

# **SUPERIOR COURT OF SACRAMENTO COUNTY**

Audit Report

## **VALIDITY OF RECORDED REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND FUND BALANCES**

*July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017*



**BETTY T. YEE**  
California State Controller

August 2018



**BETTY T. YEE**  
California State Controller

August 14, 2018

Lloyd Connelly, Court Executive Officer  
Superior Court of Sacramento County  
720 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Connelly:

The State Controller's Office audited the Superior Court of Sacramento County's (court) compliance with governing statutes, rules, and regulations to assess the validity of recorded revenues, expenditures, and fund balances of all material and significant funds under its administration, jurisdiction, and control. The audit period was July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017.

Our audit found no instances of non-compliance. However, we found weaknesses in the court's administrative and internal accounting control system; these weaknesses are described in the Findings and Recommendations section of our report.

The court agreed with our findings, and provided a detailed Corrective Action Plan addressing the fiscal control weaknesses and recommendations. We appreciate the court's willingness to implement corrective actions.

If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Kurokawa, Chief, Compliance Audits Bureau, by telephone at (916) 327-3138.

Sincerely,

*Original signed by*

JEFFREY V. BROWNFIELD, CPA  
Chief, Division of Audits

JVB/lis

cc: Rick Beard, Court Financial Officer  
Superior Court of Sacramento County  
Martin Hoshino, Administrative Director  
Judicial Council of California  
Millicent Tidwell, Chief Deputy Director  
Judicial Council of California  
John Wordlaw, Chief Administrative Officer  
Judicial Council of California  
Zlatko Theodorovic, Chief Financial Officer and Director of Finance  
Judicial Council of California  
Grant Parks, Principal Manager  
Audit Services  
Judicial Council of California  
Daniel Alvarez, Secretary of the Senate  
Office of the Secretary of State  
E. Dotson Wilson, Chief Clerk  
California State Assembly, Office of the Chief Clerk  
Amy Leach, Journal Clerk  
California State Assembly, Office of the Chief Clerk  
Diane F. Boyer-Vine, Legislative Counsel  
Office of Legislative Counsel  
Mark Tollefson, Assistant Program Budget Manager  
California Department of Finance

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# Audit Report

## Summary

The State Controller's Office (SCO) audited the Superior Court of Sacramento County's (court) compliance with governing statutes, rules, and regulations to assess the validity of recorded revenues, expenditures, and fund balances of all material and significant funds under its administration, jurisdiction, and control. The audit period was July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017.

The court complied with governing statutes, rules, and regulations relating to the validity of recorded revenues, expenditures, and fund balances. However, we found the following weaknesses in the court's administrative and internal accounting control system:

- Inadequate internal controls over the cash-handling process; and
- Failure to follow up on unclaimed trust accounts.

## Background

The court operates from five court locations in Sacramento County, California. The court employs 59 judges and approximately 581 court staff members to fulfill its operational and administrative activities. The court incurred more than \$92 million in expenditures for the period of July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017.

The court controls the General Fund, the Non-Grant Special Revenue Fund, and the Grant Special Revenue Fund. The General Fund and the Non-Grant Special Revenue Fund had revenues and expenditures in excess of 4% of total revenues and expenditures; these two funds are therefore considered material and significant.

Per the Judicial Council's *Trial Court Financial Policies and Procedures Manual*, trial courts are subject to rules and policies established by the Judicial Council of California to promote efficiency and uniformity within a system of trial court management. However, each trial court has the authority and responsibility for managing its own operations. All employees are expected to fulfill at least the minimum requirements of their positions and to conduct themselves with honesty, integrity, and professionalism. In addition, they must operate within the specific levels of authority that may be established by the trial court for their positions. California Rules of Court (CRC) and the *Trial Court Financial Policies and Procedures Manual* established under Government Code (GC) sections 77000 through 77013 and adopted under CRC 10.804, specify guidelines and requirements for court governance.

GC sections 13400 through 13407 require state agencies to establish and maintain internal controls, including proper segregation of duties and an effective system of internal review.

We performed the audit at the request of the Judicial Council of California. The authority is provided by Interagency Agreement No. 1034558, dated September 5, 2017, between the SCO and the Judicial Council of California.

## **Objective, Scope, and Methodology**

The objective of our audit was to determine whether the court complied with governing statutes, rules, and regulations relating to the validity of recorded revenues, expenditures, and fund balances of all material and significant funds under its administration, jurisdiction, and control.

The audit period was July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017.

Specifically, we conducted this audit to determine whether:

- Revenues were consistent with authorizing GC sections 77000 through 77013 requiring that they be properly supported by documentation and recorded accurately in the accounting records;
- Expenditures were properly authorized, adequately supported, accurately recorded in the accounting records, and incurred pursuant to authorizing GC sections 77000 through 77013 requiring consistency with the fund's purpose; and
- Fund balances were reported based on the Legal/Budgetary basis of accounting and maintained in accordance with fund accounting principles.

To accomplish our objective, we:

### General Procedures

- Reviewed the court's Governance Policies, the Budget Act, the Manual of State Funds, GC sections 13400 through 13407 and 77000 through 77013, CRC, the *Trial Court Financial Policies and Procedures Manual*, and relevant internal policies and procedures to identify compliance requirements applicable to trial court for revenues, expenditures, and fund balances.

### Internal Controls

- Reviewed current policies and procedures, organization charts, and the court's website, and interviewed court staff to gain an understanding of the internal control environment;
- Assessed whether key internal controls, such as reviews and approvals, reconciliations, and segregation of duties were properly designed, implemented, and operating effectively by performing walk-throughs of revenue and expenditure transactions;
- Evaluated the court's formal written internal policies and procedures;
- Completed internal control questionnaires by interviewing key staff, and observed the business operations for the purpose of evaluating cash-handling and internal accounting controls; and
- Reviewed the court's documentation and financial records supporting the validity of recorded revenues, expenditures, and fund balances.

We performed the following tests of transactions to ensure adherence with prescribed procedures and to validate and test the effectiveness of controls:

#### Revenue Substantive Testing

- Tested revenue transactions of the General Fund, the Non-Grant Special Revenue Fund, and the Grant Special Revenue Fund by selecting non-statistical samples (see the table below) to determine whether revenues were consistent with authorizing Government Code sections, properly supported by documentation, and recorded accurately in the accounting records;
- Tested individual revenue accounts that exceeded \$500,000, totaling \$49,713,736 out of \$93,086,257, or 53.4% of the total revenues (see the table below for percentages of revenue accounts sampled); and
- Judgmentally sampled a minimum of 10%, or 10 total line items, of the selected revenue accounts, consisting of large-dollar-amount transactions within each account sampled, and traced to supporting documentation.

We did not identify any errors in the samples.

The following table identifies total revenues by account and related amounts tested:

Revenue Accounts	Total Revenues	Percentage Total	Amount Tested	Percentage Tested
<u>State Financing Sources</u>				
Trial Court Trust Fund	\$ 75,278,963	80.9%	\$ 42,171,607	56.0%
Judges' Compensation	561,073	0.6%	49,083	8.7%
Court Interpreter	3,505,539	3.8%	679,256	19.4%
MOU Reimbursements	1,174,100	1.3%	176,896	15.1%
Other Miscellaneous	3,560,592	3.8%	3,560,592	100.0%
	<u>84,080,267</u>		<u>46,637,434</u>	
<u>Grants</u>				
AB 1058 Commissioner/Facilitator	1,698,283	1.8%	501,214	29.5%
	<u>1,698,283</u>		<u>501,214</u>	
<u>Other Financing Sources</u>				
Local Fees	3,070,696	3.3%	1,511,912	49.2%
Enhanced Collections	1,502,817	1.6%	516,879	34.4%
County Program-Restricted	924,609	1.0%	265,302	28.7%
Reimbursement Other	966,348	1.0%	280,995	29.1%
	<u>6,464,470</u>		<u>2,575,088</u>	
Other Accounts <sup>1</sup>	843,237	0.9%	-	
	<u>843,237</u>		<u>-</u>	
Total Revenues	<u>\$ 93,086,257</u>	100.0%	<u>\$ 49,713,736</u>	53.4%

<sup>1</sup> Other Accounts were not selected for testing.

Expenditure Substantive Testing

- Tested expenditure transactions of the General Fund, the Non-Grant Special Revenue Fund, and the Grant Special Revenue Fund to determine whether expenditures were incurred pursuant to authorizing Government Code sections consistent with the fund’s purpose, properly authorized, adequately supported, and accurately recorded in the accounting records; and
- Tested individual expenditure accounts that exceeded \$500,000, totaling \$2,750,093 of \$13,450,865, or 20.4% of total expenditures (see the table below for percentages of expenditure accounts sampled).

We did not identify any errors in the sample.

The following table identifies total expenditures by account and related amounts tested:

Expenditure Accounts	Total Expenditures	Percentage Total	Amount Tested	Percentage Tested
<u>Personnel Services<sup>1</sup></u>				
Salaries – Permanent Employees	\$ 48,695,105	52.4%		
Staff Benefits	29,572,511	31.8%		
	78,267,616			
<u>Operating Expenditures and Equipment</u>				
General Expense	2,679,604	2.9%	\$ 227,634	8.5%
Telecommunications	629,691	0.7%	293,296	46.6%
Facility Operations	1,705,129	1.8%	593,660	34.8%
Contracted Services	4,868,125	5.2%	627,711	12.9%
Consulting and Professional Services	628,691	0.7%	189,594	30.2%
Information Technology	1,486,297	1.6%	450,987	30.3%
Major Equipment	635,763	0.7%	359,700	56.6%
	12,633,300		2,742,582	
<u>Special Items of Expenditure</u>				
Jury Costs	817,565	0.9%	7,511	0.9%
	817,565		7,511	
Total Expenditures Selected for Testing <sup>2</sup>	13,450,865		\$ 2,750,093	20.4%
Other Accounts <sup>3</sup>	1,190,942	1.3%		
	1,190,942			
Total Expenditures	\$ 92,909,423	100.0%		

<sup>1</sup> Personnel Services were tested using a different methodology.

<sup>2</sup> Amount excludes Personnel Services and Other Accounts not selected for testing.

<sup>3</sup> Other Accounts were not selected for testing.

- For Salaries – Permanent Employees, we selected 10 employees out of 581 from a list provided by the court for one pay period in October 2016 and one pay period in April 2017, and reconciled the amounts to supporting documentation to ensure that:
  - Employee time included supervisory approval;
  - Overtime was authorized;
  - Regular earnings were supported by the Salary Resolution; and
  - Regular earnings tied back to the general ledger;

- For Staff Benefits, we selected the same 10 employees out of 581 from a list provided by the court for one pay period in October 2016 and one pay period in April 2017, and reconciled the amounts to supporting documentation and the general ledger; and
- For Operating Expenditures and Equipment, and Special Items of Expenditure, we judgmentally sampled a minimum of 10%, or 10 total line items, of the selected expenditure accounts consisting of large dollar amounts, and traced the amounts to supporting documentation.

Fund Balance Substantive Testing

- Tested expenditure transactions of the General Fund, the Non-Grant Special Revenue Fund, and the Grant Special Revenue Fund to determine whether transactions were reported based on the Legal/Budgetary basis of accounting and maintained in accordance with fund accounting principles (see the table below for transaction summary by fund);
- Verified the accuracy of individual fund balances in the court’s financial supporting documentation; and
- Recalculated sampled funds to ensure that fund balances as of June 30, 2017, were accurate and in compliance with applicable criteria.

We did not identify any errors in the sample.

The following table identifies changes in fund balances:

	General Fund	Non-Grant Special Revenue Fund	Grant Special Revenue Fund	Total
Beginning Balance	\$ 5,654,694	\$ 1,492,751	\$ -	\$ 7,147,445
Revenues	87,037,574	3,944,310	2,104,374	93,086,258
Expenditures	(88,141,166)	(2,537,871)	(2,230,385)	(92,909,422)
Transfers In	1,029,725	-	126,011	1,155,736
Transfers Out	-	(1,155,736)	-	(1,155,736)
Ending Balance	<u>\$ 5,580,827</u>	<u>\$ 1,743,454</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 7,324,281</u>
Percent Change	<u>(1.3%)</u>	<u>16.8%</u>	<u>0.0%</u>	

We conducted this performance audit under the authority of GC section 77206(h). We conducted the audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective.

We limited our review of the court’s internal controls to gaining an understanding of the significant internal controls within the context of the audit objective. We did not audit the court’s financial statements.

**Conclusion**

Our audit found that the court complied with statutes, rules, and regulations relating to the validity of recorded revenues, expenditures, and fund balances for the period of July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017. However, we found the following weaknesses in the administrative and internal accounting control system, which are described in the Findings and Recommendations section of this report:

- Inadequate internal controls over the cash-handling process; and
- Failure to follow up on unclaimed trust accounts.

**Follow-up on  
Prior Audit  
Findings**

This is the first audit performed at the court pursuant to GC section 77206(h); however, the court was audited by the Judicial Council of California's Internal Audit Services in May 2010. That audit identified inadequate controls over the court's cash-handling process, which is an ongoing issue in the current engagement (see Finding 1).

**Views of  
Responsible  
Officials**

We provided the court with a preliminary final audit report on August 7, 2018. Rick Beard, Chief Financial Officer, responded by letter dated August 10, 2018 (Attachment), agreeing with the audit results. This final audit report includes the court's response.

**Restricted Use**

This final report is solely intended for the information and use of the Superior Court of Sacramento County, the Judicial Council of California, and the SCO; it is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties. This restriction is not intended to limit the distribution of this report, which is a matter of public record and is available on the SCO website at [www.sco.ca.gov](http://www.sco.ca.gov).

*Original signed by*

JEFFREY V. BROWNFIELD, CPA  
Chief, Division of Audits

August 14, 2018

# Findings and Recommendations

## **FINDING 1— Inadequate internal controls over the cash-handling process**

During our review of the court’s internal controls, we found that it does not have adequate internal controls over the cash-handling process. The court did not follow its cashiering policies and procedures. Cash collection is one of the major components of reported revenues; therefore, inadequate cash controls could affect the accuracy of reported revenues.

We identified deficiencies in the following areas:

- Court supervisors do not always ensure that cashiers are adequately safeguarding cash. We observed at two cash collection points where staff members did not keep their drawer keys secured with them at all times. There were several instances in which staff members left keys unsecured on their desks or in keyholes while not at their stations, or when leaving the room altogether.
- Unprocessed mail is not secured when same-day processing does not occur. We observed that mail not processed during the day was left unsecured in a filing cart. In addition, management does not provide counter workers the mail payment totals to be processed. Therefore, no verification and reconciliation occurs between the amount that is received and the amount processed.
- During our review of the cashier overages and shortages report, it was brought to our attention that on June 19, 2017, there was a \$480 discrepancy in the amount reported and the amount verified.
- During our cash control interview and observation at the court locations, we found the following:
  - Safe combinations were not changed periodically; and
  - Safes were not secured, and remained open throughout the day.
- We observed that cashiers carry money bags from upstairs to the safe downstairs with no security. The route that the cashiers travel is in plain view of the public and, thus, the potential exists for the money bags to be tampered with or stolen.
- We observed that the barriers between the cashiers and the public are insufficient. Due to the insufficient barriers, the cashier’s drawers could be tampered with or stolen from by the public.

GC section 13401(a) (5) states, “Systems of internal control are necessarily dynamic and must be routinely monitored, continuously evaluated, and, where necessary, improved.” The development and implementation of internal control procedures will improve the integrity of financial reporting and help court staff more effectively comply with governing statutes and procedures.

### Recommendation

We recommend that the court follow its cashiering policies and procedures to strengthen its controls over the cash-handing process to ensure the proper reporting of revenues in the financial statements and the safeguarding of cash assets.

### Court Response

The court agrees that there is a continual need to review and constantly strengthen cash handling processes. The court is confident that its cash handling is adequately controlled and there is a high level of accuracy in reported revenues. The following are short notes on each bullet point in this SCO audit finding:

- Court staff are periodically reminded to maintain their drawer keys and not leave them unattended at any time. We acknowledge that during busy times, staff may quickly leave their area with their key in their drawer. In addition, the court has a very visible presence of Sheriff's personnel throughout the building, including at the entrance areas. The court audit and/or finance management will provide periodic reminders to management with responsibility over these cash handling areas on the importance of [ensuring that] staff safeguard cash.
- Unprocessed mail is maintained in a secured room that is locked by the Supervisor at the end of each day. The mail is in a mail cart, unopened.
- A one-time occurrence at days end resulted in the need to reconcile an amount the next morning. All documents concerning the amount in question were securely locked in a desk drawer and processed first thing the next morning. Management will put in a place an acceptable/auditable secure option for any such occurrences in the future.
- The court has recently changed the safe combinations at all court locations except one, which will be changed later in August 2018 after an incumbent employee leaves. In addition, the court has developed listings of all staff with access to each safe and a procedure to maintain these listings along with schedules that dictate when safe combinations will be changed in the future.
- In the Traffic courthouse, staff must move cash bags from the first to second floor via the building's central staircase. There is no alternative and, as a deterrent, entrance security staff are located within twenty feet of the bottom of the staircase.
- In order for a cash drawer to be tampered with, a customer would have to reach over three feet across the counter, open the drawer in plain sight of several other staff, remove any drawer contents, then exit the room and make their way past entrance security staff. Currently, neither funding nor the ability exists to provide barriers to remove this possible action. At the downtown courthouse, such modifications would require ADA compliant remodeling which increases the cost to well over a million dollars based on estimates from the mid 2000's. In addition the downtown courthouse is now scheduled to be replaced as early as 2023. The new building will be designed to eliminate this potential problem.

The court will continue to stress the importance of following the cash handling processes in place to ensure the security of the revenues collected at each courthouse. The court’s Audit Unit will continue to provide spot checks and other reviews periodically for [ensuring] compliance.

**FINDING 2—  
Failure to follow up  
on unclaimed trust  
accounts**

During our review of the aging of the court’s trust accounts, we found that the court did not reclassify \$6,248,472 of unclaimed trust accounts older than three years. GC section 68084.1(a) and (b) states that owners of trust accounts older than three years should be notified and if the money is not claimed, it becomes the property of the court.

Our audit found that the following accounts did not comply with statutory requirements:

Trust Account	Amount Older than June 30, 2014
Civil Trust	\$ 5,262,571
Criminal Law Trust	258,439
Family Law Trust	272,258
Probate Trust	14,248
Small Claims Trust	319,230
South Sacramento Municipal Court Trust	8,614
Traffic Trust	92,850
Unlawful Detainer Trust	20,262
Total	<u>\$ 6,248,472</u>

The court has not taken any action or published any notices to return these funds to lawful owners. The error occurred because the court does not have the necessary staff resources to maintain up-to-date notices for the trust accounts.

GC section 68084.1(a) states:

A superior court holding in trust for the lawful owner, in a court bank account or in a court trust account in a county treasury, that remains unclaimed for three years, shall become the property of the superior court if, after published notice, the money is not claimed or no verified complaint is filed and served. Money representing restitution collected on behalf of victims that remains unclaimed for three years shall be deposited either into the State Restitution Fund or into the general fund of a county that administers a victim services program exclusively for the provision of victim services.

GC section 68084.1(b) states:

At any time after the expiration of the three-year, the executive officer of the superior court may cause a notice to be published once a week for two successive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation published in the county in which the court is located. The notice shall state the amount of money, the fund in which it is held, and that it is proposed that the money will become the property of the court on a designated date not less than 45 days nor more than 60 days after the first publication of the notice.

### Recommendation

We recommend that the court establish and implement procedures to maintain up-to-date notices for all trust accounts.

### Court Response

The court agrees that this area requires attention. The court had made strides to work down some of this backlog in 2007. Unfortunately the court has not had the availability of staff [in accounting or operations] to maintain the various components of the trust account processes as set forth in the cited government code sections. The court's Accounting Office in 2007 specifically added an Accountant position to handle this task. Unfortunately the incumbent left the position within one year and the economic downturn at the time did not allow the position to be refilled, along with several other vacated positions in the unit. The position has remained unfilled to date. The process to research and determine the actual status of the trust deposits is time consuming and requires much assistance from operational staff. The court is currently in the process of developing and implementing three new case management systems which require[s] a large amount of staff time, both operational and accounting staff. This further limits the available time and key personnel necessary to tackle the trust backlog.

The court has recently laid out an internal process to address the trust account issue by working foreclosure case trust accounts. Accounting staff, following the completion of year-end work, will begin to work the criminal trust backlog, then small claims, with the other areas to be prioritized. This added workload will be blended into the existing workload for staff. Court accounting staff will work with the affected operational areas to develop an efficient process to ensure these cases are reviewed and follow the guidelines established in the cited government codes. Lastly, the court is currently evaluating alternatives based on conversations with other courts to handle this backlog either by adding a dedicated staff position or by utilizing outside contractor assistance.

**Attachment—  
Court's Response to Audit Findings**

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SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION  
RICK BEARD  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

720 NINTH STREET  
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814  
(916) 874-7133

August 10, 2018

Ms. Lisa Kurokawa, Chief  
Compliance Audits Bureau  
State Controller's Office, Division of Audits  
Post Office Box 942850  
Sacramento, CA 94250

Ms. Kurokawa:

This correspondence provides the Sacramento Superior Court's responses to the two audit findings from the Audit Report of the Superior Court of Sacramento County on the Validity of Recorded Revenues, Expenditures, and Fund Balances covering the period July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017. We understand that these court responses will be incorporated into the final report for this audit.

Should you have further questions or require additional information, please contact me at (916) 874-8133.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Beard", is written over a horizontal line.

Rick Beard  
Chief Financial Officer

Cc: Mr. Lloyd Connelly, Court CEO  
Mr. Jim Lombard, Deputy Court CEO

Attachment

**August 2018 SCO Audit Report of the Superior Court of Sacramento on the Validity of Recorded Revenues, Expenditures, and Fund Balances for the period July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017**

**FINDING 1 – Inadequate internal controls over the cash-handling process**

*SCO Recommendation: that the court follow its cashiering policies and procedures to strengthen its controls over the cash handling process to ensure the proper reporting of revenues in the financial statements and the safeguarding of cash assets.*

**Court Response** – The court agrees that there is a continual need to review and constantly strengthen cash handling processes. The court is confident that its cash handling is adequately controlled and there is a high level of accuracy in reported revenues. The following are short notes on each bullet point in this SCO audit finding:

- Court staff are periodically reminded to maintain their drawer keys and not leave them unattended at any time. We acknowledge that during busy times, staff may quickly leave their area with their key in their drawer. In addition, the court has a very visible presence of Sheriff's personnel throughout the building, including at the entrance areas. The court audit and/or finance management will provide periodic reminders to management with responsibility over these cash handling areas on the importance of instilling staff safeguard cash.
- Unprocessed mail is maintained in a secured room that is locked by the Supervisor at the end of each day. The mail is in a mail cart, unopened.
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The court will continue to stress the importance of following the cash handling processes in place to ensure the security of the revenues collected at each courthouse. The court's Audit Unit will continue to provide spot checks and other reviews periodically for ensure compliance.

**FINDING 2 - Failure to follow up on unclaimed trust accounts**

*SCO Recommendation: that the court establish and implement procedures to maintain up-to-date notices for all trust accounts.*

**Court Response** – The court agrees that this area requires attention. The court had made strides to work down some of this backlog in 2007. Unfortunately the court has not had the availability of staff, neither in accounting nor operations, to maintain the various components of the trust account processes as set forth in the cited government code sections. The court's Accounting Office in 2007 specifically added an Accountant position to handle this task. Unfortunately the incumbent left the position within one year and the economic downturn at the time did not allow the position to be refilled, along with several other vacated positions in the unit. The position has remained unfilled to date. The process to research and determine the actual status of the trust deposits is time consuming and requires much assistance from operational staff. The court is currently in the process of developing and implementing three new case management systems which require a large amount of staff time, both operational and accounting staff. This further limits the available time and key personnel necessary to tackle the trust backlog.

The court has recently laid out an internal process to address the trust account issue by working foreclosure case trust accounts. Accounting staff, following the completion of year-end work, will begin to work the criminal trust backlog, then small claims, with the other areas to be prioritized. This added workload will be blended into the existing workload for staff. Court accounting staff will work with the affected operational areas to develop an efficient process to ensure these cases are reviewed and follow the guidelines established in the cited government codes. Lastly, the court is currently evaluating alternatives based on conversations with other courts to handle this backlog either by adding a dedicated staff position or by utilizing outside contractor assistance.

**State Controller's Office  
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