



SAN MATEO COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT
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San Mateo County Superior Court Workforce and Public Service Reductions Due to State Budget Cuts

REDWOOD CITY – Due to the impact of state budget cuts, the San Mateo County Superior Court will implement workforce and public service reductions as it continues to adapt to increased operational costs with significantly reduced state funding.

The Fiscal Year 2024-25 state budget, which became effective July 1, 2024, closed a \$46.8 billion budget deficit by reducing ongoing funding for state government operations. This resulted in a \$97 million reduction to funding for trial courts statewide. On Friday, the Judicial Council of California met to decide on how to allocate the \$97 million in reductions to the trial courts. Approximately \$1.45 million in on-going reductions will be allocated to the San Mateo County Superior Court. California Chief Justice Patricia Guerrero, in addressing the impact of the state budget, explained that the cuts “will have real impacts on operations, services, and access for everyone seeking to resolve disputes or assert their legal rights in our courts.”

In addition to the on-going budget cuts, operating costs are increasing. The San Mateo County Superior Court must absorb the staff-wide cost-of-living adjustment without state assistance, translating to an approximately \$1 million reduction of the Court’s general fund. Workers’ compensation costs are also expected to increase by 25 percent, from \$458,000 to \$572,000. Additionally, forensic mental health evaluation costs are projected to increase by nearly 45 percent, from \$335,900 to \$482,746. The Court also faces increased costs for cyber-security defense, infrastructure hosting, software licensing, and application support and maintenance. Contractual facilities obligations with the County of San Mateo for the construction of two courtrooms at the Hall of Justice and the withdrawal of payroll support from the County are further contributing to the Court’s increased operational expenses.

The significant budget impacts are forcing the San Mateo County Superior Court to make difficult decisions in order to cover costs while continuing to provide key court services to the public, resulting in a reduction to the Court’s workforce. The Court has been forced to implement a hiring freeze across all divisions, with exceptions made for essential court positions. The Court expects the reduction in funding and the impact to the Court’s workforce to result in changes to the following court services:

- Beginning August 5, 2024, public service phone hours for the Civil, Probate, Family Law, and Records Management divisions will be cutback to 8:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Monday – Friday. The

Criminal, Traffic, and Juvenile divisions will maintain full operational phone hours. Counter service hours for all divisions are expected to remain unchanged.

- The number of available daily appointments for the Civil, Probate, Family Law, and Records Management divisions in Room A at the Hall of Justice are expected to be reduced. There will be limited ability to assist members of the public seeking drop-in assistance without appointments.
- The turnaround time for processing filings for Civil, Probate, and Family Law cases will increase from the current standard of 1 – 2 days, to approximately 5 – 7 days.
- Family Court Services will experience delays in the scheduling of hearings. The time from Child Custody Recommending Counseling appointment to first hearing will increase from the current standard of 8 – 10 weeks, to approximately 12 – 16 weeks.
- Judgments in Civil and Family Law cases may be delayed by up to 6 months.

The San Mateo County Superior Court remains committed to preserving the administration of justice and serving all court users as it adjusts to the impact of the state budget cuts. Important updates will continue to be communicated to the public as they become available. For more information on the Court and its current services, please visit sanmateo.courts.ca.gov.

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