



JUDICIAL COUNCIL of CALIFORNIA

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HON. PATRICIA GUERRERO
Chief Justice of California
Chair of the Judicial Council

HON. BRAD R. HILL
Chair, Executive and Planning Committee

HON. ANN C. MOORMAN
Chair, Judicial Branch Budget Committee
Chair, Litigation Management Committee

HON. STACY BOULWARE
EURIE
Chair, Legislation Committee

HON. CARIN T. FUJISAKI
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HON. KYLE S. BRODIE
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MS. MICHELLE CURRAN
Administrative Director
Judicial Council

January 17, 2025

Ms. Cara L. Jenkins
Legislative Counsel
1021 O Street, Suite 3210
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Ms. Erika Contreras
Secretary of the Senate
State Capitol, Room 305
Sacramento, California 95814

Ms. Sue Parker
Chief Clerk of the Assembly
State Capitol, Room 319
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: *Online Infraction Adjudication and Ability-to-Pay Determinations*, as required under Assembly Bill 143 (Stats. 2021, ch. 79)

Dear Ms. Jenkins, Ms. Contreras, and Ms. Parker:

Pursuant to Government Code section 68645.5, the Judicial Council is submitting *Online Infraction Adjudication and Ability-to-Pay Determinations*.

If you have any questions related to this report, please contact Francine Byrne at 415-865-8069 or by email at Francine.Byrne@jud.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Michelle Curran
Administrative Director
Judicial Council

Ms. Cara L. Jenkins
Ms. Erika Contreras
Ms. Sue Parker
January 17, 2025
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MC/FB/MW/sc

Enclosures

cc: Eric Dang, Counsel, Office of Senate President pro Tempore Mike McGuire
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Shaun Naidu, Policy Consultant, Office of Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas
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Report title: *Online Infraction Adjudication and Ability-to-Pay Determinations*

Statutory citation: Stats. 2021, ch. 79

Code section: Government Code section 68645.5

Date of report: February 2025

The Judicial Council has submitted a report to the Legislature in accordance with Government Code section 68645.5.

The following summary of the report is provided under the requirements of Government Code section 9795.

With the passage of Assembly Bill 143 (Committee on Budget; Stats. 2021, ch. 79), the Judicial Council was mandated to develop and implement a statewide system that allows for the online adjudication of infraction violations by June 30, 2024. The statute requires an annual report every February between 2022 and 2025.

This report, as the final of the four reports required:

- Describes MyCitations users;
- Explains how the MyCitations tool is being implemented;
- Presents data on the impact of the system related to the reduction of court-ordered debt; and
- Documents actions taken to complete the statewide expansion of the program.

The full report can be accessed at www.courts.ca.gov/7466.htm.

A printed copy of the report may be obtained by calling 415-865-8994.

JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA

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February 2025



Online Infraction Adjudication and Ability-to-Pay Determinations

Report to the Legislature



Judicial Council of California

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Executive Summary

This report fulfills the requirements set forth in Government Code section 68645.5 and is the final required annual report. The report (1) describes the system's users, (2) explains how the MyCitations tool is being implemented, (3) presents data on the impact of the system related to the reduction of court-ordered debt, and (4) discusses the expanded features of MyCitations and future enhancements planned for the tool.

MyCitations was developed and is maintained by the Judicial Council of California and allows lower-income individuals with infraction violations to request a reduction in their fines and fees based on financial information they submit to the court. The system compiles that information, along with relevant citation details, for the court to review and finalize an order back to the defendant.

- As of June 26, 2024, all of California's 58 superior courts have made online ability-to-pay determination requests available through the MyCitations tool.
- Between the program's launch in April 2019 through December 2024, approximately 264,000 ability-to-pay requests were submitted through the MyCitations tool by over 194,000 individuals.
- Over 46 percent of tool users reported that they receive public benefits, and just over 89 percent reported incomes at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level.
- Cases processed through MyCitations accounted for over \$136 million in outstanding infraction fines and fees, with an average of \$516 owed per case. After judicial review, the total fines and fees were reduced by more than \$68 million, with an average of \$257 owed per case.
- In 2024, 77 percent of the over 136,000 requests received were approved by the courts for a reduction, with an average reduction of 61 percent ordered by the courts.

Consistent with research findings presented in last year's report, case-level analysis of debts collected from requests made through MyCitations demonstrates that individuals are more likely to pay when offered a reduced amount. As of its sixth year of operation, MyCitations has been fully implemented in all 58 trial courts and continues to reach more people through expanded outreach efforts, benefiting both the courts and the communities they serve.

Introduction

Fines and fees associated with traffic citations are imposed in all infraction cases, regardless of the defendant's income. This imposition can cause a financial hardship for low-income defendants, often resulting in unpaid fines and fees. Individuals experiencing such a hardship can request an ability-to-pay determination by filing the appropriate paperwork with the court. MyCitations now offers people throughout the state the additional option of making their ability-to-pay request to the court from a desktop or mobile device.

Government Code section 68645 requires the Judicial Council to develop and implement a statewide system for adjudicating infraction cases and enabling ability-to-pay determination requests online. It mandates that the Judicial Council submit an annual report to the Legislature that provides demographic information on defendants who use the online tool, describes how the tool is being implemented by the courts, and presents data on defendant payments.

This report proceeds in five sections. Section I reports on defendant use of the online tool, MyCitations, and provides demographic information about individuals who submit ability-to-pay determination requests. Section II provides details on MyCitations requests and the relief ordered by the courts. Section III provides an analysis of data available on amounts collected by courts. Section IV offers a retrospective of the expanded features of MyCitations and future enhancements planned for the tool. Finally, Section V provides a summary and conclusion related to the information provided.

Background

Before the implementation of MyCitations, individuals had two main options for addressing their infraction violations:¹ An individual could “forfeit bail,” which includes pleading guilty and paying the ticket (also known as a citation) in full. Or they could contest the citation by appearing in person at the court. If an individual was not able to pay the amount owed, an ability-to-pay request had to be submitted in person before a judge.² Requiring a defendant's appearance posed significant barriers to many individuals and compromised their access to justice, as it may have required taking time off work, securing childcare, or other challenges. Although courts can accept a paper form from defendants seeking an ability-to-pay request, MyCitations offers another alternative for them to complete their transaction without going into court.

In 2016, with funding from the U.S. Department of Justice's Price of Justice Initiative, the Judicial Council began to study the impact of high fines and fees on low-income court users and identify options to minimize these impacts. The Judicial Council used the funding to partner with

¹ Infractions in California are the least serious criminal offenses and mostly include traffic violations. Infractions are not punishable by imprisonment and the defendant is not entitled to a jury trial for these offenses.

² Courts maintain various local procedures that allow defendants to request a reduction in fines and fees for infraction violations, including utilizing *Can't Afford to Pay Fine: Traffic and Other Infractions* (Judicial Council form TR-320) or petitions to vacate civil assessment fees as well as other options to provide some debt relief, such as payment plans and community service.

five superior courts to design a process for adjudicating cases and submitting ability-to-pay determinations online. That effort included identifying online workflows, selecting a software vendor, developing a prototype of the online tool, and testing interfaces with various court case management systems. The resulting prototype provided users with the ability to search for their citations online and make requests for reductions in traffic fines and fees without a court appearance.

The Budget Act of 2018 (Sen. Bill 847; Stats. 2018, ch. 29) allocated funding to the Judicial Council to develop a more comprehensive pilot program by further developing the prototype and expanding the work to two additional superior courts. Then, in 2021, Assembly Bill 143 (Committee on Budget; Stats. 2021, ch. 79) expanded the program statewide by requiring all superior courts to offer the online tool by June 30, 2024. Defendants experiencing financial hardship can access MyCitations online from any smart phone or computer to request a reduction in court-ordered debt from eligible violations. They may do so at any point when they have a remaining balance. Individuals making an ability-to-pay request through MyCitations can also ask the court for a payment plan, more time to pay, and community service as part of their request.

The tool sends the individual's request to a queue with automated recommendations for the court to review based on the system configurations set by each court. Once judicial review is complete, the tool sends the final order to the email address provided by the defendant.³ The tool automatically identifies any eligible citation a defendant can submit for ability-to-pay consideration. Furthermore, individuals can resubmit requests on the same citation before the debt is fully paid if there is a change to their previously reported financial circumstances.

Section I: MyCitations Users

During fiscal year 2023–24, over 2.8 million infraction cases, including traffic and nontraffic, were filed in California superior courts. Over 81 percent of all criminal filings in California are infraction filings—cases in which individuals could potentially benefit from the use of MyCitations.⁴ Since the beginning of the pilot program in April 2019 and through December 2024, 264,646 ability-to-pay determination requests were submitted through the MyCitations tool by 194,677 defendants. In the 2024 calendar year, 136,497 ability-to-pay requests were submitted

"If I would have had to pay the full amount it would have meant putting less food on the table that month, period! It made my world so much better when I received the reduction. I know I deserved it but couldn't afford to pay the full amount. I promise I learned my lesson about touching my cell phone while driving, I'll never forget."

Anonymous user

³ See Appendix A, How the Tool Works, for a description of how MyCitations makes recommendations to the court for judicial reviews and decisions.

⁴ Judicial Council of Cal., *2025 Court Statistics Report: Statewide Caseload Trends, 2013–14 Through 2023–24*, p. 85, https://courts.ca.gov/system/files/file/final_csr_2025.pdf.

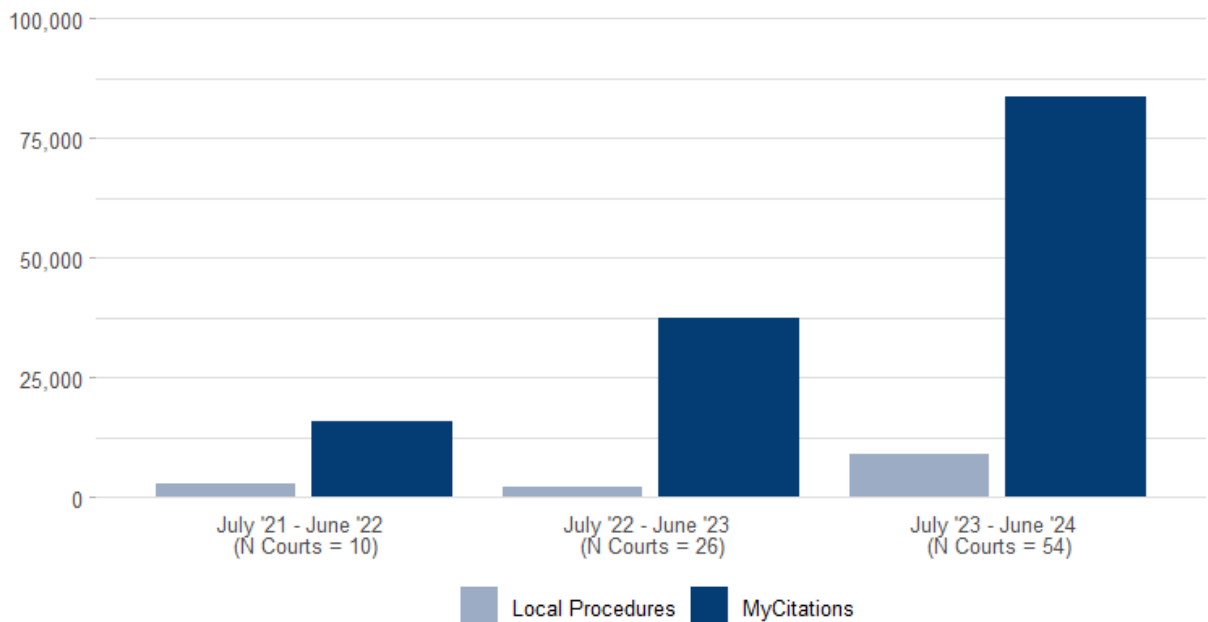
through MyCitations by 107,609 defendants. Sections II and III provide cumulative and annual figures for defendant use of MyCitations.

Accessing MyCitations

One of the primary goals motivating the creation of the tool was to expand online access to the courts and reduce the number of times an individual had to go to court in person. Government Code section 68645.5 requires the Judicial Council to report the total number of requests made through locally established ability-to-pay procedures (primarily paper forms) as well as those made through the online tool. The Judicial Council does not typically collect data on ability-to-pay determinations made outside of the MyCitations tool through local processes, so additional data were requested from participating courts for the previous fiscal year and combined with data requested for previous reports.⁵

Figure 1 below compares the number of requests made by defendants through locally established court procedures to those requests received through MyCitations in courts that were able to provide that information for each fiscal year. Based on the data collected, it is evident that adding the new online option has significantly expanded opportunities for defendants in need to make ability-to-pay determination requests to the court.

Figure 1: Requests for Ability to Pay Determinations: Local Procedures vs MyCitations



⁵ Fifty-four courts provided information on ability-to-pay determination requests made through means other than the online MyCitations tool, reporting that a total of 8,799 requests had been filed in the 12-month period of July 2023 through June 2024.

Defendant Demographics

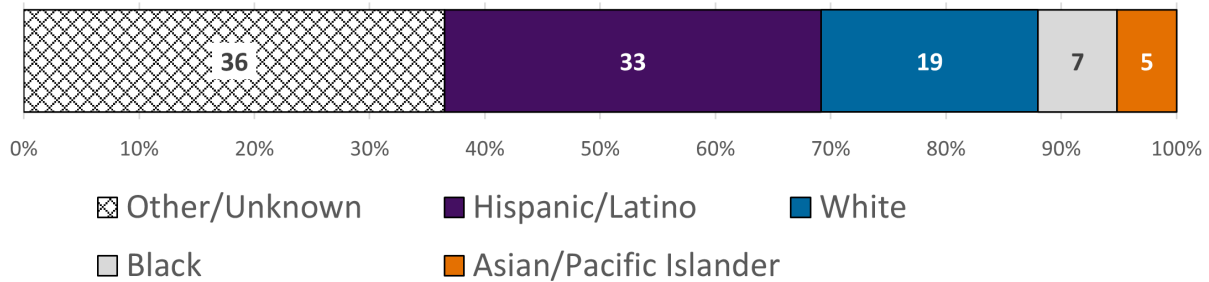
In compliance with program reporting mandates, this report contains summaries of race/ethnicity, residential zip codes, public benefit status, and income level of the defendants using MyCitations. Monitoring these numbers in the years after full statewide implementation will allow the Judicial Council to target outreach efforts to help ensure defendants who would most benefit from the tool are aware of the option to use it.

Racial and ethnic demographics

Racial and ethnic demographic information about MyCitations users is collected through a voluntary user survey or through information recorded on the citation by the issuing officer. These data, reported separately below, are often incomplete and the Judicial Council cannot assess the accuracy of one data source over the other.

Based on data recorded on the citation, racial/ethnic demographics are reported for 83,254 of the 194,677 defendants using the system since April 2019.⁶ Alternatively, based on survey response data from MyCitations users, racial/ethnic demographics were self-reported by 143,708 defendants.⁷ Distributions for each are illustrated in Figure 2 and Figure 3, respectively.

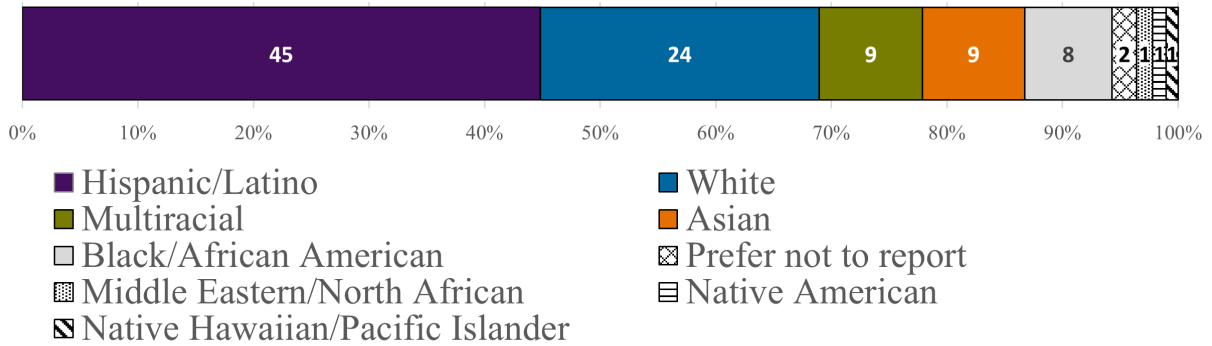
Figure 2: MyCitations Racial/Ethnic Demographics as Reported on Citation



⁶ “Other/unknown” is an optional entry on the citation completed by the issuing officer and is referenced here to indicate the frequency with which the option is recorded.

⁷ Racial/ethnic identity was added as an optional survey question for MyCitations defendants on December 10, 2021. Since that date, 229,517 defendants have accessed MyCitations and were offered the new survey question.

Figure 3: MyCitations Racial/Ethnic Demographics as Self-Reported by User



Residential zip codes

MyCitations data include residential information about system users as recorded on the citation by the officer. The top five most frequently reported residential zip codes in each county are provided in Appendix C. As expected for a system designed for use by those with financial hardship, the most frequently recorded zip codes in each county also feature higher than average poverty concentrations.⁸ Seventy-seven percent of the five most prevalent residential zip codes per MyCitations county also rank amongst the most impoverished zip codes from all counties. Zip code analyses have considerable limitations, including geographic size discrepancies, variation in population density, the arbitrary nature of zip code boundaries, and heterogeneity within zip codes; however, the data suggest that the tool is likely being used by lower-income individuals.

Public benefit status and income level

Public benefit status and income level reported by defendants accessing MyCitations suggest that most individuals using the tool are experiencing some kind of financial hardship. From April 2019 through December 2024, 46 percent of the defendants using the tool reported that they received public benefits and 89 percent reported incomes at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level at the time of their request. These percentages are the same when looking only at the 2024 calendar year: 46 percent of defendants submitting requests to the MyCitations tool reported receiving some type of public benefit, and 89 percent reported incomes at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level.⁹

⁸ For this analysis, the Judicial Council relied on data from the American Community Survey, which reports both on countywide and zip code poverty rates based on 200 percent of the federal poverty level. See U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701, Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1701?g=010XX00US\\$8600000](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1701?g=010XX00US$8600000).

⁹ For comparison, a total annual household income of \$78,000 is equal to 250 percent of the 2023 federal poverty guidelines for a family of four. *Annual Update of HHS Poverty Guidelines*, 88 Fed.Reg. 3424 (Jan. 17, 2024), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/01/17/2024-00796/annual-update-of-the-hhs-poverty-guidelines>.

Feedback from users

At the end of the online request process, individuals are provided the opportunity to respond to three optional survey questions: one question about their race/ethnicity and two questions regarding the defendant’s satisfaction with using the online tool. Analysis of the survey responses received shows that 94 percent of MyCitations users strongly agree that the tool is easy to use. In an effort to learn more from defendants after they received their court order, Judicial Council staff emailed MyCitations users to ask if they would share how a reduction in their fines and fees owed may have helped them. Responses received included the shared experience that when granted a reduction, defendants were able to continue to afford the necessities in their lives. One person responded, “It helped me [be] able to pay off my ticket and still be able to buy groceries and pay my rent! Very helpful!!”

"[The fine reduction] greatly reduced my stress during this crazy time of unemployment and gave me enough money to pay for my car loan bill this month."
Anonymous User

Section II: Ability-to-Pay Requests and Court Decisions

This section and Section III provide cumulative and annual figures for MyCitations requests and court orders. As previously mentioned, from program inception in April 2019 through December 2024, 194,677 defendants submitted requests through MyCitations amounting to \$136,537,273 in fines and fees initially owed, averaging \$516 due per case in which reductions were requested. Upon judicial review, the total amount of fines and fees ordered through the tool was reduced to \$67,977,711, averaging \$257 due per case.¹⁰ This reduction amounts to \$68,559,563 in forgiven fines and fees. (See Table 1 below.)

The fine reduction really helped me out. I'm still in school and have little money left over after having paid tuition, books, and gas. Of course, the fine still had to be paid but the reduction was helpful"
Anonymous User

In 2024 alone, 107,609 defendants submitted 136,497 ability-to-pay determination requests through MyCitations. The amount due for the cases in which MyCitations requests were submitted was originally \$64,666,445, with an average of \$474 due per case. The reduction in the amounts initially owed is likely due to the passage of Assembly Bill 199 (Committee on Budget; Stats. 2022, ch. 57), which required courts to discharge debt from all civil assessments imposed before July 1, 2022, and mandated a maximum civil assessment fee of \$100 as opposed to the previous maximum of \$300. After judicial review, the total amount of fines and fees ordered through the tool was \$32,929,070, averaging \$241 per case and amounting to \$31,737,375 in forgiven fines and fees.

¹⁰ Ordered amounts include requests that were both approved and denied for reduction.

Table 1. MyCitations Requests and Court Decisions: 2024 and Cumulative

	2024	Cumulative
Number of Requests	136,497	264,646
Average Initial Amount Submitted for Reduction per Case	\$473.76	\$515.93
Average Amount Ordered per Case	\$241.24	\$256.86
Total Initial Amount Owed and Submitted for Reduction	\$64,666,445	\$136,537,273
Total Amount Ordered	\$32,929,070	\$67,977,711
Total Amount Forgiven	\$31,737,375	\$68,559,563

Requests by County

For courts that were live with MyCitations for the full 2024 calendar year, Table 2 summarizes the number of requests each court received in 2024 and cumulatively since go-live. For courts that went live with MyCitations during 2024, Table 3 shows the number of requests each court received alongside the date the first request was received.

Table 2. MyCitations Requests by County: Courts Live Prior to 2024

County	No. of Requests:		County	No. of Requests:	
	2024	Cumulative		2024	Cumulative
Alameda	8,000	10,961	Placer	989	1,994
Amador	325	625	Plumas	75	89
Butte	856	1,301	San Benito	288	566
Calaveras	154	206	San Diego	3,304	4,373
Colusa	324	467	San Francisco	3,772	12,068
El Dorado	839	1,087	San Joaquin	6,730	16,047
Fresno	5,242	14,671	San Luis Obispo	1,535	2,658
Glenn	438	776	San Mateo	3,046	4,594
Humboldt	1,209	2,182	Santa Clara	7,114	27,675
Imperial	1,247	3,103	Santa Cruz	463	1,410
Kings	1,875	2,123	Shasta	3,196	13,167
Lassen	391	713	Sierra	61	182
Madera	988	1,140	Siskiyou	648	1,024
Marin	1,387	1,415	Solano	3,289	3,828
Mendocino	1,832	3,337	Sutter	561	563
Merced	3,284	5,607	Tehama	463	656
Modoc	162	388	Trinity	94	150
Mono	378	852	Tulare	11,671	34,580
Monterey	994	2,539	Ventura	5,286	30,061
Nevada	934	1,519	Yolo	1,622	2,518
			Total	85,066	213,215

Table 3. MyCitations Requests by County: Courts Live During 2024

County	Date 1st Request Received	No. of Requests, Cumulative
Mariposa	1/12/2024	285
Yuba	1/25/2024	1,325
Santa Barbara	2/27/2024	2,627
Del Norte	3/28/2024	728
Contra Costa	4/11/2024	3,483
Inyo	4/11/2024	252
Riverside	4/19/2024	7,045
Alpine	4/23/2024	77
Stanislaus	5/23/2024	2,338
Lake	6/6/2024	465
Los Angeles	6/6/2024	8,212
Napa	6/6/2024	986
San Bernardino	6/6/2024	4,062
Sonoma	6/6/2024	1,196
Tuolumne	6/6/2024	165
Kern	6/12/2024	4,296
Orange	6/26/2024	10,423
Sacramento	6/26/2024	3,466
Total		51,431

Recommendations and Court Decisions

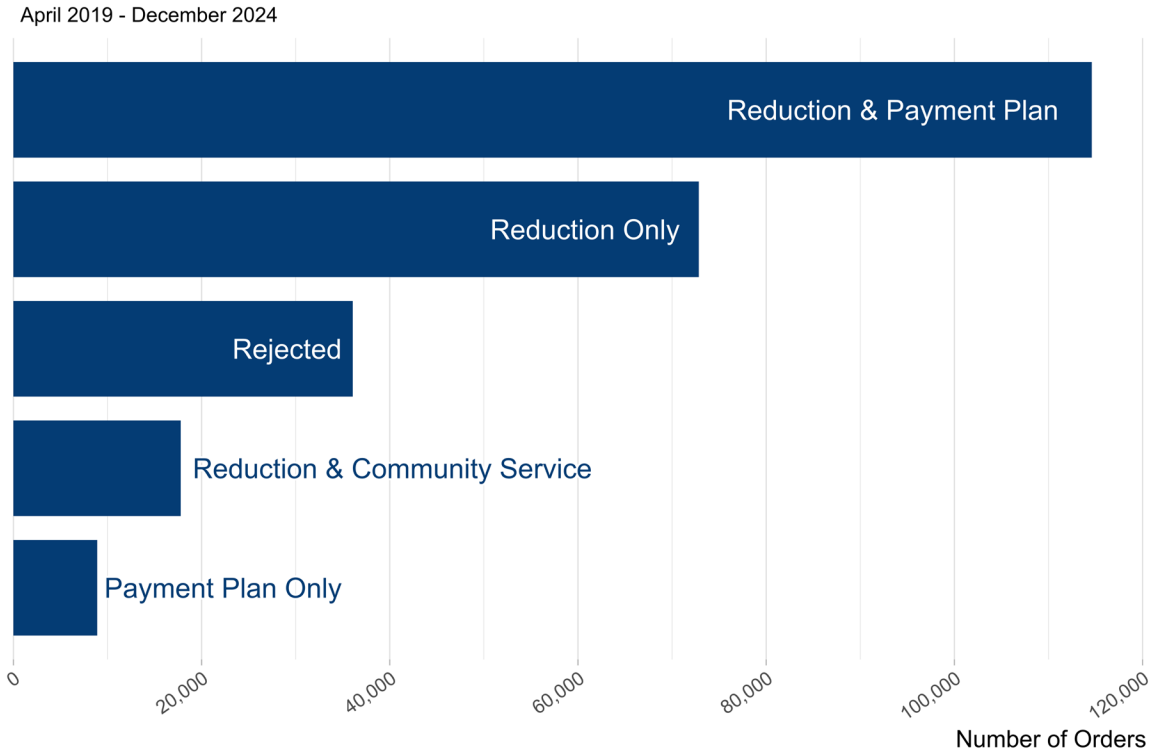
In 2024, 77 percent of the 136,497 ability-to-pay requests received were approved by the courts for a reduction. The average reduction recommendation offered by the MyCitations calculator across all participating courts was 65 percent, and the average reduction ordered after judicial review was 61 percent. Although the MyCitations calculator offers an initial recommendation of the dollar amount due for each request based on administrative settings selected by each court, judicial officers retain the discretion to accept or adjust the recommendation based on the facts of the case. (For more on the MyCitations calculator, see Appendix A.) Overall, when the court approved a request for reduction, judicial officers accepted the tool recommendation within a \$10 difference 98 percent of the time.

Court Order Details

When submitting an ability-to-pay request for a reduction in MyCitations, tool users may additionally request court consideration for a payment plan, more time to pay, or community service. Of all MyCitations requests received in 2024, 86 percent were approved for at least one of the four possible types of relief. Figure 4 below shows the frequency with which the five most common combinations of relief have been ordered from April 2019 through December 2024.

Reductions with a payment plan continue to be the most common relief type ordered through MyCitations.

Figure 4: MyCitations Order Frequencies



Payment plan orders

Individuals requested additional consideration of a payment plan as part of 76,837 reduction requests received through MyCitations in 2024, and 68,091 payment plans were ordered through the tool. Payment plans are not always approved using the payment plan function of the MyCitations tool. Some courts may not approve a payment plan request in the tool itself but instead include instructions for establishing a payment plan as a comment on the order. These instances are not included in the preceding figures since the information is relayed to the defendant in a separate comment field on the order. As a result, the preceding figures are likely lower than the actual number of payment plans defendants are utilizing.

Community service orders

In the 2024 calendar year, 30,620 MyCitations submissions included requests for consideration to complete community service in lieu of making a payment to the court. Of those requests,

14,913 were approved, with an average community service requirement of 10 hours per request.¹¹

Section III: Repayment After Ability-to-Pay Determination

This section of the report provides data on amounts collected after ability-to-pay determinations were made. Government Code section 68645.5 requires the Judicial Council to report the total amount collected as a portion of the total amount ordered after ability-to-pay determinations. Most of the data necessary for this legislative report are available to Judicial Council staff through the MyCitations database. However, data on the total amounts collected in payment are not available through the tool and must be submitted to the Judicial Council by each court through a separate and manual process. Some court case management systems are not equipped to identify and connect all payments made to each case for which an ability-to-pay determination was made. In some instances, payment information must be sourced from an external vendor or collections agency.

Although accounting for the exact balance of every ability-to-pay case is not possible, this report presents a sample of repayment data from cases for which courts were able to provide responsive information. Analyzing recovery of court-ordered debt provides insight into how the amounts of fines and fees imposed impact the likelihood of repayment. It also informs the Judicial Council and court staff on how best to utilize fine reductions to sufficiently relieve debt and resolve open cases for lower-income Californians.

In August 2024, the Judicial Council requested summative repayment data from all courts for the period from July 2023 through June 2024 for ability-to-pay cases processed by the court. Requesting data for the previous fiscal year rather than the calendar year of 2024 ensures that there is sufficient time to collect and collate the data before the submission of this report. Previous reports also utilized this date range when reporting on collected amounts. Forty-nine courts were able to provide information regarding cases ordered through MyCitations, which accounts for 80,136 cases constituting 95 percent of total cases processed in the fiscal year. The total amount originally due from this sample of cases was \$39,311,577. After judicial review, the total amount ordered through the tool was \$18,324,353. By June 30, 2024, \$6,478,969, or 35 percent, had already been repaid on requests made at some point in the preceding twelve month period.

Repayment and Amount Owed

In addition to collecting summative repayment data, courts were also given the option to provide case-level data to the Judicial Council as part of supplemental research on repayment. Analyzing recovery of court-ordered debt provides insight into how the amounts of imposed fines and fees

¹¹ Penal Code section 1209.5(c) requires that the rate applicable to any community service hours ordered be double the minimum wage set for the corresponding calendar year based on Labor Code section 1182.12(b)(2). Minimum wage was \$16 per hour in California during 2024. Ten hours of community service ordered is equal to \$320 at the required rate of conversion of double the minimum wage (\$32) in 2024.

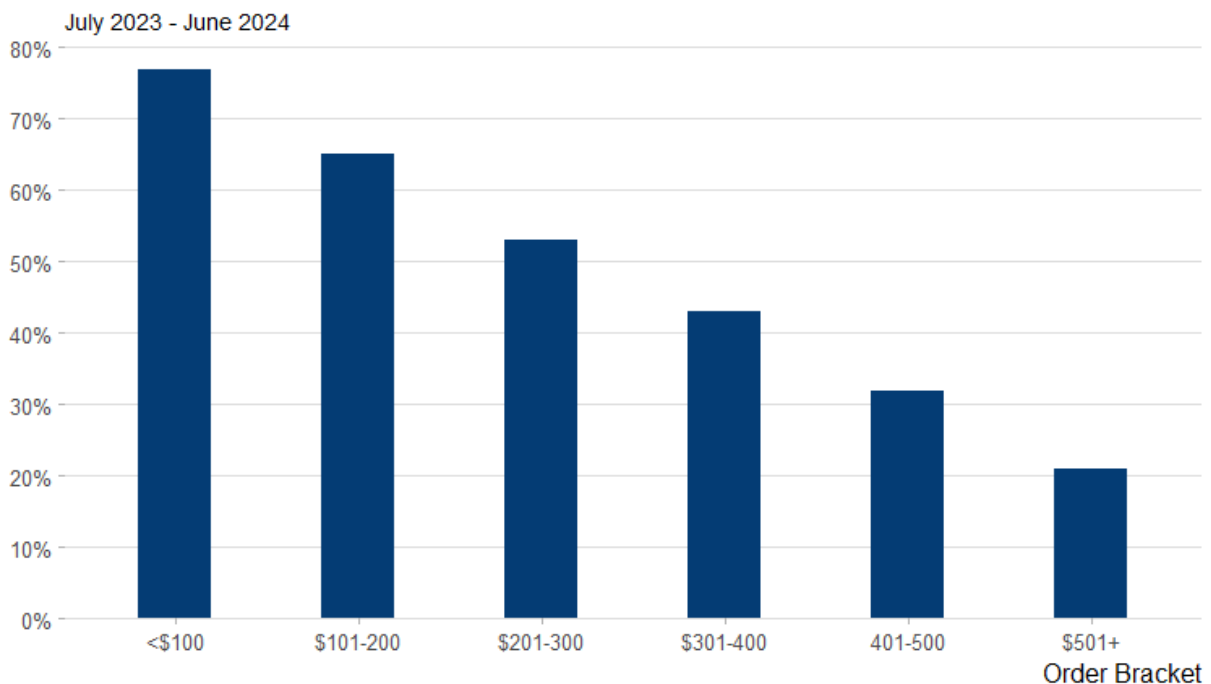
impact the likelihood of repayment. It also informs the Judicial Council and court staff on how best to utilize fine reductions to sufficiently relieve debt and resolve open cases for lower-income Californians.

Five courts were able to provide data, constituting a sample of 25,838 cases processed between July 2023 and June 2024, which represents 31 percent of the total eligible cases processed through MyCitations in this period.¹²

For this analysis, cases were determined to be “fully repaid” if the ordered amount had been completely paid by the cutoff date for data collection on June 30, 2024. Cases were projected to be fully repaid if the rate at which partial payments had been made since the fine was ordered inferred that full repayment would likely occur before the pay-by date.

Figure 5 shows that the proportion of cases that fully repay exceeds 70 percent when defendants are ordered to pay \$100 or less but drops to 20 percent when the ordered amount exceeds \$500.

Figure 5: Repayment Rate of 25,838 MyCitations Cases



These results support the conclusions reached in repayment studies included in the 2023 and 2024 reports to the Legislature.¹³ In these previous studies, a sample of 12,376 and 40,801 cases

¹² Eligible cases are those suitable to be included in the subsequent analyses. For example, cases ordered to complete community service in lieu of payment and requests that were submitted prior to a subsequent request on the same citation were excluded. Further details regarding methodology are provided in Appendix B.

¹³ Judicial Council of Cal., *Report to the Legislature: Online Infraction Adjudication and Ability-to-Pay Determinations* (February 2023), www.courts.ca.gov/documents/lr-2023-online-infraction-adjudication-ability-to-pay-determinations-Stats.2021-ch-79.pdf; Judicial Council of Cal., *Report to the Legislature: Online Infraction*

respectively showed that repayment success rates increased as the ordered amount decreased. Furthermore, the results of these three studies align on the proportional relationship between repayment likelihood and the amount ordered, showing an approximately 20 percent repayment rate at fines exceeding \$500 and increasing approximately 10 percent with each subsequent reduction of \$100 up to 70 percent for amounts between \$0 and \$100.

Section IV: MyCitations Expanded Features

Government Code section 68645 required the Judicial Council to make the MyCitations tool available statewide by June 30, 2024. Through the focused efforts of JCIT, all 58 courts implemented the tool four days ahead of schedule. The Judicial Council continues to aid and support the courts with enhancements to the tool, ongoing training, data analysis, and technical support.

New Module

The Judicial Council expanded the features available through the MyCitations platform to provide defendants with more options to complete transactions with the courts remotely. The Online Trial by Declaration (OTBD) module now allows defendants to contest eligible traffic citations by submitting a written statement and uploading evidence online through MyCitations. A police officer reviews the defendant's statement and responds in the electronic system to clarify the facts of the case for the judicial officer to consider. This new optional module is currently live in the Superior Court of San Francisco County, and implementation activities are continuing for the Superior Court of Nevada County. Fifteen additional courts are waitlisted to implement next. By the end of calendar year 2024, the first three OTBD requests were submitted using MyCitations.

Future MyCitations Features

Judicial Council staff meet with courts monthly to discuss enhancement requests and test new releases. The current MyCitations version 6.2 is the 27th release of the tool. One important function to be incorporated into the tool may be the ability to request traffic violator school. The Judicial Council is currently working closely with courts to develop the best way to handle traffic school requests along with fine reductions. The development team will be working with courts to test new options in 2025.

MyCitations includes a chatbot function to allow defendants to ask questions as they navigate through screens to better understand their options. There is also an optional survey, just before submitting the request to the court, allowing the Judicial Council to monitor defendant satisfaction when using the tool. This year, the Judicial Council staff solicited additional feedback from a selection of defendants who used the tool in the last 12 months to learn more about how the tool may have helped them and if they had suggestions for improvement. The survey was emailed to 944 defendants and 48 responses were received. From the feedback

Adjudication and Ability-to-Pay Determinations (February 2024), www.courts.ca.gov/documents/2024_Online-Infraction-Adjudication-and-Ability-to-Pay-Determinations.pdf.

received, an additional “How it Works” section is being developed to help defendants prep for submitting their request before they begin using the tool. Modifications have been made to the final order itself to respond to some of the most common issues defendants shared.

Section V: Conclusion

MyCitations is a valuable resource to connect defendants to the courts through easy-to-use online court services. What began as a prototype developed in partnership with seven superior courts in 2019 has grown to a robust tool in place in all 58 superior courts. To date, MyCitations has deployed 27 releases to modify and enhance the tool. The Judicial Council will continue efforts to regularly solicit feedback from the courts and defendants and respond by deploying enhancements to the tool.

MyCitations continues to help an increasing number of Californians struggling to resolve unpaid court debt. In 2024 alone, 136,497 ability-to-pay determination requests were submitted through MyCitations by 107,609 defendants. Forty-six percent of these defendants reported receiving some type of public benefit, and 89 percent reported incomes at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level.

After judicial review, 77 percent of the 107,609 requests received in 2024 were approved by the courts for a reduction, with an average reduction ordered by the courts of 61 percent—consistent with previous years and greater than the 50 percent required by Government Code section 68645.2. After processing, the total amount originally due in these cases was reduced by \$31,737,375, resulting in \$32,929,070 of fines and fees ordered through the tool in the 2024 calendar year. Continued studies of repayment after ability-to-pay determination show that as the amount ordered decreases, the likelihood of full repayment of the financial obligation increases.

MyCitations has standardized an important process across all counties and represents a key advancement in the judicial branch’s effort to provide equity and increase access to justice for all Californians.

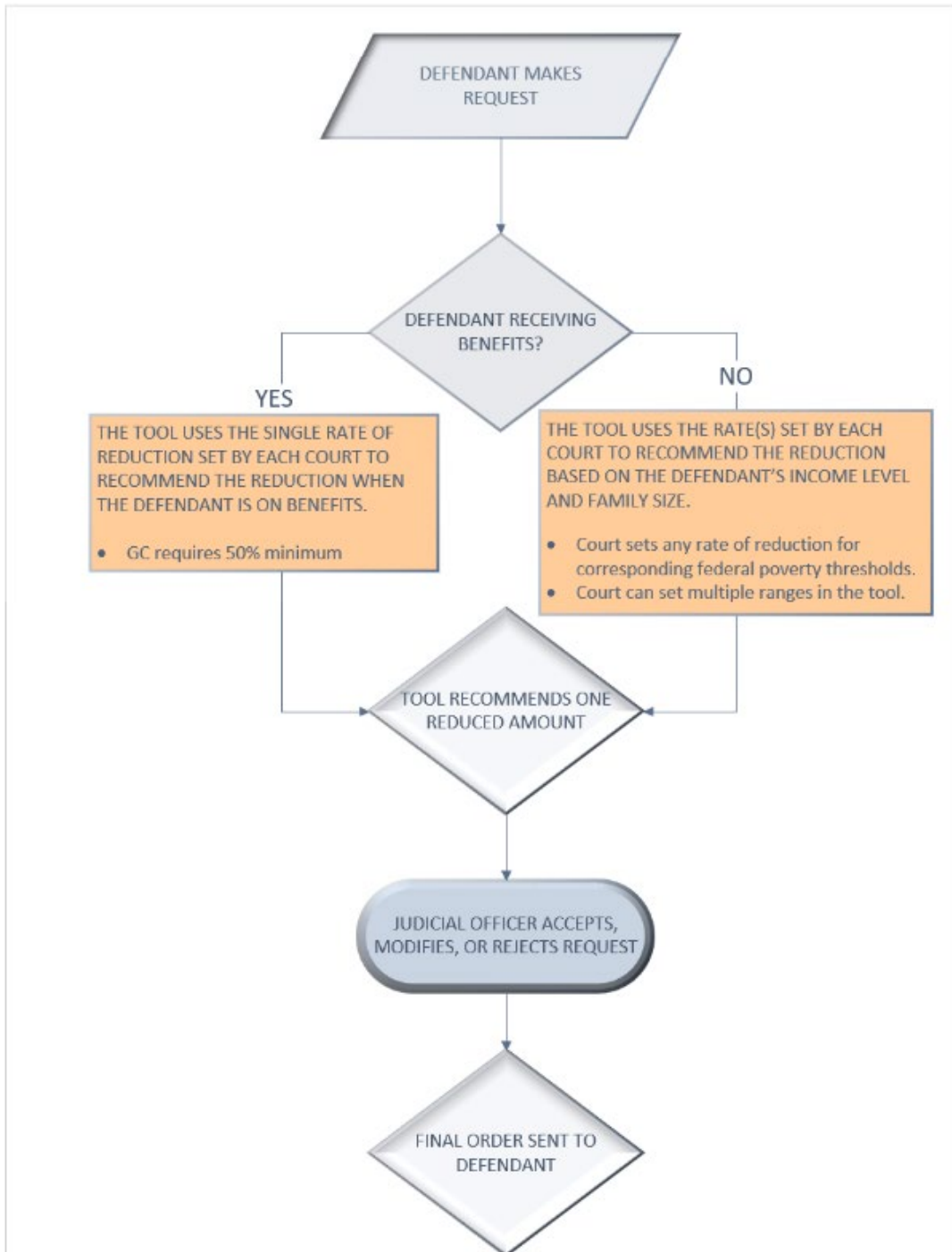
Appendix A: How the Tool Works

MyCitations is designed as an easy-to-use option for defendants to provide relevant financial information for the court to consider reductions in infraction fines and fees owed. From a defendant's perspective, the tool asks questions about income, benefits, household size, and expenses.

Courts using MyCitations can configure their own settings to calculate reduction recommendations consistent with local cost-of-living and other relevant data available. Specifically, courts define two reduction rates for the calculator to apply. The first is a flat-rate reduction for defendants who indicate that they are in receipt of public benefits. Aligning with Government Code section 68645.2, courts have configured their calculators to recommend a range of 50 to 90 percent reductions for defendants on public benefits. The second is a sliding reduction rate that is indexed to a defendant's federal poverty level if they do not receive public benefits.

The tool calculates a federal poverty percentage for each defendant based on income and household size. Indexing the sliding reduction to this number allows consideration of more than just income when offering a reduction. MyCitations supplies the court with one reduction to consider but judicial officers are presented with all the information provided by the defendant so that they can factor in all details as appropriate. The judicial officer can accept, modify, or deny the reduction that the tool recommends. Figure 6 illustrates the flow of information through the MyCitations tool.

Figure 6: Flow of Information Through MyCitations



Appendix B: Data and Methodology

The 2023 annual legislative report was mandated by Government Code 68645.6 to include a performance evaluation of the pilot program. This requirement was fulfilled with a study of the seven pilot courts of the program, an element of which was an analysis of collections records submitted by the pilot courts to the Judicial Council for the program evaluation. The following report to the Legislature in 2024 sought to build upon those findings by again requesting case-level collections data from participating courts, thereby obtaining a larger sample size to augment further analyses of repayment behavior. The increase in sample size and replication of findings augmented the research. However, this led to more challenging data collection and cleaning given the increasing number of courts utilizing MyCitations.

In August 2024, in consideration of the data collections challenges inherent to requesting data from every superior court given the statewide implementation of MyCitations, data collection took place in two phases. Initially, only data necessary to comply with Government Code 68645.5 were requested from all courts. Priority was placed upon reaching a reliable and valid figure summed from submissions from all 58 courts. Instructions were issued which aligned with other Judicial Council reporting mechanisms to minimize court workload disruptions. Secondly, courts were asked to voluntarily provide case-level data for supplementary research. A smaller number of courts with the resources to collaborate on technical matters more effectively provided the detailed data.

Forty-nine courts were able to fully comply with the summative data collection. Some courts were unable or only partially able to provide data, due to technical difficulties in extracting the necessary information from case management systems. Six courts were able and willing to provide case-level data for the supplemental research study. The six courts represent five of the six appellate districts, lending geographic diversity to the study. Furthermore, the sample size of over 25,000 cases, combined with the demographic representativeness of the courts, ensures the thresholds for sampling coverage are met. However, analyses were limited to what the cleaned data could reliably infer given the distributions of the particular variables involved.

Appendix C: Most Common Zip Codes of MyCitations Users

The table below documents the top-five most common residential zip codes for MyCitations users in each county. It also shows the proportion of residents living at 200 percent or below the federal poverty level, according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate.¹⁴

**Residential Zip Codes with Highest Concentrations of MyCitations Users:
Cumulative Data by County from April 2019–December 2024**

County	County Poverty Rate (%)	Zip Code	Zip Code Poverty Rate (%)	County	County Poverty Rate (%)	Zip Code	Zip Code Poverty Rate (%)
Alameda	19.57	94605	27.61	Orange	22.5	92804	36.37
		94541	23.34			92683	34.29
		94544	21.44			92805	33.13
		94587	14.71			92630	18.63
		94538	12.30			92688	13.79
Alpine	22.57	89701	27.61	Placer	16.01	95677	18.77
		96150	25.45			95678	18.46
		89410	23.90			95648	15.08
		89460	21.97			95765	12.00
		90732	21.14			95747	11.23
Amador	19.51	95665	24.40	Plumas	30.45	96122	49.07
		95666	23.88			96130	31.56
		95642	21.34			89506	27.75
		95685	19.49			95971	26.42
		95640	13.93			95947	13.39
Butte	35.29	95965	44.69	Riverside	28.37	92543	48.05
		95928	40.86			92240	47.69
		95926	40.41			92544	42.64
		95966	34.20			92553	42.64
		95973	22.85			92530	33.00
Calaveras	27.55	95249	49.06	Sacramento	28.29	95823	43.10
		95205	48.90			95610	30.24
		95222	28.88			95670	28.91
		95247	25.86			95621	26.24
		95252	25.27			95758	18.19

¹⁴ See U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701, Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1701?g=010XX00US\\$8600000](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1701?g=010XX00US$8600000).

Online Infraction Adjudication and Ability-to-Pay Determinations

Colusa	33.5	95422	53.16	San Benito	21.88	93905	47.99
		96021	45.32			93906	29.16
		95926	40.41			95023	22.88
		95932	37.19			95020	19.09
		95987	32.25			95045	10.81
Contra Costa	18.62	94509	31.07	San Bernardino	32.79	92345	43.13
		94806	29.53			92335	39.68
		94565	28.94			92376	38.22
		94531	21.41			91710	22.25
		94561	16.05			92336	20.20
Del Norte	30.77	95548	49.13	San Diego	23.76	92105	43.22
		95501	45.16			92115	38.88
		97415	34.34			91911	29.89
		95531	31.27			92154	27.11
		95567	22.44			91910	26.24
El Dorado	18.56	96150	25.45	San Francisco	20.85	94124	38.23
		95667	22.97			94102	36.18
		95726	18.09			94134	27.64
		95682	15.55			94112	20.54
		95762	10.01			94014	20.27
Fresno	40.15	93706	66.14	San Joaquin	30.24	95205	48.90
		93702	63.99			95210	43.84
		93726	53.79			95207	40.33
		93722	35.62			95206	40.13
		93727	34.52			95209	21.66
Glenn	34.35	96021	45.32	San Luis Obispo	24.53	93405	57.92
		95928	40.86			93401	26.71
		95926	40.41			93446	24.88
		95988	34.34			93422	22.61
		95963	33.88			93420	16.99
Humboldt	38.74	95501	45.16	San Mateo	14.67	94063	27.45
		95521	44.04			94303	17.26
		95540	36.20			94080	16.82
		95503	33.06			94015	15.80
		95519	30.69			94403	13.19
Imperial	45.28	92231	49.49	Santa Barbara	30.63	93458	49.58
		92243	45.85			93454	38.83
		92227	45.49			93117	37.04
		92250	36.20			93436	32.67
		92251	33.12			93455	18.69

Online Infraction Adjudication and Ability-to-Pay Determinations

Inyo	24.56	90012	42.33	Santa Clara	15.63	95122	29.08
		89503	36.51			95111	27.23
		90706	35.05			95127	23.55
		91304	28.89			95020	19.09
		93514	23.07			95123	12.90
Kern	42.2	93307	60.72	Santa Cruz	25.07	95076	37.07
		93304	54.89			95060	28.49
		93306	43.90			95062	24.11
		93308	43.44			95003	11.82
		93309	43.08			95018	10.88
Kings	39.82	93204	58.19	Shasta	31.17	96019	38.97
		93212	54.24			96007	35.27
		93274	40.55			96002	32.88
		93230	35.80			96003	32.57
		93245	33.81			96001	28.00
Lake	35.97	95422	53.16	Sierra	33.99	96122	49.07
		95423	48.89			96118	46.20
		95458	42.80			89502	36.81
		95451	29.17			96130	31.56
		95453	24.89			89508	21.96
Lassen	34.23	96109	69.54	Siskiyou	37.06	96039	54.89
		96113	50.24			96097	42.74
		96137	37.98			96094	34.84
		96130	31.56			96064	34.33
		96114	27.06			96067	28.60
Los Angeles	31.13	90011	59.23	Solano	22.04	94590	35.50
		90044	52.76			94533	32.00
		93550	46.15			94585	23.54
		90043	35.34			94591	21.20
		90250	33.76			95687	15.67
Madera	42.65	93638	57.34	Sonoma	20.1	95407	33.80
		93610	45.86			95403	21.54
		93637	42.14			94928	20.84
		93614	21.81			95404	18.56
		93636	16.75			94954	13.85
Marin	17.14	94901	27.74	Stanislaus	33.35	95351	51.27
		94947	23.86			95380	38.88
		94945	19.11			95307	36.25
		94949	18.35			95350	35.46
		94903	15.81			95363	26.97

Online Infraction Adjudication and Ability-to-Pay Determinations

Mariposa	31.48	95341	54.12	Sutter	34.37	95991	40.09
		95348	42.11			95953	39.23
		95340	38.78			95901	39.13
		95338	28.04			95993	29.36
		95363	26.97			95961	27.51
Mendocino	35.61	95428	67.92	Tehama	36.35	96021	45.32
		95470	44.92			96055	42.77
		95437	40.37			96080	35.01
		95482	34.34			95963	33.88
		95490	28.30			96022	25.11
Merced	41.55	95341	54.12	Trinity	44.57	96041	48.67
		95348	42.11			96048	47.12
		95340	38.78			95521	44.04
		93635	38.64			96003	32.57
		95301	34.43			96093	26.33
Modoc	37.86	96134	52.83	Tulare	42.77	93257	49.29
		95206	40.13			93274	40.55
		96101	39.29			93292	33.01
		97630	37.44			93291	31.67
		97603	34.45			93277	31.35
Mono	23.59	93550	46.15	Ventura	22.53	95351	51.27
		89502	36.81			95311	36.99
		93514	23.07			95350	35.46
		93546	20.06			95327	33.76
		89521	17.15			95370	27.48
Monterey	32.63	93905	47.99	Yolo	30.8	93033	38.87
		93955	35.36			93030	34.57
		93933	31.18			93060	33.25
		93901	30.19			93036	29.87
		93906	29.16			93003	21.84
Napa	20.21	94533	32.00	Yuba	33.63	95616	41.27
		94589	25.71			95618	31.50
		94559	23.88			95695	29.59
		94558	19.95			95691	27.88
		94503	16.87			95776	20.87
Nevada	25.94	95945	34.37				
		95946	31.09				
		95959	24.00				
		95949	22.74				
		96161	14.93				