



Superior Court
State of California
County of Lake
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Lakeport, California 95453
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ANDREW S. BLUM

PRESIDING JUDGE

KRISTA D. LeVIER

COURT EXECUTIVE/CLERK
JURY COMMISSIONER

April 11, 2017

Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee
Funding Methodology Subcommittee

Re: Item 4 Impact of Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) on Small Courts

Dear Committee Members:

First, thank you for taking the time to review the impact of the BLS factor on small courts. The impact for a small, rural court like Lake is extremely detrimental. Using the BLS factor assumes that the court is competing with local public sector employers for employees. That is not accurate. In my 12+ years of employment with the court, I do not recall a single instance when the court has lost an employee to the County of Lake (the largest public employer in the County). Although, we often lose employees to neighboring courts such as Sonoma. Due to the extremely low BLS factor in Lake County (.75 in FY16/17), we are unable to compete with neighboring courts. Our employees can drive just over an hour to neighboring Sonoma (BLS of 1.13) or Napa (BLS of 1.22) and earn significantly more. We are a training ground for nearby courts who can offer more lucrative pay and benefits. The WAFM already recognizes that the labor pool can be something other than the local government, i.e. in counties where the competing labor pool is state government an adjustment is made accordingly.

The need for the model to recognize and account for a more broad comparable labor pool by comparing salaries to other trial courts in a region was recognized when the WAFM model was initially implemented in 2013 (see materials for JCC Meeting April 26, 2013). However, the issue has not been addressed to date. I recognize the complexities of attempting to regionalize the BLS factor when appropriate; therefore, I ask that your committee recommend to the full Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee a **minimum BLS factor for all courts**. That minimum BLS factor could be .9, .95 or 1.0. I urge you to take the steps necessary to make this adjustment for the FY17/18 WAFM allocations.

One last note, the materials show an option of a minimum BLS factor for courts with less than 50 full-time equivalent positions. I have not seen any data to support this as a logical breaking point. All of the recruitment and retention challenges that are outlined above exist whether a court's FTE need is 49 or 51.

Sincerely,



Krista LeVier
Court Executive Officer