



Judicial Council of California

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Title

Juvenile Dependency: Small Court Dependency Workload Working Group Final Recommendations (Action Required)

Summary

In July 2016 the Judicial Council directed the Executive and Planning Committee to form a working group to consider changes to the court-appointed juvenile dependency counsel funding methodology as it relates to small courts. The working group recommends that the funding methodology be modified for the next two years to suspend reallocation related budget reductions for the 23 smallest courts, adjust the local economic index for all 30 small courts, and adjust the funding allocations of those larger courts receiving increases related to the reallocation to compensate for these increases. The Judicial Council has directed the Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee to consider a comprehensive update of the attorney workload data and time standards used in the current workload model, and permanent revisions to the funding methodology could follow from that update and subsequent steps directed by the Judicial Council.

Recommendation

The Small Court Dependency Workload (SCDW) Working Group recommends that:

- “Small courts” be defined as the 30 courts in California with the lowest child welfare caseloads. All of these courts have caseloads of fewer than 400 children in child welfare.
- “Smallest courts” be defined as the 23 smallest courts who were identified by the Judicial Council as exempt from reallocation-related budget reductions in fiscal year 2016-2017. All of these courts have caseloads of fewer than 200.
- “Larger courts” be defined as the 28 courts not in the “small courts” group.

The SCDW Working Group also recommends, effective July 1, 2017, that:

- Modifications be made to the Judicial Council dependency counsel workload and funding methodology as detailed in Juvenile Dependency: Court-Appointed Dependency Counsel Workload and Funding Methodology (Apr. 1, 2016) for fiscal years 2017-2018 and 2018- 2019;
- The 23 smallest courts continue to be exempt from reallocation-related budget reductions;

3. The Bureau of Labor Statistics employment and wages index that is less than 1.0 for any of the 30 small courts be adjusted to 1.0;
4. If the impact of these adjustments results in a small court being allocated more than 100 percent of the total need calculated through the workload and funding methodology, the court will receive an allocation equal to 100 percent of total need;
5. The budget increase for small courts related to recommendations 2 and 3 be offset by reducing the funding allocations of those larger courts receiving increases related to the ongoing reallocation; and
6. The \$100,000 reserve for caseload fluctuations in small courts be continued.

Speakers

Hon. David Rosenberg, Chair, Small Court Dependency Workload
Working Group

Mr. Don Will, Center for Families, Children & the Courts