deferred maintenance... it keeps adding up







One upgrade that couldn't be ignored...





Good News - Successes!

- Case Management: Traffic (C-Track)
- JC Info Tech. very helpful here and elsewhere
 - Innovation Grant: Veteran's Court (8/2017)
 - FL/Civil Self-Help: Children's Waiting Rm (7/2019)
 - Tier Model Mediation: Family Law (3/2019)



Spinetta Family Law Center FLF/Self Help







FLF/Civil Self Help

- Expanded Self Help Funds:
 - Laptops for FLF's to service different locations
 - New Children's Waiting Room





Tier Model Mediation in Family Law – Custody/Visitation

- Switch from "recommending" (non-confidential) to "non-recommending" (confidential) mediation [Futures Commissions recommendation]
- Huge culture change...but also a...
- Huge success!
 - Agreement rate went from <40% up to 60%</p>





Reaction to Tier Model Mediation

"Only after transitioning to a tiered model did I realize ...[o]ur recommending model encouraged many parents to focus on defeating instead of collaborating with the other parent. [It] has greatly helped...shift the focus of [everyone] toward working together instead of striving to win."

Jim Paulsen, FCS Director



Reaction to Tier Model Mediation

"It changed our entire court culture. Now we all have a stake in encouraging parents to take responsibility for making decisions about their children. As a judge who lived through the transition from recommending to non-recommending, I was skeptical at first, but I have learned not only to expect agreements from parents, but to trust them to reach agreements. This has resulted...in (more agreements and fewer contested hearings) but more importantly, better results for families."

Hon. Joni Hiramoto



Thank you

Questions?

Thank You Contra Costa!

JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA

