



Judicial Council of California

Data Analytics Advisory Committee

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research@jud.ca.gov

Request for ADA accommodations
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DATA ANALYTICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MATERIALS FOR AUGUST 20, 2026

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DATA ANALYTICS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

NOTICE AND AGENDA OF OPEN MEETING

Open to the Public (Cal. Rules of Court, rule 10.75(c)(1) and (e)(1))

THIS MEETING IS BEING CONDUCTED BY ELECTRONIC MEANS

THIS MEETING IS BEING RECORDED

Date: August 20, 2026
Time: 12:15 P.M. – 1:15 P.M.
Public Call-in Number: <https://jcc.granicus.com/player/event/5782>

Meeting materials will be posted on the advisory body web page on the California Courts website at least three business days before the meeting.

Members of the public seeking to make an audio recording of the meeting must submit a written request at least two business days before the meeting. Requests can be e-mailed to research@jud.ca.gov.

Agenda items are numbered for identification purposes only and will not necessarily be considered in the indicated order.

I. OPEN MEETING (CAL. RULES OF COURT, RULE 10.75(C)(1))

Call to Order and Roll Call, 12:15 P.M – 12:25 P.M. (10 Minutes)

PUBLIC COMMENT (CAL. RULES OF COURT, RULE 10.75(K)(1))

This meeting will be conducted by electronic means with a listen only conference line available for the public. As such, the public may submit comments for this meeting only in writing. In accordance with California Rules of Court, rule 10.75(k)(1), written comments pertaining to any agenda item of a regularly noticed open meeting can be submitted up to one complete business day before the meeting. For this specific meeting, comments should be e-mailed to research@jud.ca.gov or mailed or delivered to 455 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco, California 94102, attention: Ms. Anna Stenkamp. Only written comments received by August 19 12:00 P.M. will be provided to advisory body members prior to the start of the meeting.

II. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS (ITEMS X-X)

Item 1

Draft Judicial Council Report: Judicial Workload Study, 12:25 P.M. – 12:55 P.M. (30 Minutes)

Discuss the draft report to the Judicial Council re: The Judicial Workload Study (JWS).

Presenter(s)/Facilitator(s): Mr. Jake Chatters, Chair

Mr. Mustafa Sagir, Supervising Analyst, JCC

III. INFORMATION ONLY ITEMS (NO ACTION REQUIRED)

Info 1

Assessed Judicial Need (AJN): Ranking and Prioritization Methodology, 12:55 P.M. – 1:15 P.M. (20 Minutes)

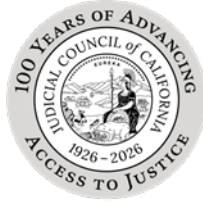
Discuss the Assessed Judicial Need (AJN) Ranking and Prioritization Methodology.

Presenter(s)/Facilitator(s): Mr. Jake Chatters, Chair

Mr. Mustafa Sagir, Supervising Analyst, JCC

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourn 1:15 P.M.



Judicial Council of California

455 Golden Gate Avenue · San Francisco, California 94102-3688

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REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Item No.:

For business meeting on October 15-16, 2026

Judicial Workload Study Update

Judicial Council Report Details

Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected

Not applicable

Recommended by

Data Analytics Advisory Committee

Mr. Jake Chatters, Chair

Judicial Council Staff

Mr. Mustafa Sagir, Supervising Analyst

Research, Analytics, and Data

Report Type

Action Required

Effective Date

October 16, 2026

Date of Report

August 14, 2026

Contact

Mustafa Sagir, 865-7553

Mustafa.Sagir@jud.ca.gov

Executive Summary

The Data Analytics Advisory Committee (DAAC) recommends that the Judicial Council adopt the 2026 Judicial Workload Study (JWS), which includes updated model parameters that are used as part of the formula for assessing judicial need in the trial courts. The council previously approved the JWS in 2001, 2011, and 2019; the current update accounts for changes in the law and practice that have affected judicial workload since the 2019 update.

The 2026 update reflects data collected during a time study conducted August 18 through September 12, 2025, with participation from more than 650 judicial officers across 17 superior courts¹. Los Angeles Superior Court's data from its independent 2024 study was incorporated

¹ Engagement across all surveyed courts was high, with a time study participation rate of 98 percent.

into the analysis, bringing the combined dataset to more than 1,200 judicial officers—over 60 percent of all judicial officers statewide. The study was conducted by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) under contract with the Judicial Council, with oversight by DAAC.

DAAC recommends that the council take three actions to adopt the updated JWS model parameters: the judicial work year, the judicial work day value, and the caseweights. Applying the updated model parameters to the most recent three-year average of filings identifies a need for 159 additional judgeships across 18 superior courts. The full assessed need and prioritization details are presented separately in the 2026 Update of the Judicial Needs Assessment, which will be transmitted to the Judicial Council in a companion report.

Recommendation

The Data Analytics Advisory Committee recommends that the Judicial Council adopt the following JWS parameters for use in evaluating statewide judicial workload and in the biennial judicial needs assessment, to meet the requirements of Government Code section 69614(c)(2), effective October 16, 2026:

1. The updated **Judicial Work Year** of 212 available working days for use in the JWS model, as described in the Analysis section below;
2. The updated **Judicial Work Day Value** of 431 minutes of case-related time per available working day for use in the JWS model, as described in the Analysis section below; and
3. The **2026 Judicial Workload Study updated caseweights** for use in evaluating statewide judicial workload, as detailed in Attachment A.

The proposed 2026 JWS Update – Draft Caseweights and Standards is available as Attachment A.

Relevant Previous Council Action

The methodology for determining the number of judgeships needed in the trial courts was first approved by the Judicial Council in August 2001² and later modified and approved by the council in August 2004.³ The August 2001 action, among other things, approved a set of workload standards (caseweights) that would be used to conduct statewide assessments of judicial need. The council also directed staff to develop a process to periodically review and update the workload standards (Judicial Workload Study). The August 2004 modification revised

² <https://courts.ca.gov/sites/default/files/courts/default/2024-12/judneedsreview.pdf>

³ <https://courts.ca.gov/sites/default/files/courts/default/2024-12/0804item6.pdf>

how filings data are incorporated into the model, replacing a single year of filings with a three-year average to smooth year-to-year fluctuations.

The model was updated with new workload study data in 2010, and the resulting updated caseweights were approved by the Judicial Council in December 2011.⁴ The most recent prior update was based on a time study conducted in 2018 and was approved by the Judicial Council on September 24, 2019.⁵

The JWS parameters are used to calculate the biennial Judicial Needs Assessment across California's superior courts. The current recommendation updates those parameters based on data from the 2025 time study, replacing reliance on the 2019 caseweights and standards. The 2026 Update of the Judicial Needs Assessment, which applies the recommended parameters to the most recent three-year average of filings, will be transmitted to the Judicial Council in a companion report.

Analysis/Rationale

Overview of the Judicial Workload Study

The Judicial Workload Study is a workload-based model used to assess judicial need in the trial courts. Also known as weighted caseload models, workload models are the nationally accepted methodology for assessing judicial workload; approximately 30 states have used this approach. The Judicial Council of California contracted with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) for the current 2026 JWS update. NCSC has served as the consultant for California's prior workload studies (2001 and 2011) and has conducted similar studies in nearly 30 other states.

Weighted caseload measures the judicial workload associated with cases of different types, recognizing that some case types require more court resources than others. To provide context, Figure 1 presents the distribution of three-year average filings by case type. Infractions account for nearly three in five cases filed statewide—58.3 percent of all filings. Felonies, one of the most time-demanding case types, represent less than 4 percent, and felony and family cases combined make up just over 10 percent of filings. Filing volume alone is a misleading measure of judicial workload: it tells us how many cases come through the door, not how much judicial time each one requires.

⁴ <https://courts.ca.gov/sites/default/files/courts/default/2024-12/jc-121211-item3.pdf>

⁵ https://courts.ca.gov/sites/default/files/courts/default/2024-12/lr-2019-update-of-judicial-needs-assessment-gov-69614c1_3.pdf

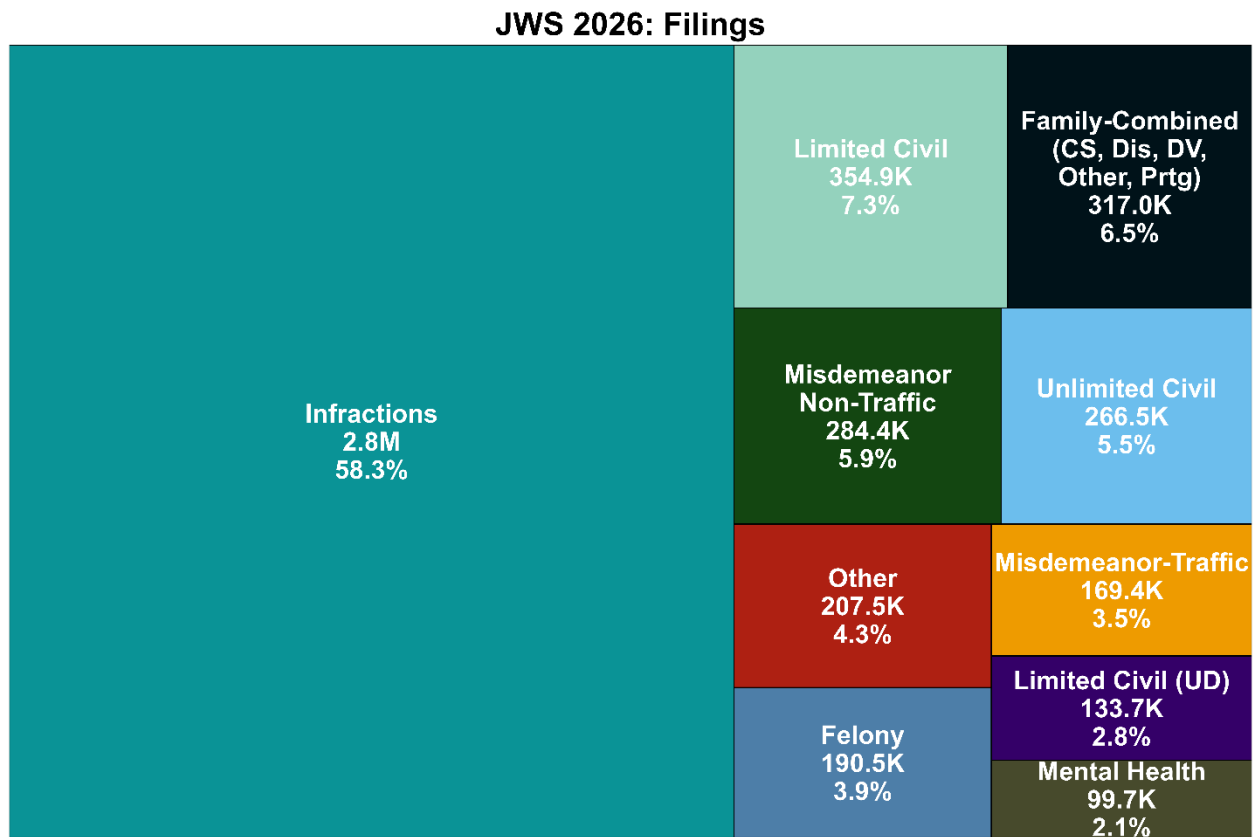


Figure 1: Distribution of Three-Year Average Filings by Case Type (FY 2022-23 through 2024-25)

When filings are weighted by their caseweights—accounting for the average judicial time each case type demands—the picture changes substantially. Figure 2 presents the weighted caseloads. Felonies, which make up less than 4 percent of filings, account for 27.5 percent of statewide judicial workload. Family cases combined represent 21.9 percent. Together, felony and family cases account for nearly half of the statewide workload. Filings measure volume; caseweights translate that volume into workload. Without this adjustment, resource and staffing decisions would systematically underestimate the workload in courts handling more time-intensive case types.

JWS 2026: Filings x Caseweights

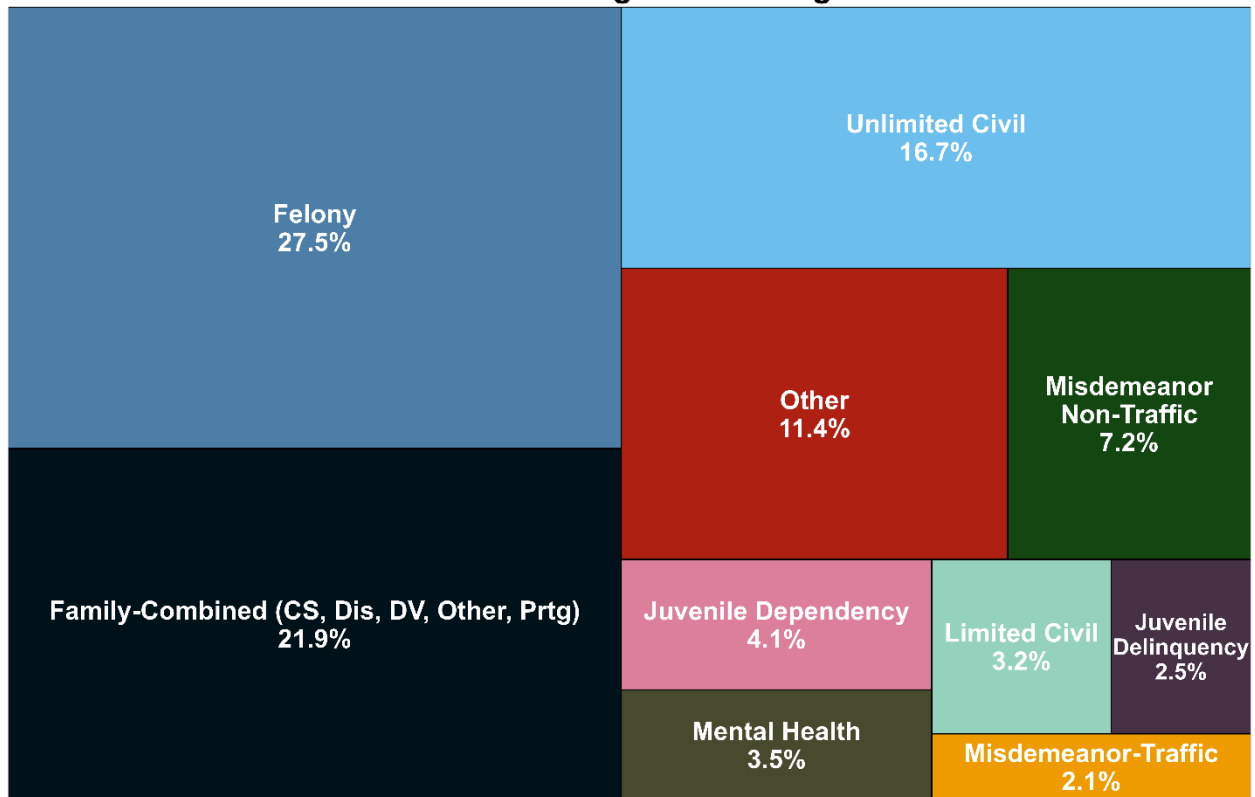


Figure 2: Distribution of Weighted Caseload by Case Type (FY 2022-23 through 2024-25)

The Judicial Workload Study measures how judicial officers in California currently spend their time; it does not prescribe how they should. Model parameters such as caseweights and non-case-related time allowances are descriptive averages derived from observed practice during the time study, reflecting the average time California judicial officers spend to resolve specific case types from filing through postdisposition, as well as the average time spent on non-case-related activities. They are not standards, benchmarks, or recommendations for how an individual judicial officer should allocate time to any particular case or activity. The parameters exist to translate observed workload into a statewide estimate of judicial need; they are not tools for evaluating individual judicial performance.

Why Update the Workload Measures?

Court workload can arise from a new court filing or from a new step or process in an existing case. Changes in the law, technology, and case processing practices therefore require periodically remeasuring workload in the courts. These changes are reflected not only in the number of court filings, but also in the judicial time required to process each filing. The caseweights currently in use were derived from the 2018 time study and adopted in 2019; they do not reflect subsequent changes, including legislatively mandated postdisposition relief,

technological advancements, the expanded use of remote proceedings, and societal behavior shifts in the post-pandemic period. Adopting the updated caseweights derived from the 2025 time study ensures that these changes are reflected in current workload estimates.

Judicial Workload Study Methodology

The California JWS relies on three basic components: (1) a three-year annual average of filings; (2) caseweights that estimate the judicial time required to process a case from initial filing through postdisposition; and (3) a judicial work year value that quantifies the case-related time a judicial officer has available in a year. Multiplying filings by caseweights and dividing by the work year value produces an estimate of judicial need expressed as full-time equivalents (FTEs).

Table 1. FTE Need Calculation

$$\text{FTE Need} = \frac{\text{3-Year Average Filings} \times \text{Caseweights}}{\text{Workyear Value (WYV)}}$$

The first two components—caseweights and three-year average filings—represent the **demand** side of judicial need: how many cases arrive and how much judicial time each one requires. The third component—available case-related minutes per year—represents the **capacity** side: how much case-related time a single judicial officer has available in a year to meet that demand.

Caseweights are built from all case-related minutes entered by judicial officers during the time study—including after-hours, weekend, holiday, and time spend by judges from the temporary assigned judges program—summed by case type. Court-level caseweights are then combined into statewide caseweights using the median value across participating courts.

Three-year average filings are used to smooth year-to-year fluctuations while keeping the analysis grounded in the most recent available data.

Available case-related minutes per year measures the capacity of a single judicial officer to perform case-related work over the course of a year. It is derived by subtracting the average non-case-related time entered by judicial officers during the time study from a standard working day, then multiplying the resulting daily case-related minutes by the number of available working days in a year. Weekends, official holidays, and average leave time are excluded from that day count.

Distinguishing demand from capacity matters because the two behave differently over time. Demand is dynamic: filings volume shifts with population, economic conditions, new legislation, and enforcement priorities, and per-case workload shifts with changes in law, technology, and court practice. Capacity, by contrast, is comparatively fixed—a judicial officer's available time in

a year is bounded by the number of working days and the hours in a working day. Capacity itself must also be periodically updated to reflect current practice, even if less susceptible to change than demand. Because capacity has an upper bound, growth in demand eventually requires additional judicial resources rather than being absorbed within existing capacity. This is the essential logic of the JWS: it converts changing demand into a measurable estimate of the judicial capacity required to meet it.

Time Study

The 2026 update is based on a time study conducted August 18 through September 12, 2025. Seventeen superior courts participated in the primary study window, and Los Angeles Superior Court's data from its independent 2024 study was incorporated into the analysis. Combined, the dataset covers over 60 percent of all judicial officers statewide.

Time data were collected using a web-based Daily Time Log, with judicial officers recording time spent on case-related activities (organized by case type and phase of case processing) and non-case-related activities (administrative duties, judicial education and training, community outreach, and committee participation). Ten online training sessions were conducted by NCSC in June and July 2025 to promote uniformity and understanding among participating judicial officers.

Participation

Including Los Angeles, over 1,200 judicial officers in 18 courts participated in the study (see Table 2 and Figure 3). The courts that participated included small, medium, and large courts; rural and urban courts; and all regions of the state—northern, coastal, central, and southern. Study participation rates among judicial officers in the study courts were excellent: the statewide average weekly participation rate was approximately 97 percent throughout the study, and overall total participation was 98 percent. The study requires significant investment of time and resources, and the courts that volunteered to participate should be recognized for their significant contribution.

Table 2. Time Study Participating Courts (alphabetical order)

Court	Court
Butte	San Bernardino
Calaveras	San Francisco
El Dorado	San Luis Obispo
Fresno	Santa Barbara
Humboldt	Santa Clara
Kern	Shasta**
Los Angeles*	Solano

Orange	Sonoma
San Benito	Stanislaus

* Data collected from an independent workload study for Los Angeles in 2024 was incorporated.

** Because of water damage affecting several of its courthouses, Shasta Superior Court was unable to participate during the primary window and collected data only for a limited set of case types in October 2025. However, because those data were insufficient to produce reliable caseweights, they were not incorporated into the study.

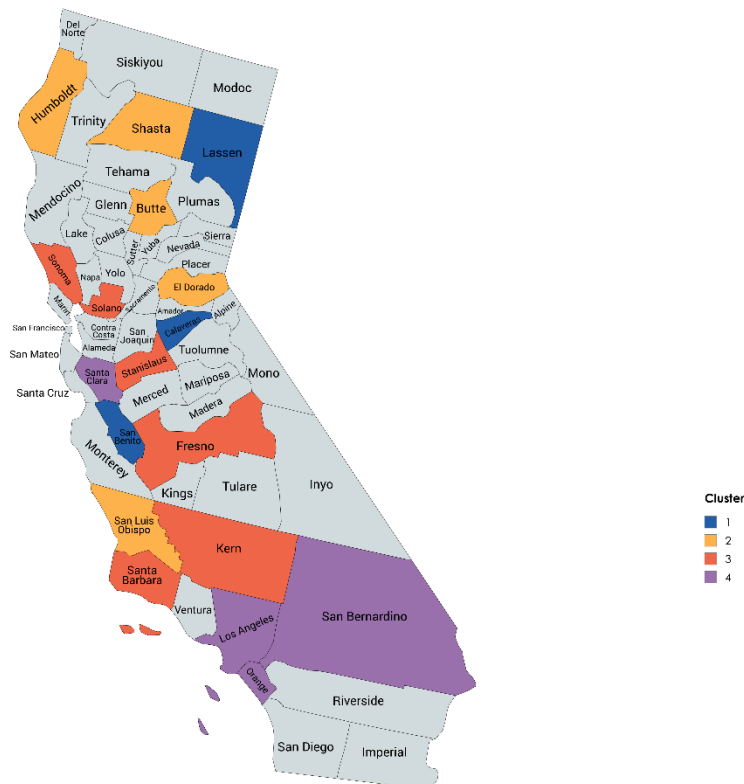


Figure 3: Map of Participating Courts

Key Milestones in the JWS Update Process

- Three preliminary planning meetings with participating courts' presiding judges and court executive officers in June and July 2025 to confirm study scope, case type categories, and receive feedback;
- Ten online training sessions in June and July 2025 to ensure uniformity and understanding among participating judicial officers;
- Time study data collection from August 18 through September 12, 2025;
- Data cleaning, annualization, and preliminary caseweight development by NCSC and Judicial Council Research, Analytics, and Data (RAD) staff;

- Five presiding judge and court executive officer validation meetings in January 2026 to review preliminary caseweights and confirm that observed values reflected legitimate workload variations;
- Sixteen virtual focus group meetings in April and May 2026, involving 4 to 16 judicial officers each, to understand the drivers behind caseweight changes greater than 20 percent compared to the 2019 update.

The 2025 time study accounted for judicial vacancies and temporary assignments in the participating courts. Time from judicial officers who took leave during the study period was imputed based on their non-leave activity so that temporary absences did not understate workload, and time from temporary assigned judges who were not covering short-term leave for another judicial officer was included in the study data. Vacant positions were reflected in each court's caseweight calculation. As a result, the caseweights themselves, which measure the time required to process a case from filing through postdisposition, are not distorted by judicial vacancies in individual courts. Vacancies do, however, continue to shape how judicial officers and court staff experience workload in day-to-day operations, which is one of several factors reflected in the qualitative feedback gathered through the Adequacy of Time Survey and focus groups.

Post-Time Study Analysis

Adequacy of Time Survey

Alongside the 2025 time study, NCSC administered an Adequacy of Time Survey to gather structured input from participating judicial officers on whether they have sufficient time to perform their work, whether the study period reflected typical workload, and how case complexity has evolved. This was the first time an adequacy-of-time instrument was administered in conjunction with a California JWS update. A total of 310 judicial officers across 17 superior courts responded. While Adequacy of Time Surveys were not used to change the caseweights, they were very helpful in understanding the realities of judicial work and perspectives and perceptions of judicial officers in a range of issues related to their work. Three high-level findings warrant particular attention.

- **Judicial officers report limited time for lunch, breaks, and sustained focus during the workday.** Among the nine adequacy-of-time questions asked on a five-point scale, the lowest-scoring item—2.95 out of 5—was whether respondents have time available to take lunch and breaks. The results bear directly on Recommendation 2: the survey data indicate that the 60-

minute lunch-and-break assumption in the recommended work day value is generous relative to what judicial officers report actually taking.⁶

- **Time to resolve cases has increased across every major case type area.** A substantial share of respondents handling each case type reported that cases have grown more time-consuming compared to several years ago: 52 percent for criminal (98 percent of whom identified felonies), 25 percent for mental health, 16 percent for civil, 15 percent for family law, 9 percent for juvenile, and 7 percent for probate. The drivers respondents identified—continuous legislative and appellate change, growth in postdisposition and resentencing work, expanded diversion frameworks, more voluminous digital evidence, and a rise in self-represented litigants using AI-generated filings—foreshadow the case-type-specific caseweight increases discussed in the next subsection.
- **Resource and staffing constraints amplify workload pressures.** Across every case type area, respondents identified shortages of court personnel—research attorneys, clerks, court reporters, interpreters, mental health evaluators, probate examiners, and support staff—as a significant driver of increased judicial time per case. Respondents noted that shortages of specialized personnel, particularly interpreters and mental health evaluators, drive continuances and repeat hearings that extend case timelines.

Taken together, the findings show that judges report time pressure across the workday and that the time required to resolve cases is growing broadly across case types. The next subsection examines how these dynamics are reflected in the updated caseweights.

Caseweight Changes

Following the time study, NCSC and Judicial Council Research, Analytics, and Data (RAD) staff conducted data cleaning, annualization, outlier analysis, and preliminary caseweight development. To ensure that court-level caseweights reflected actual workload in each participating court, NCSC and RAD staff conducted five validation meetings in January 2026 with presiding judges and court executive officers from each of the 17 time study courts. During those meetings, each court reviewed its own caseweights alongside those of other participating courts and confirmed that the caseweights reflected real workload and current practice. All caseweights were reviewed during these validation meetings.

The 2026 update produces caseweights for 23 case types, an increase from the 21 case types used in the 2019 model. Two new case types were added to reflect workload categories not previously captured:

⁶ Work performed by judicial officers during courtroom breaks or time traditionally set aside for lunch was captured by judges in their surveys and is reflected in case-related and non-case related time. In this way this workload demand is captured and included in overall demand as described on page 6 and 7.

- **Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Act petitions.** Statewide implementation of the CARE Act began December 1, 2024, creating a new petition category with a workload profile that differs substantially from existing mental health and probate case types. Because CARE filings were not yet reported through the Judicial Branch Statistical Information System (JBSIS) at the time of the study, filing data were collected manually, and per-month filings were annualized to produce a full-year estimate. The 2026 caseweight for CARE Act petitions is 205 minutes per filing. Because CARE Act filings were manually collected and annualized, and JBSIS reporting integration is still pending, these values should be considered provisional and will be revisited once 3-Year filings is available across all courts.
- **Appellate Division Appeals.** Presiding judges and court executive officers indicated during preliminary planning meetings in June and July 2025 that appellate workload is meaningfully different from the underlying case types from which appeals originate and should be measured separately. Time for these appeals was captured as a distinct category during the 2025 time study, producing a caseweight of 405 minutes per filing.

Beyond the two new categories, several existing caseweights changed by more than 20 percent compared to the 2019 update. The case types with the most significant movement include felony, misdemeanor traffic, complex civil, limited civil – unlawful detainer, small claims, family law – child support, family law – domestic violence, family law – other, juvenile dependency, juvenile delinquency, and mental health. All but one of these movements represents an increase; complex civil is the exception.

The direction and magnitude of the increases align closely with the Adequacy of Time Survey findings summarized above. The survey identified growth in the time required to resolve cases as a widespread phenomenon across every major case type area; the caseweight changes show that growth translating into measurable, per-case increases in judicial time. Similarly, the resource and staffing shortages that survey respondents identified as amplifying workload pressures—particularly interpreter and mental health evaluator shortages—appear in the case types most affected by continuances and repeat hearings, which are the case types showing the largest caseweight increases.

Case types that did not experience changes greater than 20 percent—including infractions, misdemeanor non-traffic, unlimited civil, limited civil (without UD), asbestos, family law – dissolution, family law – parentage, estates/trusts/probate – other, conservatorship/guardianship, and EDD—reflect either stable per-case workload since 2019 or offsetting factors.

Focus Groups

Following the January 2026 validation meetings, NCSC and RAD staff conducted 16 virtual focus groups in April and May 2026 to examine the operational drivers behind the case types with the most significant caseweight changes. Each session included 4 to 16 judicial officers

from participating courts, and the sessions collectively covered seven case type areas that experienced more than a 20 percent caseweight change compared to the 2019 update: Felony, Misdemeanor Traffic, Mental Health, Juvenile (Delinquency and Dependency combined), Family Law (Child Support, Domestic Violence, and Other Petitions combined), Small Claims, and Unlawful Detainer.

The focus groups were structured to distinguish predictable trends from unexpected variations and to help staff understand whether the caseweight changes reflected genuine shifts in workload or artifacts of the study period. While each session surfaced case-type-specific drivers, seven overarching themes emerged as cross-cutting drivers appearing across multiple case types. Table 3 summarizes which themes were identified as meaningful drivers in each case type area.

Table 3. Cross-Cutting Themes Across Case Types

Overarching Theme	Felony	Misdemeanor Traffic	Mental Health	Juvenile	Family Law	Small Claims	Unlawful Detainer
Legislative & Regulatory Change	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Resource & Capacity Gaps	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Technology Issues (AI, Zoom, CMS, etc.)	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
More Time-Consuming Case Concentration	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Preparedness & Incivility	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Self-Represented Litigants			✓	✓	✓		✓
Diversion-Related Issues	✓	✓	✓	✓			

✓ Theme identified as a meaningful driver across focus group sessions for the case type. Empty cells indicate the theme was not prominently identified.

The most universal finding was **legislative and regulatory change**, identified as a meaningful driver of workload change in all seven case type areas. This theme reflects the cumulative effect of statutory reforms enacted since the 2018 study—including postdisposition relief mechanisms, expanded diversion, procedural changes to unlawful detainer, and new petition categories such as the CARE Act—each of which has added judicial steps to case processing without necessarily changing filing volumes.

Resource and capacity gaps were the second most widely cited theme, appearing in six of the seven case type areas. Focus group participants pointed to shortages of court interpreters, mental health evaluators, and other specialized personnel, and to the downstream scheduling effects those shortages produce—including continuances, repeat hearings, and extended case timelines

that increase per-case judicial time. This theme mirrors the resource-and-staffing findings from the Adequacy of Time Survey.

Technology issues—including the integration of AI tools, ongoing use of remote proceedings, and case management system (CMS) limitations—were identified in five case type areas.

Participants described technology as a double-edged factor: while some tools reduce administrative burden, others introduce new workload through troubleshooting, hybrid-proceeding management, and workflow adjustments.

More time-consuming case concentration—the phenomenon of the case mix within a given case type shifting toward more complex or contested matters—was identified in five case type areas. **Preparedness and incivility** concerns, encompassing counsel and party preparedness and courtroom conduct issues that extend hearing time, similarly appeared in five case type areas.

Self-represented litigants were identified as a significant workload factor in four case type areas, particularly those with high volumes of pro per participants: Mental Health, Juvenile, Family Law, and Unlawful Detainer. Focus group participants noted that self-represented proceedings typically require additional judicial time for procedural guidance, explanation, and record development. **Diversion-related issues**—including the judicial supervision workload associated with diversion programs and the procedural complexity of diversion eligibility determinations—also appeared in four case type areas.

Taken together, the focus group findings from judicial officers across participating courts confirm that the caseweight increases reflected in the 2026 update are not isolated to a single court or a single case type. They represent broad, systemic changes in how California courts are processing cases, consistent with both the case-complexity findings from the Adequacy of Time Survey and the qualitative feedback received during the January 2026 validation meetings.

DAAC Meetings and Discussions

Throughout the study period, DAAC provided guidance and oversight on the conduct of the JWS update and all significant methodological decisions. At its March 2026 meeting, DAAC approved the model parameters and the caseweight measurement approach for specific case types, including:⁷

- Use of the median across participating courts as the primary statewide caseweight aggregation method, except for the complex civil case type;
- Retention of all outlier values in the court-level caseweights when calculating statewide caseweights;

⁷ https://courts.ca.gov/system/files/file/materials_daac_march_25_2026.pdf

- A hybrid approach for asbestos combining San Francisco Superior Court's adjusted data with Los Angeles Superior Court's independent caseweight, to account for the limited number of courts handling this workload;
- A mean-based approach for complex civil across the five courts with substantial complex civil activity (Los Angeles, San Francisco, Orange, Santa Clara, and San Bernardino), consistent with prior JWS practice;
- An updated judicial work year value of 212 available working days; and
- An updated judicial work day value of 431 minutes of case-related time per available working day.

Following the March 2026 approval of the model parameters, NCSC and Judicial Council staff calculated the updated caseweights. The full recommendation was presented to DAAC at its May 2026 meeting for approval to forward to the Judicial Council. Based on questions raised outside of DAAC meetings regarding the updated judicial work day value, the item was revisited by the committee at its July 2026 meeting; the committee retained the value adopted at its March 2026 meeting.

Recommendation 1: Adopt the Updated Judicial Work Year

DAAC recommends that the Judicial Council adopt an updated judicial work year of 212 available working days. This value represents the number of days a judicial officer is available for work in a calendar year after accounting for weekends, official holidays, vacation, sick leave, and training days. The 2019 study used a judicial work year of 215 days. The 2026 value reflects two updates:

- Data on vacation, sick leave, and training days drawn from the 2025 time study courts, which allowed the components of the work year to be re-derived from current practice; and
- The addition of Juneteenth as an official holiday, which added one holiday since the 2019 update.

Alternatives Considered

DAAC considered retaining the 2019 work year value of 215 days and considered alternative combinations of the underlying components (vacation, sick, and training day assumptions). DAAC concluded that using components derived from data collected in the time study courts best reflects contemporary judicial practice and is consistent with the study's overall approach of grounding model parameters in observed data. The 212-day value excludes 104 weekends, 14 holidays (including Juneteenth), and 35 days of combined vacation, sick, and training/education absence. The committee discussed alternative combinations and ultimately rejected them in favor of the recommended approach. If the council prefers an alternative to the recommended judicial work year, the matter would need to be referred back to DAAC for further consideration before adoption.

Recommendation 2: Adopt the Updated Judicial Work Day Value

DAAC recommends that the Judicial Council adopt an updated judicial work day value of 431 minutes of case-related time per available working day. The judicial work day value is derived as follows:

- A 9-hour (540-minute) working day;
- Less 60 minutes for lunch and breaks; and
- Less 49 minutes for non-case-related activities such as administrative duties, meetings, community outreach, and committee participation.

It is important to emphasize that the judicial work day value is a study construct used to translate observed time study data into an full time equivalent (FTE)-based measure of judicial need. It is not a prescription for how any individual judicial officer must structure a day, nor a standard for evaluating an individual judge's performance or work hours. The work day value is used solely to calculate the average capacity of available case-related minutes per judicial officer per year, which is then applied in the workload measurement formula.

Alternatives Considered

DAAC considered two principal alternatives to the recommended work day value:

Longer non-case-related time allowance. Some committee members observed that judicial officers report substantial non-case-related workload—including administrative responsibilities, judicial education, and committee service—and suggested that the 49-minute allowance may understate this workload. DAAC ultimately concluded that the 49-minute figure is grounded in observed data from the 2025 time study, with closely aligned values reported across participating courts and no meaningful outliers, and best reflects current practice on average. This reflects a change from prior studies where non-case related time was based on a fixed assumption rather than observed data. Using observed data in this way is an effort to mature the model to capture actual work-day, afterhours, and weekend non-case related work. Additional analysis of non-case-related time can be pursued in future study cycles.

Increased lunch/break time from 60 minutes to 90 minutes. This alternative reflects the view that judicial officers may need more time for lunch and breaks during a given working day and that a 60-minute assumption may underestimate better practice. Under this alternative, the work day value would be 9 hours less 90 minutes less 49 minutes, or 401 minutes of case-related time per day.

The committee discussed alternative combinations and ultimately rejected them in favor of the recommended approach. Because a change to the lunch/break assumption represents a study-implementation choice rather than a change to the underlying methodology approved by DAAC,

if the Judicial Council adopts the 90-minute alternative it would not need to be referred back to DAAC. Staff would update the work day value used in the model, and the revised parameter would carry through to the forthcoming 2026 Update of the Judicial Needs Assessment. The committee also discussed possible expansion of non-case related time category data collection in future study cycles.

Recommendation 3: Adopt the Updated Caseweights

DAAC recommends that the Judicial Council adopt the updated 2026 caseweights presented in Attachment A. The 2026 update includes caseweights for the 21 case types previously used in the 2019 model, plus two new case types—Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Act petitions and Appellate Division Appeals—for a total of 23 case type caseweights.

Caseweights were developed by aggregating each court's case-related time from the time study, annualizing that total to reflect a full year of available working days, and dividing by the court's three-year average annual filings for each case type. Statewide caseweights were then developed using the median value across participating courts, except for asbestos and complex civil, which used the hybrid and mean-based approaches described above. Median preserves typical workload across diverse courts; mean is used where activity is concentrated in a small number of courts, making the average more representative.

Preliminary caseweight results were validated with presiding judges and court executive officers of participating courts in January 2026. Participants indicated that differences among courts generally reflected legitimate workload variations rather than data quality issues, with contributing factors including differences in technology, case mix, local practices, backlog levels, and unusual activity during the study period. Case types with more than a 20 percent change from the 2019 caseweights were further examined in 16 virtual focus groups conducted in April and May 2026.

Alternatives Considered

DAAC considered several alternative approaches to caseweight development, including removing outlier court-level caseweights and using a mean-based aggregation rather than the median-based approach:

- Because presiding judges and court executive officers confirmed during the January 2026 validation meetings that the court-level caseweights reflect real workload, removing outliers was rejected and the model retains the median-based approach adopted in 2019.
- Regarding a mean-based aggregation for all case types, statewide values would be pulled by extreme court-level values under a mean-based approach—the same concern that drove the shift

to the median-based approach in 2019. DAAC concluded that the median better preserves all available data, avoids subjective case-by-case exclusions, and produces more stable statewide caseweights, while the mean is more appropriate for the concentrated workload categories (asbestos and complex civil).

If the council prefers an alternative to the recommended caseweights, the matter would need to be referred back to DAAC for further consideration before adoption.

Study Caveats and Ongoing Refinement

As with prior updates, DAAC will continue to refine data collection and analysis processes for future study cycles. Ongoing considerations include:

- The current methodology collects workload data at a specific point in time. Gathering data over an extended period across different times of the year may provide a better representation of average workload.
- The four-week study window captures a representative range of court activity but may not fully capture specialized case types such as asbestos and complex civil. Alternative methods of collecting data over a longer period for these case types would help produce more precise caseweights.
- New workload created by recent statutory reforms—including the CARE Act, ongoing criminal justice resentencing work, and Racial Justice Act proceedings—will continue to evolve, and periodic updates to the model will be needed to ensure the caseweights remain representative of current workload.

Policy implications

Government Code section 69614(c)(1) requires the Judicial Council to report on the statewide need for judicial officers every November of even-numbered years. The 2022 Judicial Needs Assessment, submitted to the Legislature in November 2022, was based on the 2019 caseweights and the then-most-recent three-year average of filings (FY 2018–19 through FY 2020–21), resulting in a statewide need of 98 additional judicial officers.⁸

If the Judicial Council approves the recommended judicial work year, judicial work day value, and caseweights, the updated model parameters will be applied to the most recent three-year average of filings (FY 2022–23 through FY 2024–25) in the 2026 Update of the Judicial Needs Assessment. Based on those parameters and filings, there is a need for 159 additional judgeships across 18 courts. The full assessed need and prioritization details will be presented to the Judicial

⁸ The 2024 Judicial Needs Assessment was not published because the COVID-19 pandemic deferred the planned study update from 2023 to 2025 and affected filings across the relevant three fiscal years (FY 2020–21 through FY 2022–23).

Council in a companion report and, upon approval, transmitted to the Legislature to satisfy the reporting requirement of Government Code section 69614(c)(1).

Table 3. Judicial Needs Assessment Comparison, 2022 vs. 2026

	2022 Judicial Needs Assessment	2026 Judicial Needs Assessment
Judgeship Need	98	159
Courts with Need	17	18

Comments

Throughout the 2025 study period, participating courts provided input on both pre-time study activities (including training and study tools) and post-time study review (particularly during the January 2026 validation meetings and the April and May 2026 focus groups). Status updates were presented to DAAC at its regularly-scheduled public meetings for its guidance and oversight throughout the study period. The 2026 JWS Update with the updated model parameters was posted for public comment.

Fiscal and Operational Impacts

If approved, the updated caseweights, judicial work year, and judicial work day value will be incorporated into the JWS model used to calculate the statewide need for judicial officers. Any new judgeships that might be authorized and funded for the judicial branch will be allocated on the basis of these updated parameters until such time as they are next updated.

Attachments and Links

1. Attachment A: 2026 Judicial Workload Study Update – Draft Caseweights and Standards
2. Attachment B: Daily Time Log
3. Attachment C: Data Analytics Advisory Committee Membership, August 2026

Attachment A

2026 Judicial Workload Study Update – Draft Caseweights and Standards

Work Year Value	91,372 minutes (212 days × 431 min/day)
Judicial Work Year	212 available working days
Judicial Work Day Value	431 minutes case-related time per day
3-Year Average Filings	FY 2022–23, FY 2023–24, FY 2024–25

Case Type	2026 Caseweight (minutes per filing)
<i>Criminal</i>	
Felony	274
Misdemeanor – Traffic	24
Misdemeanor – Non-Traffic	48
Infractions	1.35
<i>Civil</i>	
Complex	339
Asbestos	527
Unlimited Civil	119
Limited Civil (without UD)	17
Limited Civil – Unlawful Detainer	27
Small Claims	41
<i>Family Law</i>	
Family Law – Dissolution	95
Family Law – Parentage	146
Family Law – Child Support	81
Family Law – Domestic Violence	106
Family Law – Other	226
<i>Juvenile</i>	
Juvenile Dependency	271
Juvenile Delinquency	210
<i>Probate and Mental Health</i>	
Estates/Trusts/Probate – Other	70
Conservatorship/Guardianship	128
Mental Health	66
CARE Act	205

Case Type	2026 Caseweight (minutes per filing)
<i>Appellate and EDD</i>	
Appellate Division Appeals	405
EDD	0.4

Notes:

1. Caseweights are minutes per filing, measured from initial filing through postdisposition.
2. Statewide caseweights are calculated as the median across participating courts that reported data for a given case type, except as noted below.
3. Complex Civil is calculated as the mean across the five courts with substantial Complex Civil activity (Los Angeles, San Francisco, Orange, Santa Clara, San Bernardino).
4. Asbestos uses a hybrid approach combining San Francisco's adjusted time study data with Los Angeles's independent 2024 caseweight.
5. CARE Act and Appellate Division Appeals are new caseweight categories in the 2026 update.
6. The EDD caseweight is low because most EDD-related matters resolve administratively, requiring little judicial involvement.

Attachment B

California Judicial Officer Workload Assessment Study									
Daily Time Log for ____ / ____ / 2025									
CASE TYPES						Record all time from 8/18 through 9/12			
Criminal	A	Felony	Family	M	Dissolution/Legal Separation	CASE TYPE CODE	ACTIVITY CODE	TICK MARKS (FOR TIME INTERVALS) OR TIME SEGMENTS	TOTAL TIME
	B	Misdemeanor - Traffic		N	Child Support				
	C	Misdemeanor - Non-Traffic		O	Domestic Violence Prevention				
	D	Infractions		P	Parentage				
				Q	Family Law - Other				
Civil	E	Unlimited Civil	Juvenile	R	Juvenile Dependency				
	F	Limited Civil (without UD)		S	Juvenile Delinquency				
	G	Complex Civil	MH	T	Mental Health				
	H	Unlawful Detainer		U	CARE Court				
	I	Asbestos	Appellate Division Appeals	V	Appeals-Limited Civil				
	J	Small Claims		W	Appeals - Misdemeanor				
Probate	K	Conservatorship/Guardianship		X	Appeals - Infraction				
	L	Estates/Trusts							
CR	Y	Case-Related Work for Non-Case-Specific Tasks							
NCR	Z	Non-Case Related Work							
CASE-RELATED ACTIVITIES									
CASE-RELATED ACTIVITIES	1	Pre-Trial/Pre-Disposition							
	2	Non-Trial OR Uncontested Disposition							
	3	Trial/Contested Disposition							
	4	Post-Trial/Post-Disposition							
	4a	Resentencing Litigation (PC 1172.6)							
	4b	Racial Justice Act							
	CASE-RELATED Work for Non-Case Specific Tasks								
CR	5	Case-Related Work for Non-Case-Specific Tasks							
NON-CASE-RELATED ACTIVITIES									
NON-CASE-RELATED ACTIVITIES	a	PJ / APJ Administrative Work							
	b	Non-Case-Specific Administration							
	c	Judicial Education & Training							
	d	Non-Case-Specific Legal Research & Writing							
	e	Community Activities/Outreach							
	f	Committees, Meetings, & Related Work							
	g	Vacation/Sick/Other Leave							
	h	Time Study Data Reporting & Entry							

Attachment C

Data Analytics Advisory Committee As of September 1, 2026

Mr. Jake Chatters, Chair

Court Executive Officer
Superior Court of California,
County of Placer

Hon. Thomas E. Kuhnle (Ret.), Vice-Chair

Judge of the Superior Court of California,
County of Santa Clara

Hon. Benjamin F. Coats

Judge of the Superior Court of California,
County of Ventura

Hon. Tara M. Desautels

Associate Justice of the Court of Appeal,
First Appellate District

Mr. Sharif Elmallah

Court Executive Officer
Superior Court of California,
County of Butte

Mr. Kevin Harrigan (Advisory Member)

Court Executive Officer
Superior Court of California,
County of Tehama

Mr. Brandon L. Henson

Clerk/Executive Officer
Appellate Court of California,
Fourth District

Ms. Nicole N. Le

Business Analytics Director
Superior Court of California,
County of Orange

Mr. Robert Oliver (Advisory Member)

Court Executive Officer
Superior Court of California,
County of Sonoma

Hon. Lawrence P. Riff

Judge of the Superior Court of California,
County of Los Angeles

Mr. Christopher Roman

Data Analytics Manager
Superior Court of California,
County of San Bernardino

Ms. Nocona Soboleski

Court Executive Officer
Superior Court of California,
County of Kings

Mr. Travis Trapp

Director of Analytics
Superior Court of California,
County of Riverside

Mr. David H. Yamasaki

Court Executive Officer,
Superior Court of California,
County of Orange

**Data Analytics Advisory Committee
As of September 1, 2026**

Judicial Council Lead Committee Staff

Mr. Mustafa Sagir

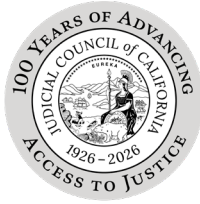
Supervising Analyst
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Ms. Kristin Greenaway

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Judicial Council of California

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MEMORANDUM

Date

August 14, 2026

Action Requested

Please Review

To

Members of the Data Analytics Advisory
Committee

Deadline

August 20, 2026

From

Kyle Capuli, Research Analyst
Research, Analytics, and Data

Contact

Kyle Capuli
Research, Analytics, and Data
415-865-7636 phone
kyle.capuli@jud.ca.gov

Subject

Methodology for Allocation of Funded
Judgeships

Executive Summary

This memo memorializes the Judicial Council's established ranking methodology for allocating newly authorized and funded trial court judgeships. The 2026 Judicial Workload Study updated key parameters used in the Needs Assessment (judicial workday, judicial work year, caseweights, and three-year average filings). The 2026 Judicial Needs Assessment will apply these parameters, after which the ranking methodology will generate the statewide prioritization list of courts eligible for new judgeships.

There is no current action needed by the Data Analytics Advisory Committee since the prioritization methodology is an established Judicial Council policy and is not currently before DAAC for approval. However, the prioritization methodology is on DAAC's work plan to review in the coming years, so it is timely to provide this update as background.

Issue

When new judgeships are authorized and funded, the Judicial Council uses the ranking methodology to prioritize and assign judgeships to courts with the greatest need relative to current complement and to improve access to courts for the greatest number of users. The methodology utilizes the most recent legislatively-mandated, biennial Judicial Needs Assessment and incorporates updated parameters from the most recent Judicial Workload Study update. The ranking methodology is an established methodology and separate from the review and approval process of the Judicial Workload Study model update. The purpose of this memo is to memorialize the prioritization methodology. While no current action is needed by DAAC in regard to the upcoming allocation of judgeships, the prioritization methodology is currently on DAAC's work plan to review in the coming years.

Background

California uses a weighted caseload (or workload-based) methodology for determining the number of judgeships needed in the trial courts, a methodology first approved by the Judicial Council in August 2001.¹ The determination of which courts receive new authorized and funded judgeships is based on the Judicial Council's ranking methodology, first approved in October 2001.² A modification was made to the methodology and approved by the Judicial Council in November 2014.³ The use of the ranking methodology is codified in Government Code section 69614(b).⁴ While the ranking methodology utilizes data from the workload-based Judicial Workload Study model, the ranking methodology is an established methodology and separate from the review and approval process of the Judicial Workload Study model update.

Government Code section 69614(c)(1) requires the Judicial Council to report to the Legislature and the Governor on or before November 1 of every even-numbered year on the need for new judgeships in each superior court, using the uniform criteria for the allocation of judgeships described in Government Code section 69614(b).

The Judicial Council's prioritization methodology uses a mathematical formula to assess judicial need and prioritize needed judgeships in rank order. The methodology and associated policy decisions are designed to account for the vast differences in sizes of courts across the state.

¹ <https://courts.ca.gov/sites/default/files/courts/default/2024-12/judneedsreview.pdf>

² <https://courts.ca.gov/sites/default/files/courts/default/2024-12/stateassess.pdf>

³ <https://courts.ca.gov/publication/judicial-workload-assessment-2014-update-judicial-needs-assessment-and-proposed>

⁴ <https://codes.findlaw.com/ca/government-code/gov-sect-69614/>

There are two major policy considerations embedded in the prioritization methodology:

- 1) **Estimate judicial need using the most recent Judicial Needs Assessment:** the judicial need in each court is calculated by subtracting the number of authorized judicial positions (AJP) from the number of positions needed in each court, as measured by the biennial Judicial Needs Assessment.
- 2) **Courts with a judicial need of at least 0.8 FTE should be qualified to obtain a new judgeship:** in December 2014, the Judicial Council approved a policy change that lowered the qualifying threshold to obtain a new judgeship to 0.8 FTE (it had been 1.0 FTE previously)⁵.

In addition to these policy considerations, there are three steps taken to calculate the prioritization list of judgeships:

- 1) The first step is to establish a ranking based on the minutes of judicial need multiplied by the ranking scores used in the Huntington-Hill Method (in effect, converting each court's raw need into a score that is comparable across courts of very different sizes)⁶. Each court's judicial need minutes is divided by the rank scores, and an allocation number (from 1 to N) is assigned to each needed judgeship in each court. If allocations were made at this point, only a court's absolute need would be factored into the calculation, and courts with the highest numerical need would be prioritized to receive judgeships.
- 2) A second ranking score is calculated by multiplying the ranking score from Step 1 by the percentage need for each judgeship in each court. In cases where courts need more than one judgeship, the percentage need for the second judgeship is calculated by assuming that the court has been given the previous judgeship, and so on. At this point, if a ranking were done based on these results, the courts with the highest numbers of judicial need and the greatest percentage need would be prioritized for new judgeships.
- 3) The final adjustment takes the second ranking score and divides it by "1" for the first new judgeship needed in a county, "2" for the second needed judgeship, etc. This adjustment applies more weight to the first judgeship needed in each court, a factor that benefits smaller courts that may only need one or two judgeships. The prioritization list is then generated based on this last adjustment by sorting the rank scores across all courts.

⁵ <https://courts.ca.gov/publication/judicial-workload-assessment-2014-update-judicial-needs-assessment-and-proposed>

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huntington%E2%80%93Hill_method

Closing

The recent 2026 Judicial Workload Study resulted in an update of several parameters used to assess judicial need in the trial courts. These parameters include a judicial workday value, a judicial work year value, updated caseweights, and the most recent three-year average filings. Using these updated parameters, a Judicial Needs Assessment will be conducted to reflect current judicial need in California and—using the ranking and prioritization methodology described above, a list will be created to prioritize and rank courts with a judicial need.