

**Superior Court of California  
County of Trinity**

**STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2021**

**DESCRIPTION OF THE TRINITY COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT:**

Since 1865 the Trinity County Superior Court has continuously occupied a two-story brick building that was constructed in 1857. The courthouse building also houses the District Attorney's Office, County Clerk/Elections Office, County Auditor, Treasurer's Office, County Administrative Office, and the Board of Supervisors. Sessions of court are also held monthly at the Trinity County Sheriff's Substation in Hayfork and bi-monthly in Mad River, at the Community Center dining hall. The driving time to Hayfork in good weather is about 45 minutes; to Mad River about 2 hours. All jury trials take place in Weaverville.

Considered a small court, Trinity is 1 of 15 two-judge courts in the State of California. The two Superior Court Judges are supported by a Court Executive Officer and Judicial Secretary, a Clerk's Office staff of seven employees, a Marshal and two Deputy Marshals, one Court Reporter, and a part-time Family Court Child Custody Recommending Counselor/Probate Investigator. One of the Clerks also runs the court Collections office and handles Self-Help Center operations. An AB 1058 Commissioner and a Family Law Facilitator are currently shared one day a month with neighboring Shasta County.

**VISION STATEMENT:**

Provide a forum to conduct the business of the court that offers maximum access to all, instills confidence in the judicial process, and commands respect for the rule of law and our justice system.

**MISSION STATEMENT:**

The mission of the Superior Court of Trinity County is manifold. It is (1) to provide fair and just outcomes for criminal offenders and their victims, (2) to enable prompt and fair resolution of civil disputes, and (3) to identify opportunities to improve citizens' access to justice, while building the community's confidence in the courts and insuring public understanding and respect for the American legal system.

**GOALS:**

**GOAL I – ACCESS, FAIRNESS, AND DIVERSITY**

**Issue Statement:**

Constituents residing in the distant communities of the county must travel up to 3 hours one-way under optimum driving conditions, over two-lane winding roads and mountain peaks to gain access to the courthouse in Weaverville. Compounded by the County's high unemployment rate and low average incomes, use of the court is a hardship for many community members. A small but growing minority of Asian and Spanish-speaking residents needs assistance with language translation when they are at the court. The Court must develop alternatives for improving access and increasing involvement of our constituency.

**Action Plan:**

1. Continue to expand our stand-alone court website, with links to language access portals, and feedback capability.
2. Move toward a web based case management system in the future to help implement an E-filing processes.
3. Implement capability for video appearances where suitable and feasible.
4. Expand the hours of availability for the Family Law Facilitator and Self-Help Center-in the branch courts on a limited schedule.
5. Improve efficiency of jury facilities and procedures, such as, customizing juror appearance schedules to minimize long periods of waiting (depending on the nature of a trial), and establish a self-check-in process.

**GOAL II – CIVIC OUTREACH AND ACCOUNTABILITY****Issue Statement:**

Recent severe statewide budget reductions for the Judicial Branch have highlighted the public's significant lack of understanding of the role and needs of the Courts. At a local level, the Court needs to reach out to county government leaders, district state legislators, and local educators to improve their understanding of the Court's role and needs, and to foster a better relationship with all to insure future support of the judicial branch and this court specifically.

**Action Plan:**

1. Disseminate articles and educational materials available for public use at the Court's Self-Help Center, which will explain how the law might affect them and help them find assistance.
2. Reinstate a complaint/suggestion box in the clerk's office of the courthouse and on the Court's website.

3. Continue to utilize the Court's website to post and continually update information needed to remain accountable to the public, such as budget information, Court calendars, Court statistics, etc.

### **GOAL III – MODERNIZATION OF MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION**

#### **Issue Statement:**

In order to assure the public is satisfied with the quality of administration of the court's business, the Court is committed to continuously improving and using best practices in security, management of personnel and facilities, and new technology. The Court must plan and implement new programs and/or processes selectively, to remain within the limitations of its budget.

#### **Action Plan:**

1. Negotiate, with the county, for additional space for Department 2 needs, including another room for jury use, and/or for attorney/client conferences, and space specifically for security needs such as separating female and juvenile inmates, and providing additional office space for the Marshal and his deputies.
2. Review, circulate for comment any new updated local rules of court at least annually.

### **GOAL IV – QUALITY OF JUSTICE AND SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC**

#### **Issue Statement:**

In spite of severely restricted funding, the Superior Court of Trinity County strives to deliver the highest quality of justice and service to the public. It is committed to affording respect and dignity for all who use the court, to assisting unrepresented litigants, to using court procedures and operations that efficiently dispose of cases, and to exhibiting professionalism throughout its operations in a manner that instills and retains confidence in the judiciary.

#### **Action Plan:**

1. Provide on-going training to all court employees for developing and improving performance in all task areas, including customer service.
2. Develop a succession plan so that as employees leave or retire, a seamless transition is possible to maintain a high level of service and performance.
3. Continue to meet or exceed continuing education requirements for judges and staff.

4. Provide resources for judges to participate in state-level planning for improvement of the judicial branch in a manner that is attentive to small-court needs.
5. Foster good relations with local and adjacent county bar associations, to develop and grow a reliable group of attorneys regularly practicing in this community who will deliver excellent representation for court users.
6. Ensure that all practicing lawyers appearing before the Court are complying with education and training requirements as applicable in their field.

**DEMOGRAPHICS**  
**SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS**  
**(2000 Census Information)**

<b>Population:</b>	13,022
Male:	6,644
Female	6,378

<b>Age:</b>	
Under 5 years	552
18 years and over	10,048
65 years and over	2,241
Median age	44.6

<b>Race</b>	Caucasian	88.9%
	Black/African American	0.4%
	Native American	4.8%
	Asian	0.5%
	Hispanic or Latino	4.0%
	Other	1.4%

<b>Income and Poverty:</b>	
Per capita (1999)	\$16,868
Median Household income (1999)	\$ 27,711
Person below poverty level	\$ 2,372
Annual Average Unemployment (2002)	10.5%

<b>Education (Over 25)</b>	
High School Graduates	81.0%
Bachelor's Degree	15.5%

<b>Financing Sources County Government</b>	
Taxes	\$3,747,175
Licenses, permits and franchises	\$209,766
Fines, forfeitures and penalties	\$159,680
Use revenue (property and money)	\$320,176
Government agencies	\$14,657,959
Charges from current services	\$606,684
Misc Revenue	\$455,897
Other financing sources	\$517,253
TOTAL	\$20,671,572