INNOVATIONS IN THE CALIFORNIA COURTS

20 YEARS OF GREAT IDEAS

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Foreword

Tani Cantil-Sakauye

We are pleased to share with you the fourth edition of *Innovations in the California Courts*. This publication showcases the innovative work by courts throughout the state to improve justice for all Californians.

The past few years have brought severe financial challenges to California. Now in the third consecutive year of budget reductions, California's courts have had no choice but to make cuts that will impact the fundamental work of the court and touch upon all facets of life in our state.

Local courts across California are making difficult but necessary decisions about reductions in service to the public, court closures, staff layoffs and furloughs, and new and more efficient methods of operation. In tandem with these local decisions, the Judicial Council—the constitutionally mandated policymaking body of the California courts—wrestles with balancing the immediate needs of the courts with the long-term maintenance necessary for the future health of the branch.

Ronald G. Overholt

Even in times of fiscal crisis and severe budget challenges, California courts continue to find ways to improve, innovate, and advance the administration of justice and find new and better ways to serve the public.

The first section of this edition profiles the 2010–2011 recipients of the Ralph N. Kleps Award for Improvement in the Administration of the Courts. The programs highlighted are shining examples of the ingenuity and creativity that are a mainstay in the California courts.

Established in 1991 in honor of the first Administrative Director of the Courts, this award recognizes courts that have implemented innovative programs that further the overarching goals of the Judicial Council's strategic plan:

- Goal I: Access, Fairness, and Diversity
- Goal II: Independence and Accountability
- Goal III: Modernization of Management and Administration
- Goal IV: Quality of Justice and Service to the Public
- Goal V: Education for Branchwide Professional Excellence
- Goal VI: Branchwide Infrastructure for Service Excellence

The Kleps Award Program does more than recognize projects. Through this venerable tradition, we salute the creativity in California's courts, foster a culture of innovation, and celebrate the spirit of public service.

This year marks the 20-year anniversary of the Kleps Award Program. Ideas that were revolutionary at the time—family law courts, self-help centers, and form filing systems just to name a few—are now common practice. This spirit of innovation was able to flourish under the leadership and support of Administrative Director of the Courts William C. Vickrey, recently retired. We can look back with pride at the programs that have been recipients of the Kleps Award since its inception.

The second section of this publication provides a retrospective look at some of the programs that have been honored throughout the years and the courts and people that have made them all possible.

The final section, Statewide Initiatives, highlights projects that have brought people together to share and leverage the collective resources, experience, and wisdom of courts throughout this vast state. Several projects are administrative and technological in nature and support the overall infrastructure of the branch. Some projects are efforts by the courts to reach out to the communities we serve. Other projects demonstrate the work of the courts toward successfully moving people out of the justice system. While these projects range in size and scope, they all contribute to the strategic goals of the judicial branch.

We would like to thank the many individuals at the courts chronicled in this edition, not only for the extraordinary contributions they have made through these programs, but for the contributions they make every day. We believe that we can meet the many challenges before us if we work together and focus on the shared goal of delivering justice to all Californians.

Tani Cantil-Sakauye
Chief Justice of California
and Chair of the Judicial Council

Ronald G. Overholt
Interim Administrative
Director of the Courts

2010–2011 RALPH N. KLEPS AWARDS

I am happy to report that the courts continue to take risks, tackle new challenges, and improve the administration of justice, even in the midst of great economic hardship and uncertainty as to what the future holds. This section describes the continuing excellence of our courts' efforts, as exemplified by the 2010–2011 Kleps Award recipients.

Biennially, the Judicial Council honors California appellate and trial courts for their innovation in furthering the goals of the judicial branch's strategic plan for the courts. These award recipients eloquently demonstrate how California courts are meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

The seven programs highlighted in this publication continue the tradition, have fully demonstrated that they met each of the requirements for this award, and are programs of which our courts can be proud.

Two of the new award recipients—the Superior Courts of Orange and Contra Costa Counties—improve direct services to the public by partnering with local organizations. Two other recipients—the Superior Courts of Monterey and San Bernardino Counties—employ private industry technology and automation to improve the efficiency of the court. The other three recipients—Superior Court of Orange County; Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District; and a collaboration between the Superior Courts of Fresno and Stanislaus Counties and the Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District—have made significant improvements to the process by which court cases are reviewed, evaluated, and decided, having a positive effect on the very core of the judicial system: people having their cases heard in a just and timely manner.

The 19-member Kleps Award Committee is an independent and autonomous committee comprising justices, judges, and court administrators. It carefully evaluates applicants and recommends awardees to the Judicial Council for approval.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank William C. Vickrey, whose 19-year tenure as the Administrative Director of the Courts ran parallel to the Kleps Award Program. Mr. Vickrey has been an ardent supporter of the Kleps Award Program and encouraged the sharing of effective practices and innovation in the courts.

I speak for the entire committee when I say that it has been an honor for us to learn more about these extraordinary programs and to share them with you.

Ronald B. Robie
Chair, Ralph N. Kleps Award Committee

JUDICIAL BRANCH STRATEGIC GOALS

GOAL I
Access, Fairness, and Diversity

GOAL II
Independence and Accountability

GOAL III
Modernization of Management and Administration

GOAL IV
Quality of Justice and Service to the Public

GOAL V
Education for Branchwide Professional Excellence

GOAL VI
Branchwide Infrastructure for Service Excellence

Ralph N. Kleps Award Process

Created in 1991 in honor of Ralph N. Kleps, the first California Administrative Director of the Courts, the Ralph N. Kleps Award for Improvement in the Administration of the Courts recognize and celebrate the contributions individual courts have made to judicial administration.

In this 20th anniversary of the Kleps Awards, the Judicial Council is bestowing the awards for the 17th time. The awards are given in five categories. Three of the categories group the courts based on the number of authorized judicial positions. The fourth and fifth categories cover appellate court projects and collaborative projects.

Programs nominated for the awards are judged and scored on five criteria. Each program must:

- Be a project of a California court—the court must be the driving force and project manager;
- Further at least one of the six goals of the judicial branch's strategic plan;
- Be innovative—in other words, create or significantly enhance a concept, goal, or objective that improves the performance and practices of the court relative to its size, community, and available resources;
- Have measureable results, outcomes, or benefits that demonstrate impact on the court and the public it serves; and
- Be replicable in other courts.

The Kleps Award Committee serves as the jury for the award. Its members are a diverse group of court representatives, including members of the bench and court staff. The committee works hard to ensure that the process of program evaluation, scoring, and ultimately making recommendations to the Judicial Council is fair, is equitable, and identifies those programs that are best suited for replication by other courts.

Nomination materials were made available to the courts in spring 2010. A total of 17 eligible nominations were received that fall. After reviewing the nominations, the award committee determined that 12 of them met the criteria outlined in the nomination materials.

Through the winter of 2010 and spring of 2011, award committee members made site visits to all 12 nominees to see the programs in action and learn more from the program staff and judicial officers involved. Immediately after each site visit, committee members scored the program and reached a consensus.

The award committee met in spring 2011 to evaluate all nominees relative to the others within their categories. Programs that most clearly met the nomination criteria were recommended to the Judicial Council, which approved them at its April 29, 2011, business meeting as the recipients of the 2010–2011 Ralph N. Kleps Award for Improvement in the Administration of the Courts.

2010–2011 Ralph N. Kleps Award Recipients

Page

Orange County Combat Veterans Court

Superior Court of Orange County **12**

Furthers the judicial goal of access, fairness, and diversity. By offering offenders therapeutic resources for mental health issues and addictions, the court has increased access to these resources in a fair and just manner. In addition, by promoting an effective treatment program as an alternative to the criminal justice system, the court is providing a high quality of service to the public—another judicial goal.

Elder Court

Superior Court of Contra Costa County **14**

Addresses the goal of access, fairness, and diversity through its outreach, education, and support services. The court addresses the goal of delivering the highest quality of justice and service in several ways. First, elders have the same knowledgeable judge address all their legal issues on the same day—there is no need for multiple court appearances in different courts. In addition, the court meets the special needs of each individual and offers assistance with social services.

Automated Civil Grand Jury Program

Superior Court of Monterey County **16**

Supports the goal of delivering the highest quality of justice and service to the public. The ease of applying for grand jury duty, and the open access the website provides to all information about the grand jury, both work to better serve the public. The program also supports the goal of enhancing the infrastructure of the courts.

Automated Mail Payment Processing System

Superior Court of San Bernardino County **18**

Supports a key goal of the judicial branch—to meet the needs of the people by enhancing the infrastructure of the courts. By improving its technology infrastructure, the court is able to provide better service to its constituents.

Electronic Writ Processing Program

Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District **20**

Helps accomplish the goal of resolving disputes in a just and timely manner. The project has improved caseload processing time and increased the number of dispositions the court can issue each month. In addition, the project fulfills the goal of improving service to the public by encouraging the electronic filing of writ petitions; electronic filing reduces time and effort for the petitioner as well as the court.

Electronic Legal File

Superior Court of Orange County **22**

Furthers the judicial goal of improving infrastructure for service excellence. The court is now able to process the cases on its calendar more speedily and skillfully, demonstrating respect for court users' time and promoting public trust.

Transcript Assembly Program

Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District, and the Superior Courts of Fresno and Stanislaus Counties **24**

Furthers the judicial goal of equal access to court proceedings and programs. Records of cases on appeal can now be easily searched online by the public. TAP also improves the technological infrastructure that supports and meets the needs of the public. By enabling everyone involved in a case to work with the necessary documents online, TAP helps improve the quality and speed of justice.

Honorable Mention

The programs on this page received honorable mention for the 2010–2011 Ralph N. Kleps Award for Improvement in the Administration of the Courts because they advanced past the first level of Kleps Award Committee review and met the initial criteria.

The Kleps Award review process is rigorous and comprehensive. After the eligible programs are fully evaluated, some may not meet all of the Kleps Award criteria but may still be employing innovative methods to address local concerns, or may be successfully improving services in their communities.

The committee wishes to share these notable programs with the judicial branch, acknowledge the work being done by these courts throughout the state, and thank them for participating in the Kleps Award process.

The **Superior Court of Napa County** created the **Judicial Branch Exploration Program** for selected high school juniors and seniors to increase their understanding of the court system and its relationships within the community. Students participate in a 26-hour intensive program over a three-week period in which they gain in-depth knowledge of criminal, civil, and family law. The program includes courtroom calendar observation, site visits to justice and community partner agencies, and simulated legal arguments before a judge, based on real case facts.

The **Court Appearance Reminder System (CARS)** was implemented by the **Superior Court of Los Angeles County** to remind defendants of their scheduled court dates. The goal of CARS is to reduce the number of defendants who fail to appear in court. CARS reminds defendants by phone of their court dates and also offers them the option of paying the citation by phone in lieu of appearing in court.

The **Superior Court of San Bernardino County's Exhibit Management Program** preserves the integrity and safety of evidence and exhibits through the implementation of proper training, communication, and accountability measures. The program is a collaboration among the superior court, local law enforcement, and the district attorney's office to establish a protocol for the handling and tracking of exhibits. Accountability measures are reinforced through biannual random internal audits of a representative sample of all exhibits in the court's custody, and exhibit clerks receive training in proper procedures.

The **Superior Court of Santa Clara County** created the **Juvenile Justice Video Conferencing Program,** which uses videoconference technology to allow minors in long-term out-of-county placement programs to participate in their permanency planning hearings. These hearings, held every six months per California law, can occur without having to physically transport the minor to court, minimizing escape risks and the costs associated with transport.

For more information on any of the programs above, please contact Deirdre Benedict, Court Services Analyst, 415-865-8915 or deirdre.benedict@jud.ca.gov.

2010–2011 Ralph N. Kleps Award Committee Members

Hon. Ronald B. Robie, Chair
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Court of Appeal
Third Appellate District

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Superior Court of Sonoma County

Hon. Kathleen M. Banke
Associate Justice
Court of Appeal
First Appellate District

Mr. James Brighton
Bureau Chief—Planning,
Research, Public Information,
and Court Services
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Court Executive Officer
Superior Court of Santa Cruz County

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Ms. Mary Majich Davis
Chief Assistant Executive Officer
Superior Court of San Bernardino
County

Ms. Rebecca Fleming
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Superior Court of San Diego County

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Superior Court of Mono County

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Judge
Superior Court of Riverside County

Hon. Cynthia A. Ludvigsen
Judge
Superior Court of
San Bernardino County

Hon. Robert H. Oliver
Judge
Superior Court of Fresno County

Hon. Donna M. Petre
Assigned Judge
Superior Court of California

Ms. Sylvia White-Irby
Administrator
Superior Court of
Los Angeles County

ORANGE COUNTY COMBAT VETERANS COURT

Superior Court of Orange County

A Second Chance for Combat Veterans

The young man standing in front of the judge in the Orange County courtroom has entered a guilty plea to a serious DUI offense. However, instead of requiring the man to pay a fine or sentencing him to jail time, the judge places him on formal probation with a suspended sentence. The judge also refers him to a program that includes treatment for his alcoholism, social services, and closely supervised probation. The young man is a combat veteran, and the court is the Orange County Combat Veterans Court.

The Combat Veterans Court was started in November 2008 as a joint venture between the Superior Court of Orange County and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Long Beach Healthcare System. The goal of the court is to provide an alternative to the criminal justice system for veterans whose first offense—misdemeanor or felony—stems from disorders arising from their combat experience. These include brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, sexual trauma, substance abuse, and other psychological disorders. The court seeks to give veterans a chance to get their lives back on track by addressing the problems underlying their criminal behavior.

"I know that I have been given a second chance to rebuild, and even improve, my life for the long term and I completely intend to take advantage of this opportunity. Your honor, I would like to thank you for this opportunity and thank the court staff for all their help and encouragement."

—Participant in the Combat Veterans Court

The 18-month program offered by the Combat Veterans Court is a combination of therapeutic treatment, social services, and judicial oversight. The participants engage in treatment for their substance abuse and mental health problems. Their medical and dental needs are taken care of, and they are helped to find suitable housing. In addition, each participant is assigned a mentor who is also a veteran. This mentor acts as a coach, role model, and advocate, guiding the veteran through the entire program and lending support when needed. Participants must meet regularly with their parole officers and attend court hearings to review their progress. For those who are moving forward, the atmosphere at these hearings is one of friendly encouragement. However, the judge issues stern warnings to those who are not fulfilling the requirements of the program; these participants are reminded that they may be dropped from the program and could go to prison.

During the first few months, the goals for a participant are simply to maintain sobriety and mental stability and to show up at all necessary meetings. He or she is required to attend individual therapy sessions, group counseling, and self-help meetings, as well as to submit to random drug or alcohol testing. Later in the program, the emphasis shifts to reintegrating the veteran into society. This may involve assistance in finding employment and a suitable living situation, and in reunifying with family.

The local Veterans Affairs office provides many of the counseling resources for the veterans in the program. It also coordinates services from various govern-

Judge Wendy S. Lindley (left) introduces volunteer mentors from the North Orange County Vet Center. These veterans work with and provide support to participants in the Combat Veterans Court.

ment agencies and nonprofits. These may include employment training and placement from the state Employment Development Department, educational counseling from a local college, and help with legal matters from Legal Aid.

The first "class" of five veterans graduated in October 2010, and the program currently has 50 participants. These participants have incurred no new law violations—a record that demonstrates that the goal of rehabilitating the veterans is being realized.

Although the Orange County Combat Veterans Court was one of the pioneers, veterans courts are now being started across the country. To replicate this program, the court suggests first contacting the local Veterans Affairs office to discuss a partnership. It is also important to contact the agencies that will provide the services to the veterans. Because veterans courts depend on a number of partnering agencies, startup and sustaining costs are low, but good coordination is important.

"We, as a society, owe it to our veterans to do everything we can to help them overcome the problems that result from their military service. When these men and women become involved in the criminal justice system, we must . . . work together to make them whole once again."

—Judge Wendy S. Lindley, Superior Court of Orange County, a founder of the Combat Veterans Court

Contact:
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ELDER COURT

Superior Court of Contra Costa County

A Court That Meets the Special Needs of Seniors

Many seniors are isolated and physically frail, and some have mental impairments. Unfortunately, these same infirmities make them more vulnerable to abuse—physical, emotional, and financial. However, seniors suffering from abuse may not be aware that legal remedies and social services are available to them. To provide access to these resources, and to help address the special needs of the senior population, the Superior Court of Contra Costa County created Elder Court in 2008.

Elder Court is held every Tuesday in the late morning, and the docket includes every case that involves elder abuse. Just one judge—Joyce M. Cram—oversees the entire legal process. A senior peer counselor gives emotional support to each senior before the hearing, and experienced attorneys offer free legal advice to indigent seniors. The courtroom is equipped with a wheelchair, assistive listening devices, eyeglasses, and a document magnifier.

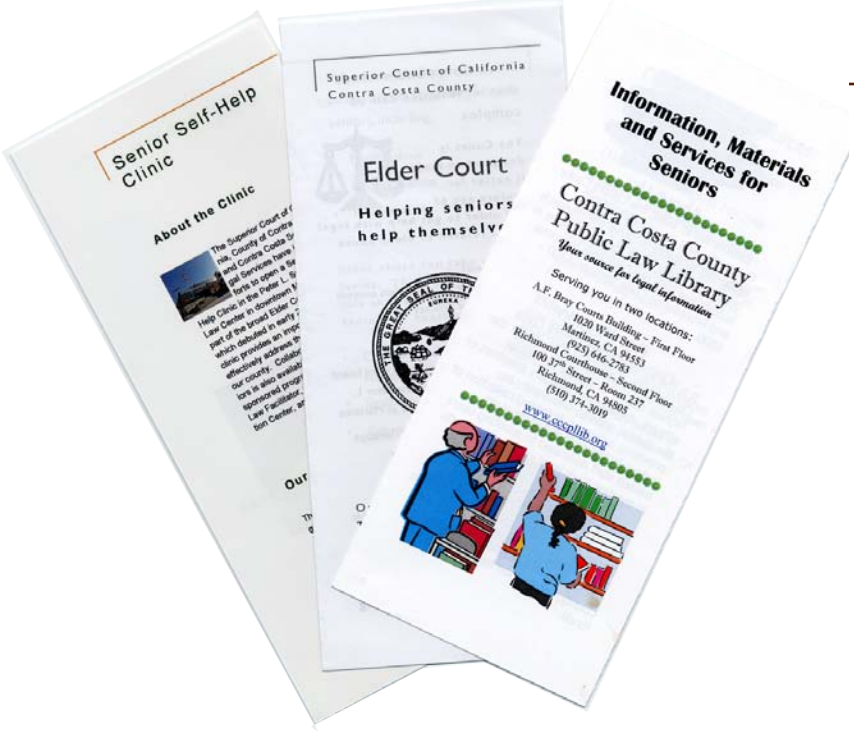
Judge Cram presiding over Elder Court.

In addition to any legal action, Judge Cram may recommend certain social services for a senior. The special needs of the individual are carefully considered in each case. For example, if abuse is occurring in an elder's family, the judge might assign a mediator to help the family resolve disputes. Senior peer counselors will visit the elder to provide additional support, if needed.

Before 2008, numerous government agencies and nonprofit organizations offered services to elders, but there was very little communication or coordination among them. Under the leadership of Judge Cram, the Contra Costa County court created a task force to investigate how best to coordinate these services and create a legal framework that could better serve the senior population. The task force organized roundtable discussions and other meetings among the service agencies. As a result of these discussions, the agencies agreed on ways to coordinate their efforts to

"In Elder Court, we bring everybody together at the same time and try to negotiate a resolution that the DA, the defendant, the attorneys, and the victim can live with. . . . We try to get a global settlement. We have been very successful at doing this faster than the other way, which can take years."

— Judge Joyce M. Cram, Superior Court of Contra Costa County, a founder of Elder Court



The Elder Court program is a unique partnership in which the court and community pool their resources to ensure justice for elders.

serve the senior population under the leadership of the court. With input from these partners and recommendations from the task force, Elder Court was created and began hearing cases in November 2008.

Elder Court now partners with several organizations that provide services to elders who have filed a legal complaint. For example, the Center for Human Development offers mediation services to seniors who are in conflict with family members or care providers. Contra Costa Health Services offers senior peer counseling to support and prepare elders before a court hearing.

With the assistance of its agency partners, the court is reaching out to the elder community. The outreach program gives presentations at senior centers, elder conferences, and other community events. The court also distributes brochures describing Elder Court and its supporting partners to all agencies with an interest in elder affairs. These education and outreach events are well attended, and as a result the number of cases being heard in Elder Court has been steadily increasing. At the same time, increasing numbers of seniors have been using the services of the supporting agencies.

To replicate this program, Magda Lopez, director of court programs and services for the Contra Costa County court, suggests that the effort be spearheaded by a judge willing to initiate the program and hear the cases. Court managers will need to help implement the program and train staff. The Contra Costa court is willing to act as a mentor. The Elder Court program was instituted and continues to operate with existing court resources. And because most of the partner agencies rely on volunteers to staff their programs, the coordinated effort has required very little additional funding.

Other courts have already taken note of the success of Elder Court. The Superior Court of Ventura County's Elder Court is based on the Contra Costa court's model. Judge Cram has attended roundtable discussions in Northern and Southern California and has consulted with courts in Chicago and Buffalo, New York.

Contact:
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AUTOMATED CIVIL GRAND JURY PROGRAM

Superior Court of Monterey County

Applying Online Enables Efficient Management of Grand Jury Data

In 2008, the Superior Court of Monterey County took note of the time and effort involved in selecting a civil grand jury and maintaining a database of applicants. Solicitations for jury duty, notifications, application forms, and juror demographic reports were all paper-based, with various manual systems for keeping track of the data. This time- and labor-intensive procedure to manage the grand jury process is still employed by most courts in California.

In the summer of 2008, members of the jury commissioner's office of the Monterey County court met with the court's Information Technology Division to attempt to improve the process. They were seeking an automated way to manage the data surrounding the annual civil grand jury, for greater efficiency and lower costs. A project team was created, consisting of the civil grand jury manager and, from the Information Technology Division, a project manager, web developer, web administrator, and support team. Employing a standard Microsoft platform, the team developed an online application that meets all of the team's goals.

The Civil Grand Jury Online Application website was launched in August 2008. Since that time, the website has brought a number of benefits to the citizens of Monterey County and to the jury commissioner's office. For example, in 2010, the office saved an estimated 151 hours of time formerly spent working with paper-based processes. The time saved has already paid for the initial outlay of $10,000 to implement the application. In addition, the public now has easy access to all information about the civil grand jury, and applicants for grand jury duty can now apply online.

Another goal of the program team was to comply with rule 10.625 of the California Rules of Court, which aims to ensure that grand juries are made up of a representative cross-section of the county's population. To this end, the online application asks prospective grand jurors to state what age range they fall into, their gender, and their race or ethnicity. The data is then captured in a database and made available to the public, accomplishing another aim of rule 10.625—open access to grand jury data. The online application greatly facilitates managing the data and making it available to the public.

The Civil Grand Jury Online Application site is clear and easy to navigate. A visitor can read about the functions of the grand jury as well as find answers to a number of common questions, such as who can apply for grand jury duty, how to apply, and how jurors are chosen. Users can also find grand jury reports from recent years, the demographics of the current jury, and contact information.

"The module now provides us with the ability to input a ranking score, sort by rank, and produce ranking sheets for review by the bench. It now has the ability to extract mailing information for appropriate notification to prospective jurors. Once the jury is selected, the system can be updated and a directory of the current jury may be created. The automation of these processes preserves an extensive amount of court personnel time and effort that may be utilized elsewhere."

— Nona Medina, Civil Grand Jury Manager

"I was thrilled to see that I could apply online to become a member of the Civil Grand Jury for Monterey County. I was able to complete the application in a matter of minutes rather than having to go pick up or request an application from the court."

—Lisa Hyman, 2010 Civil Grand Jury Foreperson

Currently about 40 percent of prospective jurors use the online form. According to Information Technology Manager Darvin Monkemeier, the court is considering ways to increase this percentage. Doing so would cut costs and reduce the use of paper even further. The court has already received inquiries from other California courts wanting to learn more about the program. The Superior Court of Monterey County's Civil Grand Jury website is a good place to start: www.monterey.courts.ca.gov/grandjury/default.aspx.

To replicate this program, contact the information technology staff of the Superior Court of Monterey County. Information Technology Manager Darvin Monkemeier is willing to help other courts install this program. According to Mr. Monkemeier, the program requires minimal technical maintenance, and ongoing support costs are low. The module is easily transferred to a standard Microsoft platform.

GRAND JURIES

Many people are mystified by grand juries. What exactly do they do? The concept of juries dates back to 12th-century England, where the right to be judged by one's peers (or equals) originated.

Grand juries were established in California during the early years of statehood. Today, they are generally impaneled annually at the county level. Unlike trial jury duty, service on grand juries is voluntary. Citizens of a county may apply to serve as grand jurors.

A civil grand jury is essentially an investigatory body. Its primary function is to examine the workings of county and city governments. In this watchdog capacity, a grand jury may inspect records and financial expenditures to ensure that public funds are spent in a legal manner. It may also inquire into charges of willful misconduct by any public official. Citizens may send letters of complaint to the grand jury if they feel that an official has acted illegally; the grand jury then investigates the complaint and decides whether an indictment is warranted.

Contact:
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AUTOMATED MAIL PAYMENT PROCESSING SYSTEM

Superior Court of San Bernardino County

Substantial Savings from "Magic Money Machine"

In the land of San Bernardino, there is a marvelous machine that compresses time and eliminates tedious work. This "Magic Money Machine" also creates millions of dollars in savings . . .

Too good to be true? Well, this is one fable that has been turned into reality by the Superior Court of San Bernardino County. What they refer to as their "Magic Money Machine" has saved the court $3.8 million since November 2005.

This story begins in the spring of 2004, when the court performed time studies of the processing of mailed-in payments in the 11 court locations within San Bernardino County. These studies revealed that the courts were receiving a combined total of 700 pieces of mail daily, containing payments for fines. Seventeen clerks were needed to open the mail, process the payments, and make deposits.

The court then created a work team to review how payments were processed and recommend improvements. The team began by visiting local utility companies and the office of the county tax collector. After reviewing the payment processes in these offices, the team recommended revisions to the Courtesy Notice sent to defendants (those making payments on their fines). This notice was altered to include a tear-off payment coupon that contained optical scanning data (the actual case information) at the bottom of the notice.

Next, the court purchased automation hardware capable of opening 1,000 envelopes per hour. This was coupled with a remittance processing system that images the front and back of both the coupon and the check, eliminating the need to enter the payments manually and allowing the court to make next-day deposits.

Finally, ISD Corporation, the court's software subcontractor, developed software that enabled the payment information to be uploaded into the court's case management system.

This combination of hardware and software constitutes the "Magic Money Machine," also known by its more mundane name, the Automated Mail Payment Processing System. The system not only processes payments very efficiently, it also generates large savings for the court. Instead of

Four clerks and one machine now handle work previously performed by 17 employees.

17 clerks in 11 different locations, there are now just 4 in one centralized location. These 4 clerks process, balance, and correct the payments that the automated system rejects. The number of payments that require manual processing has fallen to 35 percent of the total—and there are fewer each year. The aforementioned $3.8 million in savings comes from the dramatic reduction in personnel.

It's interesting to note that the annual savings for the court actually increase every year. This is because the 11 court locations presently receive an average of 1,000 mailed-in payments each day, as opposed

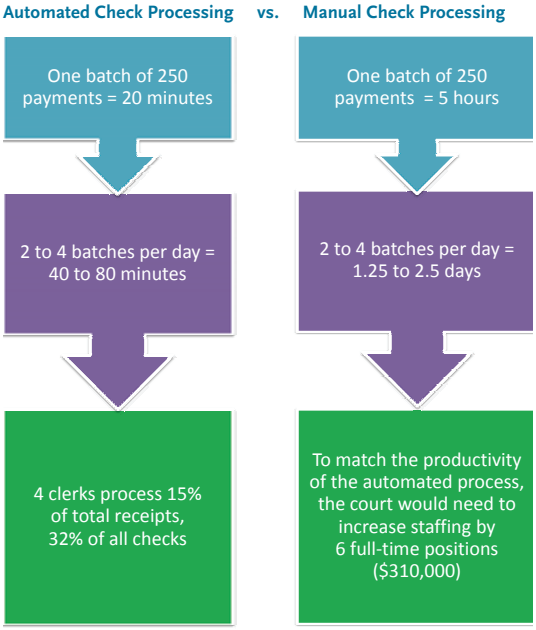
to the 700 received daily in 2004. This increased volume of mail would have required additional clerks to process the payments—at a substantially greater cost. As the amount of mail increases each year, so does the savings.

The "Magic Money Machine" has brought other benefits as well. A number of clerks have been relieved of the tedious work of processing payments and can spend their time assisting the public in more direct ways. The people served by the San Bernardino County court benefit from this assistance. In addition, those paying fines benefit from an up-to-date payment system that includes timely reminders, return envelopes, and rapid processing of payments.

The initial funding for the equipment and software development, which totaled $116,000, was obtained through local funds approved by the court's Executive Committee.

Several other court systems have sent teams to learn about the automated processing system. In recent years, the Superior Courts of Riverside and Orange Counties have implemented similar systems.

To create an automated processing system, the San Bernardino court recommends that courts first analyze their current processing of mail-in payments and the associated costs. There are several vendors that offer automated payment systems, and these vendors can assist in developing cost models. The San Bernardino court is willing to help in this process.



In addition to the labor savings shown to the left, the court saves an additional $5,000 a year in bank fees. The court estimated that with current staffing levels, manual processing could result in a delay of up to 20 business hours between the time a payment is received and when it is recorded in the court's case management system.

Source: Superior Court of San Bernardino County

Contact:
Pamela Nay, Court Financial Officer
909-708-8744 • pnay@sb-court.org

ELECTRONIC WRIT PROCESSING PROGRAM

Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District

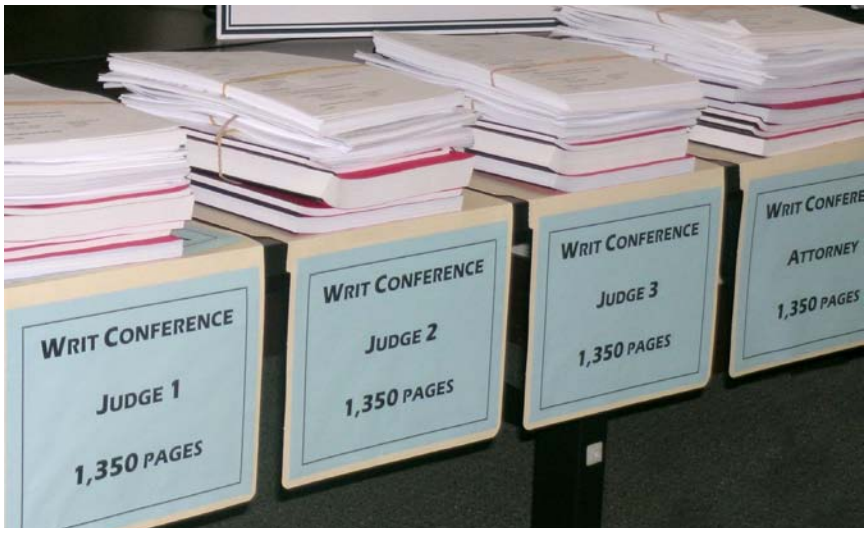
Easier Collaboration and Greater Efficiency

"It is so much easier to access the writs online—it saves staff time and supplies, especially paper. We used to make five paper copies of the habeas corpus writs."

—Diana Monopoli, Senior Deputy Clerk, Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District

In 2009, the Fifth Appellate District of the Court of Appeal designed and developed the Electronic Writ Processing Program, also known as the Writ Project. This program eliminates the piles of paper normally generated by each case; instead, the court's original proceedings, called writs, are processed electronically.

The Writ Project has created a collaborative environment for justices and staff of the court. Justices can now review online any documents relating to any case and then discuss the case with their colleagues online—and they can do this from their offices, from home, or while traveling. They can even cast votes electronically from any location.



Case documents before the Writ Project. Scanning petitions and creating electronic documents have eliminated the need for multiple sets of paper copies.

Research attorneys can also view petitions online and send out their research memos electronically.

Before the Writ Project, court clerks needed to make multiple copies of all petitions. The new process, which involves scanning each petition and creating electronic documents, is 25 percent faster. The project includes all writs, civil and criminal.

The Writ Project was designed and developed in-house by the Fifth Appellate District of the Court of Appeal. The development team consisted of the presiding judge, the court administrator, the assistant court administrator, and the court's information technology staff. The cost of the project, including hardware, software, training, and consulting services, came to $39,000; funding came entirely from Court of Appeal general funds.

"We're saving a lot of trees, a lot of labor time, and have been moving a lot of paper around that in hindsight was not terribly necessary."

—Justice Stephen J. Kane, Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District

The Fifth Appellate District is willing to share its business plan and breakdown of expenses. The court's initial costs were low because the project was developed in-house; outside development would be more expensive. The platform is Microsoft SharePoint software.

The justices and staff at the Fifth Appellate District of the Court of Appeal are also ready to share their enthusiasm for the Writ Project. They will tell you that working collaboratively online is not only more efficient, it's also more pleasant. The program has increased efficiencies at all levels, and this efficiency is reflected in shorter processing times for each case. This, in turn, enables the court to handle significantly more dispositions per month.

In May 2011, the court began offering an option to submit writ petitions electronically for civil and criminal writ proceedings. Documents submitted in this way do not need to be scanned, further improving the efficiency of the process. This step continues the court's progress toward its ultimate goal, which is to be on a totally electronic footing.

"I can scan in relevant sections of the case, brief, or exhibits, and include attachments. . . . As soon as my memo is complete, I can put it on the system and send it to the three justices to vote. I can receive all three votes within 24 hours and, thus, file the case several days quicker."

—Bradley Tahajian, Senior Appellate Court Attorney

Contact:
Julie Bagoye, Assistant Clerk/Administrator
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ELECTRONIC LEGAL FILE

Superior Court of Orange County

Case Management with a Few Clicks

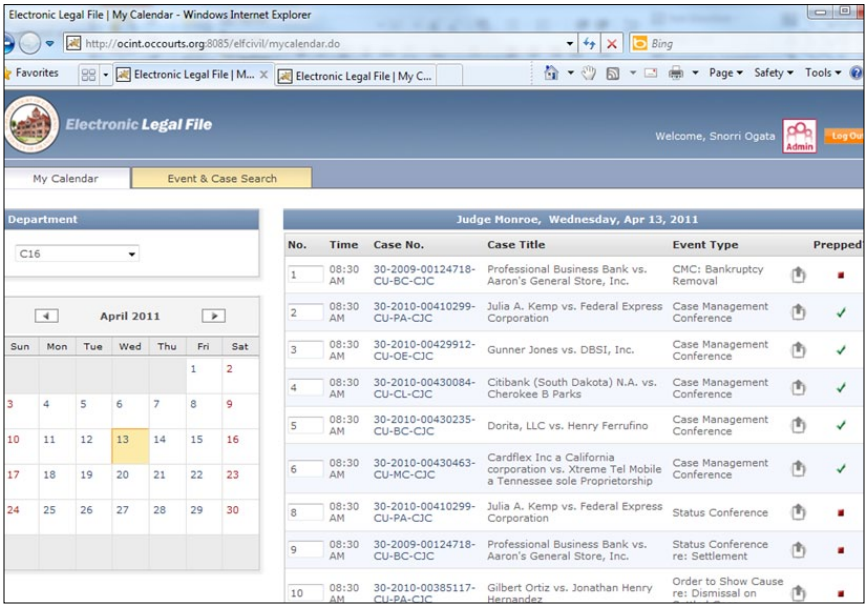
Courts employ a number of different computer systems—often one for each administrative function, such as recording, filing, and updating court calendars. The Electronic Legal File (ELF) unifies all these systems into one simple structure. Instead of logging on to different systems, a judicial officer or a court employee need only open up ELF.

The story of ELF began in 2009, when the Superior Court of Orange County made a decision to recognize electronic files as legal documents. The court scanned paper files electronically and then destroyed them. It then made the documents available to judges and court staff with a multidocument viewer (MDV).

Using the MDV, however, was very time-consuming. A user had to log on to each case and each document separately. Accessing recommendations for each case from research attorneys or finding the date and time for a specific hearing required additional searches.

It was soon clear to everyone at the court that a new, more comprehensive application was needed. Under the leadership of Judge Kim G. Dunning, the court initiated the development of ELF. The staff of Court Technology Services built the infrastructure for the application in August 2009 and began a pilot program in December of that year. After all civil judges and staff had been trained in its use, ELF was fully deployed in April 2010.

The Electronic Legal File has brought profound operational changes at every level of the court. Now, when a judge logs on to ELF, the initial page displays the day's calendar for the judge's department. He or she can move to other days, search for a specific case, or view the calendar for another courtroom. With a few clicks, the judge can view all documents filed on a specific case. This includes the official case file, recommendations from research



A judge's calendar in ELF.

"ELF has increased my productivity and speed many-fold. It is all at my fingertips, thanks to ELF."

—Judge Geoffrey T. Glass, Superior Court of Orange County

attorneys, and any other information that court clerks think the judge would find useful.

Life is also easier for the court clerks. Instead of manually retrieving and compiling paper documents for each case, they can place them directly on ELF. In addition, calendars are much easier to prepare, whether they are daily calendars for each department or "alpha calendar pages"—that is, master lists of all cases scheduled for hearing on specific days.

In March 20011, ELF was extended to family law. The court is planning to expand the application to other case types as well.

Other courts have expressed an interest in ELF, including the Superior Courts of Santa Clara and Napa Counties. The Superior Courts of Sacramento and San Diego Counties are implementing their own versions of ELF—with assistance from Orange County Court Technology Services. The software is easily transferable, and the costs—which mostly involve technology staff time—are low.

Adopting ELF has enabled the court to eliminate 12 clerical positions; redeploying the staff and eliminating the vacant positions has created an annual savings of $735,000.

"ELF is an amazing tool that allows judges to intuitively and easily search for any document. The calendar-driven feature makes it unique. Quite simply, access to this tool allows me to be the only person in the courtroom who has total mastery of the case file."

—Judge Nancy W. Stock, Superior Court of Orange County

Contact:
Snorri Ogata, Chief Technology Officer
657-622-7617 • sogata@occourts.org

TRANSCRIPT ASSEMBLY PROGRAM

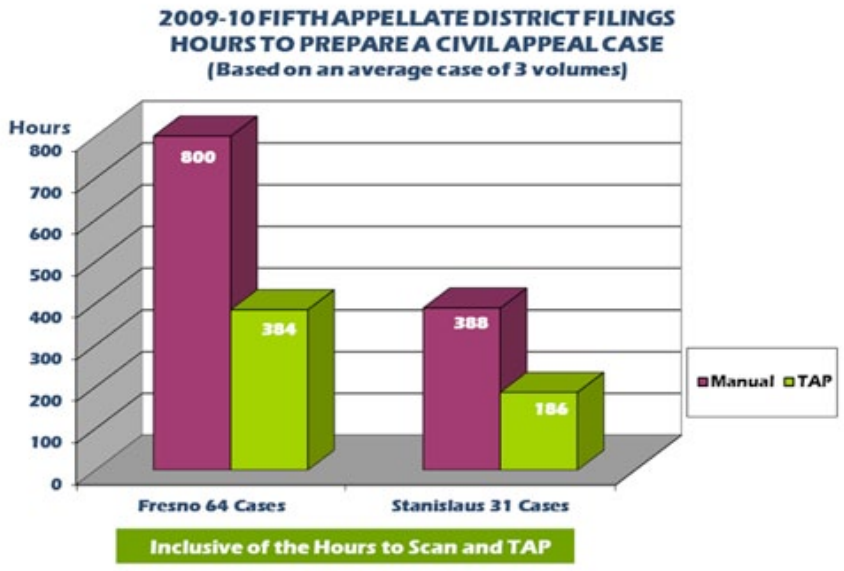
Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District, and the Superior Courts of Fresno and Stanislaus Counties

Streamlined Process Offers Online Access to Case Files

Most courts create large numbers of documents for each case they hear. When a civil case goes from a trial court to an appellate court, all the documents related to that case—called the civil clerk's transcript—must be copied and transported to the appellate court, a labor-intensive process often involving thousands of sheets of paper. In 2008, the Fifth Appellate District of the Court of Appeal in Fresno moved to streamline this process, proposing to create an electronic transcript file that is identical to the paper version.

The court anticipated a number of benefits from an electronic version of the civil clerk's transcript. First, the file could easily be forwarded from the superior court to the appellate court as well as to all attorneys involved in the case. Clerks could easily cut and paste any information needed by the justices into the attorney-prepared documents at the court. In addition, the court predicted that it would save time: The nine trial courts in the Fifth Appellate District prepare about 225 transcript files per year and were spending an average of 10 hours on each one. Creating a paper transcript involves photocopying each document in the file, manually compiling the documents, and assembling them into the required volumes.

The Transcript Assembly Program, or TAP, as it is called, was developed under the leadership of the Fifth Appellate District of the Court of Appeal, in consultation with the nine trial courts. Initial funding for the project came from general funds budgeted for technical improvements in the Fifth Appellate District. IKON Office Solutions provided the necessary expertise to develop TAP, and in



Savings that speak for themselves. Source: Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District.

"This project holds great promise for enhancing services to the public, particularly the large and growing number of self-represented litigants."

—Tamara L. Beard, Court Executive Officer of the Superior Court of Fresno County

"What started as a simple idea to improve the local appeal process provides a valuable opportunity to modernize the way the court system serves its users."

—Justice James J. Ardaiz (Ret.), Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District

June 2009 the program was ready for testing by the trial courts.

A planning grant from the State Justice Institute supported pilot projects with the Superior Courts of Stanislaus and Fresno Counties. After completing their user testing of TAP, these two courts began electronic transmission of civil clerk's transcripts to the Court of Appeal in early 2011. Then, in June 2011, the Court of Appeal received another grant from the State Justice Institute for implementation of TAP at the seven other trial courts in the Fifth Appellate District. According to Charlene Ynson, the clerk/administrator for the Fifth Appellate District of the Court of Appeal, the court plans to have all nine trial courts in the district employing TAP by June 2012.

The Superior County of Fresno County has determined that, under TAP, its staff can prepare a civil clerk's transcript for the Court of Appeal in approximately half the time it takes to create a paper version, due to the ability to work with documents in electronic form. When all nine trial courts in the district are on board, it is estimated that the savings will total $75,000 each year. The courts also save money by reducing costs for storage, postage, and paper. As anticipated, other benefits include the ability to share files electronically and to cut and paste documents. Further, the electronic transcripts have increased access to the files for everyone, including the public. TAP is now a proven, cost-effective system that other courts can easily replicate. In California, TAP is unique in the benefits it brings to the trial courts and to the Fifth Appellate District of the Court of Appeal.

The court is willing to share the TAP application with courts outside the Fifth Appellate District. Costs for implementing the TAP system in each trial court range from $10,000 to $30,000, depending on what hardware and software are already in place. Savings, however, can be substantial.

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RALPH N. KLEPS AWARD RETROSPECTIVE: 20 YEARS OF INNOVATION

The year 2011 marks the 20th anniversary of the Kleps Award for Improvement in the Administration of the Courts, and we take this opportunity to acknowledge the individuals who have given their time to the award program, as well as the many programs that have received a Kleps Award, and to look back at some of the important strides that have been made in judicial administration over the past two decades.

This section opens with a profile of Mr. Ralph N. Kleps, who served as the first Administrative Director of the California Courts, and after whom the Kleps Award is named.

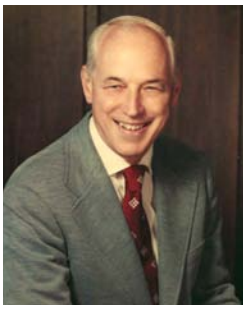
This award program would not be possible without the contributions of the justices, judges, court executive officers, appellate clerks/administrators, and court and appellate staff who have served on the awards committees. These individuals are listed on page 28. We thank each and every one for their efforts along the way.

One hundred and seventy-seven court programs have received the Kleps Award since 1991. Pages 29 through 31 contain a comprehensive list of all award recipients by appellate district or county. You will see that a vast majority of the California courts—both small and large—have received recognition for the exceptional efforts they have made to address a wide array of issues that affect the day-to-day administration of justice in California.

Finally, although we are not able to profile each recipient here, we highlight one program from each award cycle, giving a flavor of the breadth and scope of the progress achieved over the past 20 years. Many programs that were started locally have since taken root in the collective court culture and have been successfully replicated; they are in wide use today not only in California, but throughout the country.

Please enjoy this look back.

Ralph N. Kleps



"The acceptance—indeed prominence—that the profession of court administration has achieved during the past 20 years is due in large measure to the work and the example of Ralph N. Kleps."

—William E. Davis, Circuit Executive, United States Courts, Ninth Circuit, 1982

California's Administrative Office of the Courts was created in 1961, and Ralph N. Kleps was appointed its first Administrative Director by California Chief Justice Phil S. Gibson.

A New York native, Mr. Kleps graduated from Deep Springs College in Bishop, California, and went on to receive his AB and LLB from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. After being admitted to the bar, Mr. Kleps went to work for a San Francisco law firm for several years before clerking for Chief Justice Gibson.

Mr. Kleps's affiliation with the Judicial Council began in 1943, when he served as research director and oversaw the council's survey of California's administrative procedures. He was then appointed as the first director for the California Office of Administrative Procedure and served in that capacity from 1945 to 1950. From 1950 to 1961, Mr. Kleps served as Legislative Counsel to both houses of the state Legislature.

Upon his appointment as Administrative Director of the Courts, Mr. Kleps summed up the charge of the Administrative Office of the Courts as ". . . an administrative arm for the Council, through which continuous and effective action can be taken to carry out the policies adopted by the Council."

Under Mr. Kleps's 11-year tenure as Administrative Director of the Courts, he set in motion major initiatives that paved the way for court administration, using methods, analysis, and techniques that are still in use today.

Mr. Kleps was directly responsible for the establishment of a statistical reporting system in California and for developing state judicial information systems programs throughout the country.

His influence extended to court administration nationwide. He helped to make federal funding available for state courts to improve their management information. He contributed to the establishment of both the National Center for State Courts and the Institute for Court Management.

Within California, he was instrumental in the establishment of the California Center for Judicial Education and the development of the Standards of Judicial Administration.

Mr. Kleps passed away in San Francisco on August 15, 1982.

For more information on Ralph N. Kleps and the history of judicial administration in California, see the sources on page 80.

1991–2011 Committee Members

The process of recommending award recipients has evolved over the years. From 1991 through 2001, the Court Management Committee of the Judicial Council, the California Judicial Administration Conference Planning Committee (CJAC), and select AOC staff recommended recipients to the Judicial Council. In 2002, the Kleps Award Committee was formed, and it continues to evaluate and recommend Kleps Award recipients to the Judicial Council.

Hon. Richard D. Aldrich
Hon. Patricia Bamattre-Manoukian
Hon. Kathleen Banke
Mr. Ronald Barrow
Ms. Tamara Beard
Hon. Hollis G. Best
Hon. Ernest Borunda
Mr. James Brighton
Ms. Tina Burkhart
Mr. Alex Calvo
Ms. Karen Camper
Hon. Marjorie Laird Carter
Ms. Jeanne Caughell
Ms. Yvonne Choong
Hon. Warren Conklin
Hon. Patricia Yim Cowett
Hon. Rudolph Diaz
Ms. Lee Edmon
Ms. Meri Fischer
Ms. Rebecca Fleming
Hon. Judith Donna Ford
Hon. Ronald F. Frazier
Hon. Richard D. Fybel
Ms. Lisa Galdos
Ms. Janet M. Gallagher
Hon. Ronald M. George
Hon. Arthur Gilbert
Mr. Michael Glisson
Ms. Sharon Gonterman
Ms. Sheila Gonzalez
Mr. Hector Gonzalez, Jr.
Ms. Tammy Grimm
Mr. José O. Guillén
Hon. Brad R. Hill
Hon. Thomas E. Hollenhorst
Hon. Mary Thornton House
Hon. Steven Howell
Hon. Phil Isenberg
Hon. Anthony W. Ishii
Ms. Marilyn K. James
Mr. Allen Jensen
Mr. Peter Keane
Mr. Stephen M. Kelly
Hon. Daniel J. Kremer
Ms. Sheila Kuck
Mr. Robert B. Kuhel
Ms. Louise A. La Mothe
Mr. Joseph Lane
Mr. Kevin J. Lane
Ms. Nicole N. Le
Ms. Sharon Lear
Hon. Jackson Lucky
Hon. Cynthia Ludvigsen
Mr. Donald Lundy
Ms. Mary Majich Davis
Mr. Lawrence Maligie
Hon. Jon M. Mayeda
Hon. Judith McConnell
Mr. William McCurine, Jr.
Mr. Terry McNally
Mr. John Mendes
Hon. Marilyn Miles
Hon. Patrick J. Morris
Mr. Martin J. Moshier
Hon. William J. Murray, Jr.
Ms. Susan M. Myers
Hon. Henry E. Needham, Jr.
Ms. Susan Null
Mr. Frederick Ohlrich
Hon. Kathleen E. O'Leary
Hon. Robert H. Oliver
Mr. Ronald Overholt
Hon. Richard A. Paez
Mr. Gordon Park-Li
Ms. Christine Patton
Hon. James F. Perley
Hon. Wayne Peterson
Hon. Donna M. Petre
Ms. Nancy Piano
Mr. Michael Planet
Ms. Florence Prushan
Mr. Charles Ramey
Hon. Mel Recana
Hon. Ronald B. Robie
Mr. Mike Roddy
Mr. Alan I. Rothenberg
Hon. Arthur Scotland
Hon. Patricia Sepulveda
Mr. Arthur Sims
Ms. Kelly Sims
Ms. Dale Sipes
Mr. Alan Slater
Hon. James L. Smith
Ms. Eve Sproule
Ms. Sharol Strickland
Mr. Kevin Swanson
Hon. Nancy L. Sweet
Hon. Robert G. Taylor
Hon. Ricardo A. Torres
Mr. Michael Tozzi
Ms. Deena Trujillo
Hon. Michael S. Ullman
Ms. Sylvia White-Irby
Hon. Roy L. Wonder
Mr. Michael Yerly
Hon. Erica Yew
Ms. Joyce M. Ziegler

We sincerely apologize if any names have been excluded. Every effort was made to provide a complete and accurate listing of all past committee members.

Kleps Awards by Court, 1991–2011

Below is a comprehensive list of all Kleps Award recipients, listed by district at the appellate court level, and by county at the trial court level. You can find a full listing of all Kleps Award submissions, as well as the recipients, at *www.courts.ca.gov/programs-innovations.htm*.

Court of Appeal, First Appellate District 2

Appellate Mediation Program, 2002
Electronic Reporter's Transcripts on Appeal, 2000

Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District 3

Appellate Self-Help Center, 2008–09
Judicial Externship Program, 2006–07
Up Close and Personal with Division Six, 2000

Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District 1

Appellate Court Outreach Program, 2001

Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District 2

Step by Step Civil Appellate Manual, 2003
Oral Argument via Teleconferencing (video), 1999

Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District 4

*Transcript Assembly Program (TAP), 2010–11
Electronic Writ Program, 2010–11
The Courts as Curriculum, 2003
Oral Argument by Teleconference, 1992

Alameda 5

Elder Abuse Protection Court, 2004–05
Enhancement of Court Web-Site–E-Commerce, 2000
Decision Support and Operations Management Information System (DOMAIN), 1998
Traffic Citation Collections Program, 1995
The F.I.R.S.T. Drug Diversion Program, 1993

Amador 3

Online Procedure Manual, 2008–09
Amador Becomes Its Own Employer, 2002
*Superior Courts of Sacramento and Amador Counties Internet/Intranet, 2001

Butte 10

*Collaborative Information Services (IS) Project, 2006–07
Court Clerk Career Progression Program (3C-P-O), 2006–07
*Self-Help and Regional Assistance Program, 2004–05
Reality Check (SHARP), 2000
H.O.P.E. (Helping Organize Parents Effectively) Court, 1999
Downtown Chico Cleanup Project, 1998
Court ReVia Alcohol Treatment Program, 1996
Small Claims Court Goes to School, 1995
Graffiti Removal Project, 1994
Small Claims Success with Mediation, 1993

Calaveras 1

Development of Community Legal Assistance Center, 2004–05

Contra Costa 3

Elder Court, 2010–11
Online Probable Cause, 2008–09
Children, Courts, and Arts Project, 2001

El Dorado 1

*Joint-Powers Training, 1994

Fresno 4

*Transcript Assembly Program (TAP), 2010–11
ACTION (After Criminal Traffic Infraction One-Stop Network) Center, 2006–07
Spanish Self Help Center and Court Interpreter Development, 2003
Keep Kids In School (KKIS), 2000

Glenn 2

*Collaborative Information Services (IS) Project, 2006–07
*Self-Help and Regional Assistance Program (SHARP), 2004–05

Imperial 1

Binational Justice Project, 2008–2009

Inyo 1

Night Court for Child Support Calendar, 2003

Kern 1

Comprehensive Revenue Recovery Program, 1995

Lassen 1

*Four Court Regional Appellate Division, 2006–07

Los Angeles 23

Online Juror Orientation, 2008–2009
JusticeCorps, 2006–07
New Judge Orientation, 2004–05
Teachers' Courthouse Seminar, 2003
Find Arbitrator Mediator Electronically (FAME), 2001
Sara Berman Adoption Saturdays, 2000
Project 2000, 1998
The Constitutional Rights of the Big Bad Wolf, 1997
Implementation of Trial Court Performance Standards, 1997
Summer Youth Mentoring Program, 1997
Court House Access & Mentoring Programs (CHAMPS), 1995
Juror Services Telephone Center, 1995
Probate Volunteer Visitation Alliance (PVVA), 1995
Domestic Violence Courtroom Pilot Project, 1994
Superior Court Outreach (SCOR), 1994
Court Compliance Office, 1993

Continued on next page

Los Angeles *(cont.)*

Monroe Partnership Program, 1993

Court Collections Program, 1992

Domestic Violence Clinics, 1992

Traffic Interactive Payment System (TIPS), 1992

Central Courts Video Arraignment Project, 1991

Court Automated Filing and Payment Kiosks for Traffic and Small Claims, 1991

Traffic Records Imaging Project, 1991

Madera 1

*Consolidating Purchase/Format of Juror Forms, 1993

Mariposa 1

*Center Courts Regional Training Day, 2001

Merced 1

*Consolidating Purchase/Format of Juror Forms, 1993

Modoc 2

*Four Court Regional Appellate Division, 2006–07

*Joint Court, 2004–05

Monterey 5

Automated Civil Grand Jury Program, 2010–11

Self-Help Online Workshop Registration, 2008–09

*Court Case Information Web Application—Justice Partner Access Web Site (JPAW), 2006–07

*Regional Court and Library Partnership 2006–07

*Regional Educational Consortium, 2004–05

Napa 2

NapaHelp.Info Court and Community Referral System, 2006–07

Comprehensive Court Reorganization/Consolidation, 1991

Nevada 2

Public Law Center, 2002

*Joint-Powers Training, 1994

Orange 14

Electronic Legal File (ELF), 2010–11

Orange County Combat Veterans Court, 2010–11

Complex Civil E-filing Pilot Project, 2004–05

I-CAN (Interactive Community Assistance Network), 2003

Self-Help Forms Printing Kiosk Project, 2002

Domestic Violence Training and Awareness Program, 2000

Domestic Violence Services Project, 1999

Task Force for ADA Compliance, 1999

Domestic Violence Registry, 1998

Domestic Violence Temporary Restraining Orders, 1997

Volunteers Care (Court Assistants Reaching Out With Empathy), 1996

Integrated Court Information System, 1994

Document Image Processing System: Orange County Superior Court/County Clerk Probate Division, 1993

Flat Fee Arrangements for Indigent Defense in Homicide Cases, 1992

Placer 1

Peer Court, 1997

Plumas 1

* Four Court Regional Appellate Division, 2006–07

Riverside 11

Court Certificate Program, 2002

Bagel Time, 2000

BEST (Benefits of Educating a Service-Oriented Team), 1999

Expedited Victim Restitution Pilot Program, 1998

Automated Billing System, 1995

Cross Filing and Payment Acceptance, 1994

Integrated Case Management and Information System, 1993

Weighted Caseload Alternative to Determine Non-Judicial Staffing Needs, 1993

Civil Fast Track Program, 1992

Traffic Management System, 1992

Work Simplification, 1992

Sacramento 8

Small Claims Electronic Filing Program, 2001

*Superior Courts of Sacramento and Amador Counties Internet/Intranet, 2001

Annual Conference on Multi-Cultural Family Violence Prevention, 1999

Sacramento Stand Down Rally, 1996

Family Law Pro Per Assistance Clinic, 1995

Employee and Organizational Support Team (EmOST), 1994

Sacramento Criminal Justice Cabinet, 1993

Consolidation and Transition Plans, 1992

San Benito 4

*Regional Court and Library Partnership, 2006–07

*Regional Educational Consortium, 2004–05

Court to Community: Teen Parenting, 2002

*Center Courts Regional Training Day, 2001

San Bernardino 7

Automated Mail Payment Processing System, aka "Magic Money Machine," 2010–2011

Automated Records Management, 2004–05

Court Community Outreach and Education Through Countywide Public Service Announcements, 2000

JNET: Juvenile Court Integrated Case Management System, 1999

Forms Automation Program, 1997

Records Management Coordination, 1993

Trial Court Consolidation, 1992

San Diego 21

On My Honor Law Education Program, 2002

F.O.C.U.S. Program—Monitoring Court Performance Using a Balanced Scorecard, 2001

Family Violence Solutions Center, 2000

Dependency Court Recovery Project, 1999

San Diego *(cont.)*

Delinquency Treatment Reform Project, 1998

Civil and Small Claims Automated Case Management System, 1997

Court Customer Service Training Program, 1997

Pro Bono Legal Services for Pro Per Clients, 1997

Touch Screen Case Index, 1997

Coordination of South Bay Trial Courts—San Diego County, 1996

Simulated Courtroom Clerk Training, 1996

Bonds Automation and Records Tracking System (BART), 1995

Family Law Access Project, 1995

BIC Technology–Achieving the Future Today, 1993

900 Number Telephone Service in the Municipal Court, 1993

"Consider the Children" Parenting Classes, 1992

Court Coordination, 1992

Civil Delay Reduction Program, 1991

Formal Volunteer Program, 1991

Independent Calendar/Direct Assignment Method of Case Management, 1991

Mobile Traffic Unit, 1991

San Francisco 2

ACCESS—Assisting Court Customers with Education and Self-Help, 2004–05

Indigent Defense Fees and Compensation System, 1993

San Joaquin 3

In the Interest of Justice Video, 2002

Court-Community Leadership and Liaison Program, 2001

Jury Duty Compliance Program, 2000

San Mateo 3

Multi-Option Appropriate Dispute Resolution Project (MAP), 2008–2009

EZLegal File Service Bureau, 2003

Small Claims Internet Web Site, 1998

Santa Barbara 1

Web Site for High Profile Cases, 2004–05

Santa Clara 6

Giving Families a Chance: The Collaboration Between Family Court Services and FIRST 5, 2008–2009

*Regional Court and Library Partnership, 2006–07

*Regional Educational Consortium, 2004–05

Superior Court's Juvenile Delinquency Domestic Violence/Family Violence Court, 2001

Family Court/Court Services Comprehensive Program of Intervention, 1997

Treatment Court Project, 1995

Santa Cruz 3

*Regional Court and Library Partnership, 2006–07

*Regional Educational Consortium, 2004–05

Watsonville Juvenile Community Court, 1999

Shasta 2

Domestic Violence Imaging Project, 1998

Addicted Offender Program, 1997

Sierra 1

*Four Court Regional Appellate Division, 2006–07

Siskiyou 2

*Joint Court, 2004–05

Visual Guides to the Courts, 2003

Sonoma 1

CLETS Interface, 2002

Stanislaus 5

*Transcript Assembly Program (TAP), 2010–2011

*Center Courts Regional Training Day, 2001

Automated Family Law Statistical Data Project (SCANTRON Project), 1999

Family Court Instant Orders After Hearing Re: Custody and Visitation, 1994

*Consolidating Purchase/Format of Juror Forms, 1993

Tehama 1

*Self-Help and Regional Assistance Program (SHARP), 2004–05

Trinity 1

Court Services Unit, 1991

Ventura 9

Tip of the Day Radio Program, 2003

Homeless Court, 2001

Mobile Self-Help Center, 2000

Field Study in Criminal Case Processing, 1999

Self-Help Legal Access Center, 1998

Interactive Take Home Traffic School, 1997

Multi-Door Court Dispute Resolution Programs, 1993

DMV/Courts Interchange, 1992

Consolidation of Court Support Services, 1991

Yolo 8

Gaining Education Through Determination (G.E.D.), 2004–05

Guardianship Facilitator and Outreach, 2003

Juvenile Violence Court, 2002

Unified Family In-Court Clinician, 2001

Yolo County Unified Family Court, 1999

Supervised Visitation Program, 1998

Special Award 1

County Clerks Association of California, CCAC Summer Training Institute for Superior Court Clerks, 1993

**Kleps Award received in the collaborative courts category, in which two or more courts worked together. These programs are listed under each court that participated in the collaboration.*

20 YEARS AT A GLANCE

From 1991 to the present, here is a small sampling of the Kleps Award programs through the years.

1991

Statewide trial court coordination workshop, 1996.

The successful consolidation of court services in the Trinity County courts and other courts throughout the state soon progressed to coordination, and by 2001 all California counties had unified their superior and municipal courts.

Court Services Unit

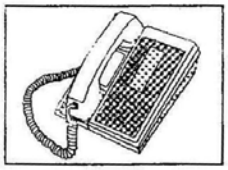
Superior Court and Justice Courts of Trinity County

In 1988, the Superior Court of Trinity County and the county justice courts consolidated their administrative and clerical staffs into one unit—the Court Services Unit. This consolidation brought a number of beneficial changes to the Trinity County courts, including a central counter that offered faster, more efficient service to the public; a consolidated budget with reduced costs; and coordinated calendaring and integrated court management that used court staff more effectively and improved record keeping, reducing the courts' costs.

Update: The successful consolidation of court staffs, which combined two diverse systems, was the first such project in California. As the Trinity County courts—and a growing number of other court systems—demonstrated the benefits of consolidation, the California Legislature moved to enable all county court systems in the state to adopt this structure. In 1998, California voters passed a constitutional amendment that provided for voluntary unification of the superior and municipal courts in each county into a single, countywide trial court system. By January 2001, all 58 California counties had voted to unify their municipal and superior courts.

1992

TRAFFIC INTERACTIVE PAYMENT SYSTEM (TIPS) RECEIVES CREDIT



Imagine that you've just come home from work and tattooed to the coffee table is that darn traffic citation. It's been four weeks since you drove your Pontiac Sunfire 70 mph in a 55 zone and you've put off going down to the courthouse to pay off the ticket. Wouldn't it be convenient to just pick up your TouchTone telephone, punch in the citation number, wait for a computer to verify the information, and then make bail payments, sign up for Traffic School or get an extension with your Visa or Master Card number?

Advertisement for the TIPS program, 1993.

Traffic Interactive Payment System

Los Angeles Municipal Court

The Los Angeles Municipal Court had a problem. It was 1992, and law enforcement officers were issuing more than 50,000 traffic tickets per month. The problem was that the majority of individuals were paying their tickets in person at the courthouse, where the lines were so long that clerks had to work overtime to serve everyone.

The solution was the Traffic Interactive Payment System, or TIPS. Instead of coming to the courthouse, court customers could pay their fines with a credit card, using a Touch-Tone phone. They could also sign up for traffic school or request an extension on a ticket by phone. TIPS is entirely automated; customers simply respond to recorded messages and tap in the required information.

TIPS got excellent reviews from customers—and from court clerks, who were able to offer unhurried, quality service to customers who needed to be physically present at the courthouse.

Update: In 2000, when the Superior Court of Los Angeles County and the county's 25 municipal courts merged into one system, the TIPS program was expanded for use by the entire county. Although court customers can still use TIPS, today many individuals pay their fines online. The court website currently processes an average of $2.1 million in traffic fines per week.

1993

BIC Technology—Achieving the Future Today

Superior Court of San Diego County

In the early 1990s, thousands of women across the country brought individual and class action suits against the manufacturers of silicone-gel breast implants. The plaintiffs claimed that the implants had ruptured after implantation and that the silicone had caused them to contract autoimmune diseases and other disorders.

Approximately 4,000 breast implant cases (BIC) were filed in California. These diverse cases were coordinated into one master case. In March 1992, California Chief Justice Malcolm M. Lucas assigned this master case to Judge Robert J. O'Neill of the Superior Court of San Diego County. The logistics of coordinating up to 4,000 individual cases presented a major challenge to the court. For example, thousands of documents had to be made available to the various parties involved in the case. After a two-day technology planning conference, the court decided to purchase a state-of-the-art document imaging system and enough optical storage to hold all of the documents. These would be integrated with the court's existing case management system.

Users of this new system could instantly retrieve and display any document filed in the master case. In addition, the court was able to set up an electronic bulletin board for the 400 plaintiff law firms and the attorneys for the defendants around the state. This enabled all attorneys to view notices, orders, tentative rulings, and case calendar information as soon as they were posted.

Update: The time from the case assignment in March 1992 to the first trial was just 12 months—much shorter than the 18 to 24 months commonly needed to coordinate highly complex cases. The San Diego County court managed this case so skillfully and cost-effectively that it became a model for future civil case coordination.

Breast Implant Decision Looms

Plaintiffs Looking At A $4.25 Billion Settlement

Local courts hold key on suits tied to gel implants

In all, the San Diego County courts coordinated more than 4,500 cases related to breast implants, believed at the time to be the largest legal action in the nation's history.

Source:

Top: *San Diego Daily Transcript,* April 26, 1994, pg. A-1.

Bottom: *San Diego Union Tribune,* January 4, 1993, pg. B-1.

1994

Public service counter of the superior court in the Riverside Hall of Justice, 1999.

Cross Filing and Payment Acceptance Program

Superior Court and Municipal Courts of Riverside County

In April 1994, the Superior Court of Riverside County and the county municipal courts implemented a program allowing cross-court filings and payments. This meant that any person with business to conduct at a court could go to any court facility in Riverside County, regardless of the type of case, jurisdiction, or court location.

An automated case-processing system, implemented with the Cross Filing and Payment Acceptance program, enables court employees to view all business conducted in the various court facilities. This coordination among the courts has increased the operating efficiency of the entire court system and has given the public greater access to the courts. Riverside is a very large county, and before this program, a resident might have had to travel up to 200 miles simply to pay a traffic ticket.

Update: The Riverside County courts pioneered the consolidation of county court systems in California. During this process, the courts dealt with a number of challenges, including resistance to change and technical difficulties. By working through the inevitable problems involved in merging parts of two court systems, the Riverside courts showed that solutions were possible. In addition, by demonstrating the benefits of consolidation and coordination, these courts helped convince people throughout the state that unification of the superior and municipal courts was a desirable goal. Within several years, other California counties had begun to follow the Riverside courts' lead.

1995

A happy and proud graduate of drug treatment court (center).

Santa Clara County Courts Treatment Court

Superior Court and Municipal Courts of Santa Clara County

In the early 1990s, cases in the Santa Clara County court system involving severely addicted defendants commonly took months to resolve, with multiple appearances before different judges and, often, new arrests. These cases clogged the system, and offenders were filling up jails, prisons, and healthcare facilities.

Created in 1995, the Santa Clara County Courts Treatment Court, a collaborative effort by the Superior Court of Santa Clara County and the county municipal courts, was designed to substitute a treatment model for the increasingly expensive and time-consuming criminal justice model in dealing with criminal offenses committed by addicts.

Instead of sentencing an offender to a prison term, the treatment court judge assigns him or her to a carefully monitored, year-long treatment program. The court then oversees the progress of each participant.

Update: The rate of recidivism among the hard-core drug users served by the court has been greatly reduced—with significant savings to the courts and to taxpayers. Intangible benefits include new hope for the recovering addicts and, often, reunited families. Santa Clara County now has four drug courts: the Adult Criminal Drug Court, Mental Health Treatment Court, Family Drug Court, and Juvenile Drug Court.

Statewide, there are presently more than 200 drug courts; nationally, there are 2,450. Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge Stephen Manley, one of the founders of the treatment court, says, "When you can take prison-bound defendants and put them in a drug court and save more money than the cost of the program, I say you have proven the case for drug courts."

1996

Simulated Courtroom Clerk Training

San Diego Municipal Court

It can be very difficult to provide training for court clerks in the high-pressure atmosphere of a courtroom. Nevertheless, clerks must be highly proficient in order to run a courtroom efficiently. In 1994, the San Diego Municipal Court began using a simulated courtroom to train court clerks. The training is conducted in an off-site location and uses recordings of actual court sessions, finished calendars, and completed dockets. The trainees continue with the simulation until they can process the dockets and accompanying paperwork at a pace that matches the recorded court session.

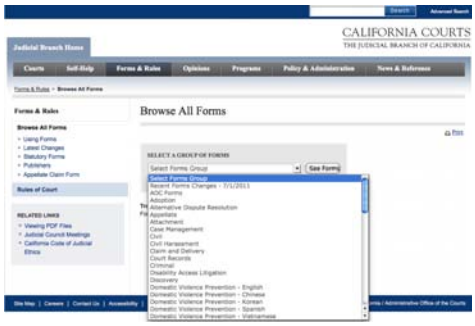
This method of training has several advantages. First, the trainer can work with more than one clerk at a time. Second, the trainees can ask questions at any time. And third, the trainees can practice their skills without the pressure of an actual court in session. The simulated training has allowed the court to train twice the number of courtroom clerks in one-half the time required by the old method—at a minimal cost.

Update: Simulated training has been adopted as one of the methods taught by the California Court Clerk Training Institute. The institute works with experienced clerks from trial courts throughout California, who then return to their own courts and conduct training for new clerks. Simulated training is one of the key methods these instructors can employ.

1997

Forms Automation System

Superior Court and Municipal Court of San Bernardino County



Today all Judicial Council court forms are available at www.courts.ca.gov, and local forms are available online on most local courts' websites.

One of the pioneering efforts in the California courts' move toward automating their processes was the Forms Automation System adopted by the Superior Court of San Bernardino County and the county municipal court in 1996.

Creating electronic versions of the numerous court forms enabled employees at the 12 court sites throughout the county to print forms on demand. Prior to this, courts had to requisition all paper forms from the Central Court Division. The process of requesting, printing, transporting, and storing forms required hundreds of staff hours. When forms were revised, thousands of copies of the obsolete versions were simply thrown away.

All of these time- and money-consuming tasks were eliminated by the Forms Automation System. Annual savings on printing costs and salaries totaled $154,000. In addition, printing the necessary court forms for customers on site, on demand enabled court employees to provide faster, higher-quality service. Considering that the new computers and printers required for the change cost just $110,000, this was an excellent return on investment.

Update: Today, almost all legal forms for all courts in California are available on the California Courts website. At this site, court users can access a specific form, fill it out online, print it, and send it to the appropriate court.

1998

Domestic Violence Registry

Central Orange County Municipal Court

Central Orange County Municipal Court celebrates receiving the Kleps Award in 1998. Left to right: Don Rice, Albert De La Isla, Judge Donna Crandall, Assistant Court Executive Officer Robert Gray of the Central Orange County Municipal Court, Dee Velasco, Executive Officer Alan Slater of the San Diego County Superior Court, Lana Dinh, and Executive Officer Robert Kuhel of the Central Orange County Municipal Court.

In 1997, the Central Orange County Municipal Court initiated a Domestic Violence Registry that captures all orders pertaining to domestic violence cases in local and statewide electronic databases. This information is made available to court locations throughout the county and to the sheriff's main dispatch center.

To assist protected individuals in domestic violence disputes, law enforcement officers and judicial officers require rapid access to existing restraining orders. With the protective order in hand, a law enforcement officer is able to enforce it appropriately. In addition, when a judicial officer is able to view all orders issued in a case in a timely manner, he or she can issue further orders without fear of contradicting the existing ones.

Before this registry, many protective and restraining orders were never entered into any electronic database, meaning that the protected party was obliged to provide the original restraining order when necessary. This reliance on paper documents, whether they were faxed, mailed, or delivered by hand, often delayed enforcement of the orders.

Update: The Orange County registry is being used as a model for a statewide registry of protective orders. As of December 2010, 22 counties had enrolled in the California Courts Protective Order Registry (CCPOR). Started by the Administrative Office of the Courts in June 2010, this registry is available to law enforcement and court officials throughout the state. CCPOR incorporates all the advantages of the Orange County registry, but includes a statewide database. (CCPOR is featured in the Statewide Initiatives section in this book.)

1999

Unified Family Court

Superior Court of Yolo County

In 1998, the Superior Court of Yolo County created a Unified Family Court that consolidated all family, probate, guardianship, and juvenile cases for one family in front of one judge. Under the old system, a family's divorce case might be heard by a family law judge while their teenager's delinquency case would be heard by a juvenile court judge. There were many cases in which family and delinquency cases, as well as family and guardianship cases, crossed over.

Profile of the Superior Court of Yolo County's Unified Family Court in the September/October 2000 issue of the Journal of the California State Association of Counties.

The United Family Court heard all cases in front of one judge, avoiding conflicting orders by different judges. Protocols were developed that allowed the cases to be transferred and heard in front of one judge. A case manager in the court alerted the judge of the various cases in other departments.

The family court judge worked with a multidisciplinary team of therapeutic and dispute resolution professionals who made their recommendations to the judge and supported the family throughout the proceedings. Most cases were successfully mediated among family members. For example, in a large number of cases a family member, such as a grandmother, sought guardianship of her grandchildren due to their parents' drug addiction. As in traditional family court, in the Unified Family Court, the entire family was sent to a mediator; a common outcome of mediation was that the parents consented to the guardianship, sought treatment for their addictions, and continue to see their children under the supervision of the grandmother.

This "one judge, one family" approach allowed for holistic solutions to the multiple needs of a single family. In addition, the program enabled more efficient use of court resources.

Update: A number of courts have adopted many of the practices of the unified model; these practices yield better communication among courts serving members of one family.

2000

Sara Berman Adoption Saturdays

Superior Court of Los Angeles County

Adoption Day ceremonies in Los Angeles. Former Chief Justice Ronald M. George (at left in bottom photo) presides over an Adoption Saturday in 1999. The day was filled with happy children, families, and teddy bear judges for all.

The Sara Berman Adoption Saturdays program was created in 1997 to accelerate the adoption of children in foster care in Los Angeles. At the time, there was a large backlog of adoption cases at the Superior Court of Los Angeles County.

The core idea was to facilitate the adoption process by bringing together, in one courthouse, all the parties necessary to complete adoptions. These included the foster children, the adopting parents, attorneys to advise the parents, court staff, judicial officers, and staff of the Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services. All attorneys and court personnel agreed to volunteer their time on a Saturday.

On April 25, 1998, under the leadership of Presiding Juvenile Judge Michael Nash, the first Adoption Saturday finalized adoptions for 130 children in foster care. On two Saturdays in August and December of 1998, a total of 650 additional children were adopted.

Held three or four times a year, Adoption Saturdays soon became very popular with the media and with the public. Film stars helped to publicize the events, and community volunteers donated gifts to create a festive atmosphere for the children and their delighted new parents. According to Judge Nash, "For one day, the court becomes the happiest place on Earth!"

Update: In November 2000, the Alliance for Children's Rights held a National Adoption Day, based on the Adoption Saturdays model. Since 2007, all 50 states have participated, with events in 300 cities. Other countries have been testing the concept as well; an Adoption Saturday was held in Mumbai, India, in April 2011.

2001

Court Outreach Program

Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District

On April 5, 2000, justices of the Third Appellate District held court in an auditorium in Redding, California. Approximately four hundred high school students, teachers, and members of the public watched as the justices heard oral arguments in actual cases from Shasta, Siskiyou, and Tehama Counties. This unusual event marked the beginning of the Court Outreach Program, which helps familiarize students and the general public with the role and the operation of the Court of Appeal.

Left to right: Justice Rick Sims, Administrative Presiding Justice Arthur G. Scotland, and Justice Fred K. Morrison from the Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District, speak with students at the El Dorado County Outreach Program held at Ponderosa High School in Shingle Springs on March 6, 2003.

The program is designed to bring the appellate court to the people it serves. Based in Sacramento, the Third Appellate District is geographically the largest appellate district in the state, covering 23 counties and 47,600 square miles. Several times a year, justices and court staff travel to a location in the district. They visit a local high school, where the justices answer questions about the appellate process. The following day, the court hears oral arguments in actual cases at the school; the cases selected are ones with a great deal of local interest. The interest in these events is so high that students from surrounding schools are often bused in.

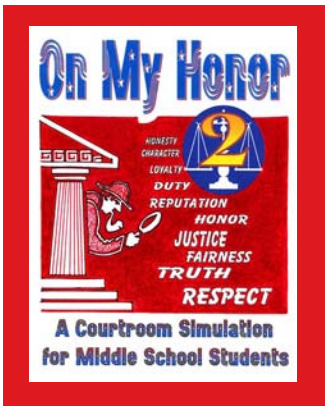
Update: Public response to these outreach events has been extremely positive. By 2011, events had been held in 20 of the 23 counties in the Third Appellate District. Statewide, the Court Outreach Program has served as a model for similar programs in other appellate courts—and for the California Supreme Court, which holds outreach events each year for hundreds of high school, university, and law school students.

2002

On My Honor Law Education Program

Superior Court of San Diego County

On My Honor was created in 2000 by Judge Richard G. Cline of the Superior Court of San Diego County, in collaboration with a local fourth-grade teacher. The program educates children about the legal system and the courts; in particular, it shows how a real courtroom operates, in contrast to the sensationalized portrayals of courts on TV and in the movies. The program was originally aimed at students in the fourth and fifth grades but was later expanded to include middle school students.



One of several mock trial simulations or "scripts" developed by the On My Honor program.

On My Honor includes a curriculum that is taught in the classroom for a few weeks, followed by a visit to the court. At the court, students participate in a mock trial presided over by an actual judge. In its first year, the

Students visit the Superior Court of San Diego County and participate in a mock trial.

program attracted a great deal of attention. Additional school districts asked to be included, and more judges were trained to participate. By the end of 2001, 1,900 students had participated in the program.

Update: On My Honor continues in the San Diego school system. The program has also formed the basis of other programs in San Diego, including a Civics Symposium for middle school students. In addition, it served as the model for a statewide program called California On My Honor, which holds workshops and summer institutes for kindergarten through 12th-grade teachers. Enhancing the teachers' understanding of the judicial branch enables them to pass this understanding on to their students. See page 60 for more information on California On My Honor. To date, more than 59,000 students and 580 teachers have participated in some facet of the various court outreach programs that originated with On My Honor in 1999.

2003

Interactive Community Assistance Network

Superior Court of Orange County

More than 137,500 forms were completed and printed from the I-CAN! system to be filed in California courts during fiscal year 2010-11.

The Interactive Community Assistance Network (I-CAN!) was initiated by the Superior Court of Orange County in 2001 to address the needs of self-represented litigants. These individuals often have difficulty finding their way through the complex legal system, which is designed for litigants who are represented by attorneys. I-CAN! helps ensure that self-represented litigants can access the legal system more easily and skillfully.

I-CAN! is a network of web-based legal services and interactive kiosks. A litigant can go online to find the legal forms he or she requires and answer questions that then populate those forms. The litigant can then print and file the forms with the court. Instructions are built into the program, and there is a video guide for every page that can repeat what is on the screen for those who are more comfortable listening than reading. If the user runs into problems, there is information on how to contact the Help Center of the Legal Aid Society of Orange County. Alternatively, the litigant can use one of the I-CAN! kiosks located in the self-help center and court clerks' offices. These kiosks employ easy-to-use technology with touch-screen monitors and videos. Users can access English, Spanish, and Vietnamese modules.

Update: On January 4, 2011, I-CAN! began offering e-filing for parties involved in small claims cases. As people complete the screens in I-CAN!, the data and documents are submitted and uploaded directly into the court's case management system. This allows for quicker access

to documents and labor efficiencies for the court resulting from less data entry and enhanced processing. A professional evaluation by the University of California, Irvine, gave the I-CAN! program high marks. Judges have indicated that they can help six I-CAN! users in the same amount of time as they can help one nonuser. The web-based version of I-CAN! has been adopted by the California courts self-help website.

2004–2005

Self-Help and Referral Program

Superior Courts of Butte, Glenn, and Tehama Counties

The Self-Help and Referral Program (SHARP) is a court-sponsored program that provides legal assistance to self-represented litigants. It was started in 2002 as a collaboration among the Superior Courts of Butte, Glenn, and Tehama Counties.

SHARP assists self-represented litigants in several ways. It provides clearly written instructions on how to fill out the various legal forms. If litigants hit a snag, they can get help from trained staff under the supervision of the staff attorney. The program also offers small workshops featuring legal information and assistance from the staff attorney, both in person and via videoconferences, enabling residents of the three rural counties in the program to participate from a location close to their homes. As the attorney broadcasts from one center, trained legal assistants at the other centers help people face-to-face. Program services are maximized through the development, training, and use of volunteers.

Update: In 2010, the Superior Court of Glenn County determined a different program direction for its self-help services. The Superior Court of Lake County subsequently joined the Butte/Tehama collaboration. Mindful of their fiduciary responsibility, the courts are transitioning to new—and less expensive—teleconferencing technology and are continuing to investigate the most cost-effective ways of assisting self-represented litigants.

However, there is no doubt about the popularity of SHARP. In several customer satisfaction surveys, the response among users of the program has been overwhelmingly positive. Judges and court clerks acknowledge the difference SHARP has made; they indicate that legal forms are now filled out more accurately, reducing requests to the clerks for help and helping to better prepare litigants for court hearings and trials.

Top: *Attorney Suzanne Morlock meets via videoconference with assistant Margaret Vasquez-Ahrens and a Spanish-speaking litigant. Vasquez-Ahrens translates as Morlock answers the litigant's questions.*

Bottom: *Morlock instructs two SHARP clients as they complete forms related to domestic violence.*

2006–2007

A Cal Poly Pomona student involved in JusticeCorps in its first year helps litigants in Los Angeles. The student is now a recent graduate of the University of San Francisco Law School.

JusticeCorps

Superior Court of Los Angeles County

By 2004, the steadily increasing number of self-represented litigants was overwhelming the self-help programs established by the Superior Court of Los Angeles County. Court staff often were unable to keep up with the long lines of litigants and even had to turn some away. In addition, many of the litigants found it difficult to use computerized self-help resources or to fill out forms properly.

To address these challenges, in 2004, the Los Angeles County court created a program called JusticeCorps in collaboration with local universities, nonprofits, and AmeriCorps. Each year, the program recruits 100 undergraduate students, who are trained and then assigned to self-help programs at courthouses throughout the county. Under the supervision of the court's self-help attorney, recruits give clear advice to the self-represented litigants, help them fill out forms, and refer them to appropriate legal resources. Students who complete 300 hours of work receive a grant of about $1,000 from AmeriCorps for tuition or student loans.

Litigants who have been served by JusticeCorps members express a high level of satisfaction. Judges express appreciation that court users are better prepared, and court staff are delighted with the extra assistance.

Update: JusticeCorps now has a presence in nine California counties and is available to 48 percent of the state's population. Since 2004, over 1,000 recruits have completed the program statewide. These students have provided more than 240,000 hours of service to the public, filed 130,000 legal documents, and made 122,000 referrals to associated services. The Administrative Office of the Courts is also providing technical assistance to more than seven different states' Access to Justice Commissions that are considering replicating the program in their jurisdictions.

2008–2009

Appellate Self-Help Clinic

Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District

About 30 percent of all civil cases in California involve one or more parties who are self-represented—and many of these litigants cannot afford a lawyer. The Appellate Self-Help Clinic was started in Los Angeles in 2007 specifically to guide indigent, self-represented litigants through the appeal process. It is the first and only self-help appellate clinic in California, and apparently the only one in the nation. Although California Rule of Court 10.960 requires that there be at least one self-help center in every California county, this rule applies only to the trial courts; there is no such requirement at the appellate level.

The clinic is operated by Public Counsel in collaboration with the Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District. The public interest law office of the Los Angeles County and Beverly Hills Bar Association, Public Counsel offers free legal services to indigent and underrepresented litigants throughout Los Angeles County.

At the self-help clinic, located in the same building as the court, a Public Counsel attorney helps self-represented litigants understand and navigate the appeal process, assists them with paperwork, and, when appropriate, refers them to pro bono attorneys. The Second Appellate District of the Court of Appeal provides facilities for the clinic and holds regular meetings with Public Counsel representatives to assess the program.

Users of the Appellate Self-Help Clinic give it enthusiastic reviews. Many say that they would have been unable to proceed with their appeal without the clinic's help.

Update: The Appellate Self-Help Clinic has become a model for self-help centers around the state.

Public Counsel Attorney Lisa Jaskol (at right in both photos) spends most of her day assisting self-represented litigants as they prepare for their civil appeal.

STATEWIDE INITIATIVES

As you've seen in the preceding sections, many innovations in the courts occur at the local trial court and appellate court levels. However, there are also a host of initiatives that extend statewide with the shared goal of improving the overall delivery of justice in California. This section profiles a small portion of that work.

In the first section, **One Branch,** we highlight strides toward addressing some of the most basic needs of the courts—case management, judicial and staff education, efforts to address disparities in practice among counties in the state (in this case, court-appointed counsel in dependency cases), and courthouse facilities.

The next section, **Connecting the Court to the Community**, spotlights programs that strive to improve transparency, access, and outreach to the public we serve. Here we highlight programs the judicial branch has initiated to support education efforts for civics teachers, to foster collaboration with colleagues and counterparts in California's large and diverse tribal communities, to provide outreach through law and public library partnerships, and to offer youth opportunities to participate in youth courts and experience justice firsthand.

In the final section, **Closing the Loop,** we highlight branchwide initiatives that are working to move people out of the justice system, whether they be self-represented litigants in civil cases, children in foster care, or people on probation or parole in emerging community corrections initiatives.

These efforts are possible with a unified court system and centralized administrative efforts, guided by the direction of the Judicial Council for the benefit of the courts and the public they serve. This collection represents just a small percentage of the work occurring each and every day to improve the administration of the California courts.

Everyone Should Be Heard
Law Week & AmeriCorps Week

imagine!

five
four
three
two
one

ONE BRANCH

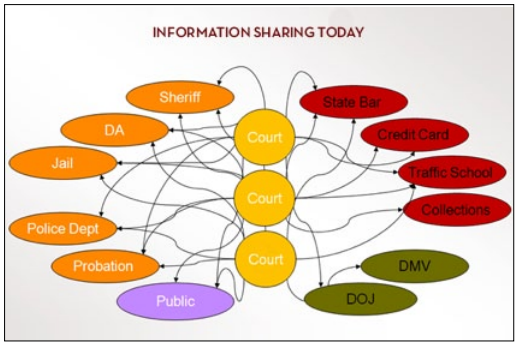
California Court Case Management System

In 2001, an assessment by the Administrative Office of the Courts revealed that the superior courts of California employed more than 70 different case management systems. Many of these technology systems were outmoded and unable to communicate with systems in other courts. In 2002, the Judicial Council approved the development of a statewide case management system to manage all case types for California trial courts. After years of development, this application, called the California Court Case Management System (CCMS), was deployed on August 26, 2011.

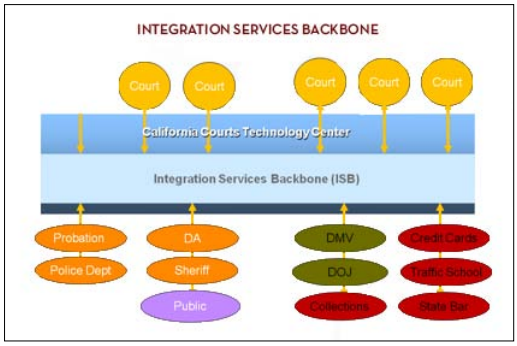
When CCMS is fully deployed to all 58 superior courts, they will be unified by a common technical infrastructure. CCMS uses the same approach for all case categories based on best practices and ongoing technical evolution. It creates standards for data sharing yet allows each court to configure the application for its own unique needs. These unified standards advance the judicial goal of equal access to justice for the public and for all justice partners.

CCMS will expedite the pairing of law enforcement and court records. Currently, the state lacks disposition data for two-thirds of the arrests reported to the Department of Justice. This lack of data makes it difficult or impossible for participants to access information about their cases. CCMS will enhance the ability of the courts to share information among themselves and with the public. For example, all participants in a case will have Internet access to their case files. And once all 58 superior courts are on board, people will be able to pay traffic citations anywhere in the state.

Before



After



Information sharing between the courts and justice system partners before and after CCMS.

Currently, the Superior Courts of San Luis Obispo and Ventura Counties have signed on as early adopters of the application. According to Mark A. Moore, executive director of the CCMS Program Management Office, "The judicial branch now owns the completed CCMS application. CCMS is available to any trial court needing a case management system. The early adopter courts will serve as models for future deployments."

"When I am asked why we continue to invest in CCMS even in the face of budget reductions, my response is that I cannot think of a better investment in the future of our courts, or for that matter our courts here and now."

—Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye, in a speech on January 31, 2010, before an audience of judges, court executives, and justice system partners at the CCMS Governance Conference in San Francisco

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California Courts Protective Order Registry

"The California Courts Protective Order Registry is one of the most dramatic advances in the handling of domestic violence in many years," says Judge Colleen Toy White of the Superior Court of Ventura County. "For a judge who presides over domestic violence cases, it is critical to have the ability to get immediate online access to court protective orders. This registry will enhance victim safety and help ensure that judges don't make duplicate or conflicting court orders."

Screen shot from the California Courts Protective Order Registry.

Launched in June 2010, the California Courts Protective Order Registry (CCPOR) is a statewide repository of protective orders containing both data and scanned images of orders that can be accessed by judges, court staff, and law enforcement officers. Currently used by superior courts in 22 counties, CCPOR allows judges to view orders issued by other court divisions and across county lines. Armed with more complete data, judges can make more informed decisions and avoid issuing multiple protective orders with conflicting terms and conditions. Law enforcement officers also benefit from the ability to view complete images of orders, including notes, special conditions, and warnings that are often handwritten by judges on the orders.

CCPOR contains all types of restraining and protective orders, including:

- Domestic violence restraining orders;
- Criminal protective orders;
- Civil harassment restraining orders;
- Elder or dependent adult restraining orders;
- Juvenile orders;
- School violence prevention orders;
- Workplace violence restraining orders; and
- Emergency protective orders.

Judges, court staff, and law enforcement officers are the primary users of CCPOR, but the primary beneficiaries of the system are members of the public, particularly victims of domestic violence, elder abuse, workplace violence, and violent crimes. Court staff and their law enforcement partners also benefit from operational efficiencies that result from workflow support in the system and electronic access to scans of protective orders.

In partnership with the Tribal Projects Unit, CCPOR started a pilot program in August 2011 to provide tribal courts with read-only access to the registry. This pilot has allowed tribal judges and tribal law enforcement to view the terms of protective orders issued by state courts and to access tribal orders registered with the state courts.

CCPOR has received accolades and awards from independent organizations. In May 2011, the Center for Digital Government awarded CCPOR a 2011 Best of California Award in the Best Application Serving an Agency's Business Needs category. In September 2011, CCPOR won that organization's national 2011 Digital Government Achievement Award in the Government-to-Government category.

The National Association of State Chief Information Officers also named CCPOR one of the three finalists for its 2011 Recognition Awards for Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Information Technology in State Government in the Data Information and Knowledge Management category.

"Overall, CCPOR has improved service to the public and has had a very positive impact for court operations in the savings of staff time and effort. In the past, when the public requested to see a restraining order, the staff would pull the file and look for the order among all of the papers in the file. If the file were missing from the shelf, staff would spend time searching for the file or have the public come back another day when the file was found and available. When the order was located at another site, a party was sent to the other courthouse to see the order. With CCPOR, staff can now pull the order online and make a copy immediately."

—Jean Pennypacker, director of the Family Resources Division, Superior Court of Santa Clara County

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Local Education Initiative

"Excellent teacher and wonderfully detailed and complete written materials."

—Course participant

One of the highest priorities of the Judicial Council is to maintain a professional judiciary that offers fair and impartial justice to all Californians. Ensuring that judicial officers have access to high-quality continuing education that keeps them current with the law and latest legal procedures is one way to help achieve this goal.

In 2009, the Education Division/Center for Judicial Education and Research (CJER) of the Administrative Office of the Courts introduced a program to partner with courts to provide high-quality judicial education at the local level. Under this Local Education Initiative, courts can host classes for their judicial officers simply by selecting from among the almost 100 courses described in the Judicial Education Course Catalog and contacting CJER to make a request.

Upon receiving a request for a specific class, CJER recruits the faculty, provides written materials for the class, and coordinates between the instructor and the local court. The local court makes arrangements for a classroom, notifies its judicial officers about the course, and registers participants.

Most of the faculty are judicial officers and are recognized experts in the fields they teach. They have also attended CJER seminars designed to explore the best teaching methods for adult education.

Local courts benefit in several ways from the Local Education Initiative. First, they are able to offer classes by experts on a wide variety of subjects. Courts can even request courses on topics not listed in the catalog. Second, their expenses for the classes are minimal. The AOC pays for the instructors' travel expenses and provides written materials and, if requested, any necessary audiovisual support. In addition, because the classes are held at local courthouses, judicial officers are not required to spend time and money traveling. Finally, the participants benefit from the give and take of a live presentation.

Feedback from faculty for the more than 75 local courses offered so far has been uniformly positive. Judge Lynn Duryee, who has taught several courses, said, "The great benefit of local instruction is that it allows live presentation for minimal expense. The live course is, in my mind, so much better than self-study or distance learning."

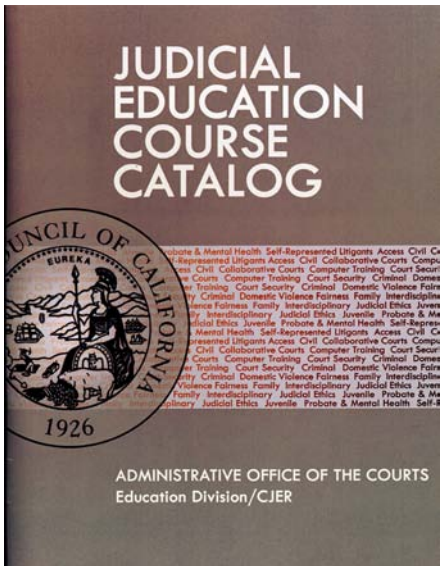
The state and taxpayers also benefit from this move toward local judicial education. Trial court judges are expected to complete 30 hours of continuing education on a three-year cycle, but bringing instructors to local courts is more cost-effective than holding centralized, statewide programs of instruction. Statewide events will still be held, but they will be scheduled less frequently; local courses will help bridge any educational gaps caused by the reduced statewide program schedule.

"Great presentation and good accompanying updates and notes. Very knowledgeable teacher."

—Course participant

SOME COURSE TOPICS FOUND IN THE JUDICIAL EDUCATION COURSE CATALOG

- Collaborative courts
- Judicial ethics
- Criminal, civil, juvenile, family, and probate
- Court security
- Domestic violence
- Self-represented litigants
- Computer training



Courses available for local delivery are described in the Judicial Education Course Catalog. These courses address substantive areas of law (civil, criminal, family, juvenile, probate, and mental health) as well as access, collaborative courts, computer training, court security, domestic violence, fairness, judicial ethics, and self-represented litigants.

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Institute for Court Management Consortium

In 2008, the Administrative Office of the Courts entered into a three-year consortium agreement with the court leadership of six other states and the Institute for Court Management (ICM) for the purpose of enhancing and expanding the existing ICM certification program for current and future court leaders. The ICM is the education arm of the National Center for State Courts, an independent, nonprofit court improvement organization.

As part of the consortium agreement, the states contributed funding to support the creation and revision of 12 courses for court managers offered in national ICM programs. The goals were to offer these revised courses in each of the seven states at a significantly lower cost than the national programs and to certify local faculty in each state.

"The faculty was energetic and knowledgeable. Useful war stories made the material come to life."

—Course participant

After the 12-course curriculum was completed and reviewed, the Education Division/Center for Judicial Education and Research (CJER) of the AOC began the process of selecting California judicial branch court leaders as faculty for the courses. Individuals were nominated and selected according to their work, teaching experience, and expertise in the subject matter of each course. These faculty members then attended a development program sponsored by CJER and a program sponsored by the ICM that included faculty from other consortium states. At present, 41 court leaders have been certified to teach the ICM curriculum in California.

Since the program began in 2009, CJER has held nearly 40 courses around the state attended by more than 600 participants. These

COST COMPARISON

The cost of certifying 40 participants in five required courses is substantially less than if each had to travel out of state to the five courses. The following table shows an estimated cost comparison per participant per course.

Venue	Registration Cost	Travel Cost	Total per Course	Total for Five Courses
California	$50	$400	$450	$2,250
Out of state	$645 to $845	$1,700 to $2,000	$2,345 to $2,845	$11,725 to $14,225

Source: Institute for Court Management and the Administrative Office of the Courts, Education Division/Center for Judicial Education and Research, Court Management Program Consortium Project: Final Report (January 2011), p. 3.

courses received very positive reviews, as recorded in an online survey completed by participants. Attendees spoke of enjoying the give and take of the live classes with expert instructors. In addition, during the two-and-a-half-day sessions, they were able to form relationships and share their experience with other managers.

The first six courses constitute Level 1 of the program; this level focuses on finance, human resources, and general operational management techniques. A participant who completes Level 1 is recognized by the ICM as a Certified Court Manager. By January 2011, 40 court managers had completed Level 1 and received this certification. Level 2, which consists of the second six courses, focuses on strategic planning, leadership, and high-performance courts. Upon completion of Level 2, a participant is recognized as a Certified Court Executive. For those who wish to go further, there is an ICM Fellows program, which applies court management concepts through a cumulative court research project.

The partnership with the ICM and the six other consortium states has brought a number of benefits to the California judiciary. Court managers can now attend in-state training programs at a much lower cost: a $50 registration fee per course as opposed to $650 to $850 for out-of-state or online courses. Current court leaders can take any of these courses to fulfill their continuing education requirement. In addition, the program promotes Goal V of the Judicial Council's strategic plan, which calls for "high-quality education and professional development . . . to achieve high standards of professionalism, ethics and performance."

Core Competencies: What Court Leaders Should Know and Be Able to Do. This curriculum developed for the consortium incorporates the National Association for Court Management's core competencies. Developed by national consensus, these competencies constitute a summation of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that court professionals must have to be effective managers and exceptional leaders facing new demands and challenges within the judiciary.

"The subject matter was very relevant to our work environments. I especially enjoyed the opportunity to network with managers and other administrative staff from other courts."

—Course participant

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Dependency Representation, Administration, Funding, and Training Program

The DRAFT program seeks ways to address the disparities that exist among California's 58 counties in terms of caseloads, performance standards, and compensation for court-appointed attorneys in juvenile dependency cases.

The Dependency Representation, Administration, Funding, and Training (DRAFT) program was established in 2004 at the direction of the Judicial Council. DRAFT was started as a pilot program designed to stabilize the costs related to appointed dependency counsel and test the use of performance and compensation standards for court-appointed attorneys in juvenile dependency cases.

In many instances, when a county social services agency believes a child has been abused or neglected, the agency files a petition with its local juvenile court, thus initiating a juvenile dependency case. Both parents and children are entitled to legal representation, but many are unable to pay for their own attorneys. In these cases, the juvenile court appoints attorneys to represent the parents and the dependent children, and the state pays for these attorneys through funds administered by the Administrative Office of the Courts.

With the passage of the Trial Court Funding Act in 1997, funding for the courts shifted from the counties to the state. The funding for court-appointed dependency counsel services was included as part of that transition; thus, local courts continued to administer—and began to directly fund—attorney services for juvenile cases. However, dependency counsel services had varied considerably from county to county, with significant differences in juvenile court caseloads, performance standards, and compensation. Trial court funding tended to institutionalize these disparate funding levels and standards. At the same time, in the years immediately following the transition to state funding, the overall costs of dependency counsel were escalating. The purpose of the DRAFT program is to bring uniformity and fiscal efficiency to this confusing assortment of methods. This purpose furthers Goal III of the strategic plan of the judicial branch, which states that the court system must operate efficiently and effectively.

Ten court systems volunteered to participate, including some of the largest (Los Angeles) and smallest (Mendocino) in the state. In establishing the program, the council directed staff to work with participating courts, attorney providers, and an oversight committee to create new standards for dependency counsel caseloads, compensation, and performance.

In partnership with the volunteer courts, the AOC developed the following components of DRAFT:

- Competitive bidding to represent clients in dependency cases. This bidding for three- to five-year contracts ensures a competitive price and results in cost stabilization over the period of the contract. Bids may come from private firms, nonprofits, government agencies, and panel organizations.

- Caseload standards for attorneys in dependency cases. These standards were developed from a statewide workload study conducted in 2002.

- Regional compensation standards. Under the old methods, each court determined compensation for court-appointed attorneys. Compensation was sometimes substandard, sometimes exorbitant. The new statewide standards rationalize compensation, allowing for regional differences in cost-of-living expenses.

- Attorney performance standards. Contracts with dependency counsel providers specify performance requirements. Attorney performance evaluations are conducted regularly by judicial officers, peers, and clients.

- Training and technical assistance. New practitioners go through a comprehensive initial training program, and a juvenile dependency website has been created that houses training materials, an in-court reference manual, sample motions and briefs, and a comprehensive repository of California dependency cases.

The DRAFT program also employs social services data to evaluate the impact of the program on permanency and well-being outcomes, including family reunification, guardianship, and placement.

In October 2007, the Judicial Council adopted a recommendation to expand the DRAFT program to include up to 10 additional courts. At that time, the "pilot" designation was also lifted from the program; DRAFT is now a permanent program. Currently, 20 court systems are participating in the program, and dependency cases under the jurisdiction of these 20 courts involve more than a third of the state's juvenile dependency population.

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Performance-Based Infrastructure

In 2002, ownership of California's trial court buildings passed from the 58 counties to the judicial branch of the state. With this transfer, completed in 2009, came the responsibility of maintaining the court buildings and constructing new facilities. Many of the buildings are in poor repair, while others are simply outmoded and need to be replaced.

The new courthouse site, located on Magnolia and Pine in downtown Long Beach, is scheduled to open in late 2013. Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye (fourth from the right) attended the groundbreaking ceremonies held on April 7, 2011.

The Office of Court Construction and Management (OCCM) was created in 2003 as a division of the Administrative Office of the Courts. OCCM is charged with managing existing court facilities, repairing and remodeling these facilities as needed, and constructing new buildings. At present, more than 50 new construction and major remodeling projects are in various stages of completion. Most of these projects were funded through legislation authorizing the collection of court user fees and assessments set aside for this purpose. However, in this time of fiscal constraints, some of the funding authorized for court construction has been borrowed or reallocated for other purposes, so the judicial branch is exploring other methods of financing its building projects.

Currently, about 100 more courthouse construction projects need funding. No single source of public funding is large enough to finance these projects. Because of this shortfall, the Judicial Council, through the AOC, is pilot-testing an innovative way to finance and construct new court buildings called performance-based infrastructure, or PBI.

PBI is a partnership between the public sector owner—in this case, the judicial branch— and a private project company that—in the case of the new Long Beach courthouse—finances, designs, and builds the courthouse and then operates and maintains the building. Once the court occupies the building, the judicial branch pays the project company an annual fee; the state is the legal owner of the land and building. The yearly payment is performance based; that is, it is conditional based on the successful operation and maintenance of the building.

Architect's renderings of the Governor George Deukmejian Courthouse.

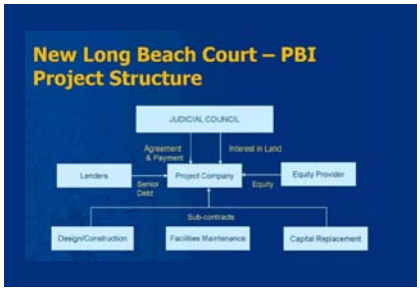
This performance-based approach ensures that the private partner will employ high standards both in construction and in maintenance of the court building.

The PBI delivery method contains other advantages for the state—and the taxpayers. It transfers many of the risks of development from the state to the private company. The private partner undertakes the construction on a fast-track basis, which leads to rapid creation of much-needed local construction jobs, with the economic benefits they bring. The state does not begin to pay until the court building is occupied.

The new Governor George Deukmejian Courthouse in Long Beach is the first courthouse in the United States to be built using the PBI method. In 2010, the AOC reviewed applications from three consortia and selected Long Beach Judicial Partners as the project company. Construction began in May 2011; by the end of August, the foundation was finished and construction had begun on the building.

The striking design of the new courthouse will make it a landmark addition to downtown Long Beach. The 31-courtroom building will cost $490 million, and construction will be completed in late 2013. Long Beach Judicial Partners will manage and maintain the building for 35 years and then turn the building over to the judicial branch.

The project in Long Beach is a pilot effort meant to test PBI as a project delivery method. If the public/private partnership proves successful, the experience gained will be invaluable for similar projects in the future.



Overview of the performance-based incentive process.

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The Renovated Fresno Courthouse and Its Effect on Court Operations

Main entrance of the B. F. Sisk Courthouse, Superior Court of Fresno County. The courthouse project received the 2011 Notable Achievement Award from the Western Council of Construction Consumers.

Screens display the day's court calendars, enabling people to quickly and easily find where they need to go.

In what ways do new and renovated court buildings affect the actual administration of justice? The renovated courthouse of the Superior Court of Fresno County provides some answers.

The five-story B. F. Sisk Courthouse is a former federal courthouse that was transferred to state ownership in 2007. At that time, the Superior Court of Fresno County had numerous facilities in Fresno; as a result, clients involved in family court proceedings might have to go to as many as five different venues to pursue their case. When the renovation was completed in November 2010, the superior court was able to consolidate all civil and family law services into the new 15-courtroom building. Family law clients now enjoy one-stop service.

The designers of the courthouse planned for client convenience. Ample parking is available nearby. When clients enter the building, the first thing they see is a large electronic screen that shows which case is in which courtroom. There are several areas with computer terminals where clients can look up information about their cases.

In the superior court's old facilities, there never seemed to be enough courtrooms, conference rooms, or rooms for special purposes, such as jury waiting rooms. The designers of the renovated building made provisions for all of these needs. There is even a cafeteria, visited not just

Before

Lack of space in the family law clerks' office created crowded conditions for staff. In addition to improved design, the renovation includes new or major improvements to the seismic, life safety, mechanical, electrical, voice data, and security systems. The superior court's civil and family law divisions, with 15 judicial officers and 178 staff, moved into the B. F. Sisk Courthouse in November 2010.

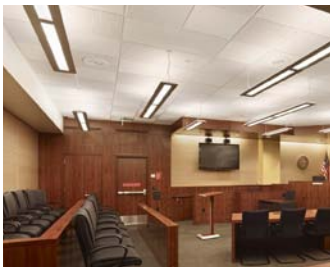
for food but also as a place to take a break. At the many tables, people read newspapers or talk with friends, and lawyers meet with clients or go over their briefs.

The supervised children's waiting room is another popular feature in the newly renovated courthouse. In this room, younger children play with colorful toys and older children read while they wait for their parents to finish with their court engagements. The room is on the first floor, just past the security checkpoint, and the close proximity of the uniformed officers at the checkpoint lends an air of safety and security.

The children's waiting room offers a safe place for children to wait while their parents are in court.

Children and their parents are not the only ones who appreciate the enhanced security of the new building. Court staff mention the close attention paid to security details in the architect's design; an example is the gated staff parking area.

Court staff also enjoy intangibles such as the quiet in the new building, the air of professionalism, and the greater sense of camaraderie. The staff took an active part in the design; for several years, they consulted with architects and sat in on design meetings, ensuring that their needs were addressed. The result is a courthouse where the needs of judicial officers, court staff, and public clients of the court have been incorporated into the building plan. This attention to design has created a courthouse that fulfills Goal VI of the Judicial Council: to provide a physical infrastructure that supports and meets the needs of the public, the judicial branch, and its justice system and community partners.



The court building features 15 courtrooms (and has a capacity for up to 16 courtrooms) in approximately 192,000 square feet.

After

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CONNECTING THE COURT TO THE COMMUNITY

Civics Education: California On My Honor

Institute participants develop curriculum designed to increase the understanding of democracy and civic engagement, while supporting national and California content standards.

In January 2009, Chief Justice Ronald M. George wrote to California civics teachers, "Despite the diligent efforts of schools and our courts, research about perceptions of the courts has shown that public knowledge about the judicial branch of government, generally, and about the courts, in particular, needs improvement." The Chief Justice was writing to interest the teachers in a program called California On My Honor, which was created to address these concerns.

California On My Honor is a statewide collaboration between the Administrative Office of the Courts and California State University San Marcos. The program started in San Diego in 2006 and was opened to teachers statewide in 2007. California On My Honor presents institutes and workshops for teachers of grades kindergarten through 12 with a focus on civics education, especially as it relates to the judicial branch.

Mark Benetiz (right) shares his lesson with colleagues.

Summer institutes, held in San Francisco and San Diego, provide professional development for teachers, using research-based methods, innovative technology, and visual and performing arts in civics education. During the five-day program, attendees collaborate with colleagues to develop new civics curricula. In addition, participants increase their knowledge of the role and operations of the courts with the help of participating judges and attorneys. Each institute includes a visit to a superior court courtroom to witness the judicial process in action. Participants field-test their curricula in their classrooms in the fall and reconvene in San Francisco to reflect on lessons learned and visit the California Supreme Court.

The one-day Court Connections Workshops, held in superior courts throughout the state, are led by experienced teachers who are also leaders from the institutes. Teachers learn about resources and programs provided by their local court and other law-related personnel in their communities, as well as resources available on the web.

The institutes and workshops assist teachers in developing innovative ways to interest their students in civics. The teachers also learn more about the judicial process and the courts—knowledge they can then pass on to their students. The aim is to ensure that every child in the state receives a quality civics education and that students and the public are better informed about the role and operations of the state court system.

Professor Fran Chadwick of California State University, San Marcos, at the 2010 On My Honor Civics Institute.

Judge (now Justice) William J. Murray, Jr. (left), answers questions from teachers about the courts.

LEADERSHIP GROUP ON CIVICS EDUCATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

In 2007, the Judicial Council created the Commission for Impartial Courts (CIC) with the goal of keeping the courts free from political influence. In 2010, the Implementation Committee of the CIC presented to the Judicial Council two high-priority recommendations from the CIC's final report. These two recommendations provided for (1) the appointment of a branchwide public outreach leadership group and (2) focused and coordinated judicial branch advocacy for improving civics education in the K–12 curriculum. The committee emphasized the importance of the judiciary taking a leadership role in civics education through the appointment of a leadership group.

The Leadership Group on Civics Education and Public Outreach was created by the Judicial Council in response to these recommendations. The purpose of the group is to protect the impartiality of the courts and increase access to justice by enhancing the understanding of the role the courts play in our democratic system. The initial focus of the group has been on civics education for California kindergarten through high school students, with an emphasis on providing opportunities for students to learn about the judicial branch.

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Law Week: Bringing Law to the People

Mike Eyes checks out the free publications provided by the State Bar of California at the Martin Luther King, Jr., Library in San Jose during Law Week.

Judge Maureen A. Folan of the Superior Court of Santa Clara County helps celebrate Law Week by reading during children's story time at the Martin Luther King, Jr., Library in San Jose.

Teresa Moya and her son, Ineba, listen to Judge Folan read.

On May 2 through 7, 2011, the Administrative Office of the Courts helped bring together local bar associations, pro bono organizations, law libraries, and public libraries to celebrate Law Week in California.

National Law Day is recognized on May 1 as a day that honors the role of law in our nation. Many state and local programs throughout the country are held just before or after that date to celebrate Law Week or Law Month.

The California Law Week collaboration brought together community partners, many of which had already planned to hold Law Day events. But by joining forces, the team was able to coordinate events and to advertise them to a much broader audience.

Concurrent events took place throughout Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, and Santa Clara Counties. These public events included immigration clinics, "how-to" legal resources workshops, one-on-one legal consultations with volunteer attorneys, and debtors' rights clinics, as well as resources and activities for children.

The Law Week collaboration built upon successful partnerships established through other initiatives within the judicial branch. For example, on May 7, California JusticeCorps members staffed information tables at participating libraries, providing 230 people with general information about the courts' legal access self-help centers. (For more information about JusticeCorps, an AmeriCorps program operating in the courts, see page 42.)

The Law Week collaboration also drew on the work of California On My Honor program (see page 60) by making resources available to public libraries, including recommendations for children's books to display and read during the week, links to online civics-related games, and suggested activities to host in children's libraries.

In addition, the Law Week collaboration celebrated a successful partnership between the courts and California's public libraries. The partnership was created by the AOC to provide training and resources to librarians, with the goal of increasing the public's understanding of the California court system.

For more information about civics education efforts in the judicial branch, go to: *www.courts.ca.gov/programs-lawrelated.htm.*

Additional information about JusticeCorps can be found at: *www.courts.ca.gov/programs-justicecorps.htm.*

To learn more about the California Court and Library Partnership, go to: *www.calegaladvocates.org/libraries.*

JusticeCorps members were on hand for Law Week. JusticeCorps members in nine locations throughout the state provided general information to the public about court self-help centers.

Many organizations worked together to offer information and resources about the law during California's Law Week.

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Tribal Projects Unit

In 2009, the Administrative Office of the Courts established, as part of the Center for Families, Children & the Courts (CFCC), a Tribal Projects Unit. The purpose of this unit is to act as a liaison between the state justice system and the tribal communities and justice systems in California, in order to improve the California Native American community's access to justice and strengthen the working relationship between the state and tribal justice systems.

The need for this collaboration has been growing. According to the 2000 census, more than 600,000 American Indian and Alaskan Native citizens reside in California in both rural and urban communities—more than in any other state except Alaska. This represents roughly 13 percent of the entire American Indian/Alaska Native population of the United States. California contains approximately 600,000 acres of "Indian county" in more than 100 separate parcels scattered throughout the state. This territory is home to 107 federally recognized tribes, with another 74 tribes in the process of applying for federal recognition. As sovereign tribes, they have the authority to establish their own justice systems. There are now 17 tribal courts, up from just 7 a few years ago, and the number is growing. These courts serve approximately 30 of the 107 tribes.

Tribal Court/State Court Judges Meeting held on December 21, 2009.

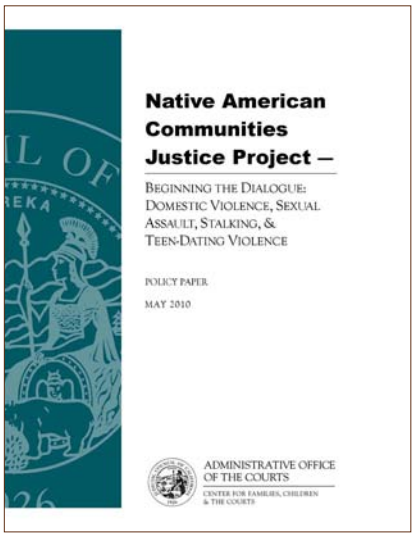
The increase in the number of tribal courts, and the legal complexity of jurisdiction, points up the need for greater understanding and collaboration between the state courts and the tribal courts. To increase understanding and build trust, the Tribal Projects Unit has produced educational curricula, a webinar, and other bench tools for judges on federal Indian law. The unit has also created a clearinghouse that provides access to resources, responds to inquiries by local courts on a wide range of tribal issues, and supports collaboration between state and tribal courts.

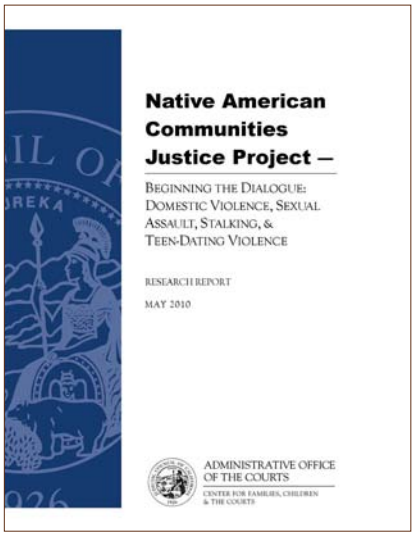
These efforts have already begun to bring benefits to local courts, such as:

- An understanding of the common interest shared by state and tribal courts and the people they serve;
- Increased collaboration between state and tribal courts to address interjurisdictional challenges;
- Sharing of educational and other resources;
- Progress on the recognition and enforcement of each other's court orders, thus preventing confusion and reducing costs; and
- The capacity to share information on criminal history and each other's protective orders. This sharing reduces the possibility of conflicting orders, ensures that judicial officers have the information they need to make informed decisions, and provides law enforcement officers with the information they need to protect the public.

State and tribal justice systems have a great deal of experience to share and much to learn from each other. The two systems need to work jointly to solve problems that they both face. The Tribal Projects Unit will continue to facilitate cooperation and collaboration between the state courts and tribal courts in order to ensure the highest quality of justice and service for California's Native American communities.

The Tribal Projects Unit is supported exclusively with grant funds from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women. These funds are administered through the California Emergency Management Agency, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Court Improvement Program, and the California Department of Social Services.





In October 2008, the CFCC launched the Native American Communities Justice Project, an eight-month project to assess the needs of Native American victims of family violence in California and to inform the AOC's actions and projects to enhance access to, and improve the administration of, justice for these victims.

THE TRIBAL COURT/STATE COURT FORUM: ADDRESSING SHARED CONCERNS

The Tribal Projects Unit supports the Tribal Court/State Court Forum. The forum, established by former Chief Justice Ronald M. George and continued by Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye, comprises both tribal court judges and state court judges and justices. The forum makes policy recommendations to the Judicial Council on issues relating to the recognition and enforcement of court orders that cross jurisdictional lines, the determination of jurisdiction for cases that might appear in either court system, and the sharing of services between jurisdictions.

In 2008–2009, the Native American Communities Justice Project brought together more than 500 Native Americans and California court personnel to hear the voices of Native American victims of family violence. This assessment, conducted by the CFCC, reported that tribal protective orders were not being uniformly and consistently enforced, leaving victims at risk of being revictimized. The forum identified the following two solutions to these issues:

California Courts Protective Order Registry. In August 2011, the Tribal Projects Unit worked with the AOC's Information Services Division to launch a pilot program that provides tribal courts with read-only access to the California Courts Protective Order Registry (CCPOR). By sharing information on restraining and protective orders, state courts and tribal courts are better able to protect the public, particularly victims of domestic violence. (Learn more about CCPOR on page 48.)

Efficient and consistent procedures. A proposed statewide rule will establish an efficient and consistent statewide procedure for California state courts to register protective orders issued by tribal courts in California. The proposed rule is on the Judicial Council's consent agenda and, if adopted, will become effective January 1, 2012.

Members of the Native Boogie and Beats, a cultural collaboration of Native American singers, dancers, and artists participate in the California Tribal Court/State Court Forum. Left to right: Jon Swimmer, Angelina Swimmer, Shea Norris, Anecita Yahzii Hernandez, Manny Lieras, and Lakota Holder.

Anecita Yahzii Hernandez (left) and Lakota Holder (right) perform the Fancy Shawl Dance at the California Tribal Court/State Court Forum meeting on January 13, 2011.

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Youth Court Summit

Youth participate in a mock trial during the Youth Court Summit.

At the Sixth Annual Youth Court Summit, a number of youth are involved in a mock trial that reenacts an actual case previously heard by a youth court (also called a peer court or teen court). The reenactment demonstrates to the audience how peer courts determine the consequences imposed on youth defendants for low-level criminal conduct. In many instances, an adult serves as a judge, but the teenage jury members have the final say in sentencing.

Youth courts provide an alternative to the traditional juvenile justice system for first-time, nonviolent offenders. A youth charged with an offense can choose to forego the hearing and sentencing procedures of the juvenile courts; instead, he or she agrees to plead guilty and appear before a jury of youthful peers. The peer court staff is made up of youth who have been trained to assume various roles, including those of attorneys, judges, court staff, and, most important, jurors who determine what should happen to a youth who violated the law. Juvenile offenders who participate in the youth court program avoid a criminal record while still being held accountable for their actions.

The Youth Court Summit is California's leading training and educational conference for youth and teen court staff. At the 2011 summit, held from June 24 to 26, 100 youth involved in peer courts throughout California met with judges, community service leaders, education experts, and law enforcement personnel at Chapman University School of Law in Orange, California. The summit is a project of the Administrative Office of the Courts' Center for Families, Children & the Courts, and is cosponsored by the California Association of Youth Courts (CAYC).

The talks and workshops at the summit are designed to assist both current and prospective youth court staff on various issues. At the 2011 summit, workshops addressed such subjects as bullying, substance abuse, discrimination, and developing youth courts. Students also took part in moot courts, where they learned about famous Supreme Court cases like Dred Scott and Brown vs. the Board of Education.

According to Assistant Presiding Judge David S. Wesley of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County, who is president of the CAYC,

> In 1992 there were 3 youth courts in California and 78 in the nation. In 2011, California has youth courts throughout the entire state, from Lassen to Los Angeles, and there are over 1,100 nationwide. In all of these courts, students are committed to the concept of preventing delinquency by empowering young people. What better way to empower our youth than to bring them together to learn new approaches from each other and experts, and to share best practices in reducing delinquent behavior? The result is that the CAYC Conference provides this unique forum to inspire students to form a statewide network of youth dedicated to expanding early intervention programs. Every new youth court, no matter the model, adds energy and fresh ideas, and advances the goal of keeping young people involved in solving problems in their communities.

In June 2011, more than 150 youth, peer court staff, juvenile bench officers, education experts, and staff of youth-focused associations attended the Youth Court Summit to share ideas and information on youth courts.

Based on national growth rates, it is estimated that youth courts might handle 25 percent of all juvenile arrests by 2015.

With this kind of growth, leadership of the type encouraged by the yearly Youth Court Summit is critical. The summit provides a unique opportunity for youth, juvenile court bench officers, and education experts to share best practices and to provide assistance to those who want to start a youth court.

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CLOSING THE LOOP

Sargent Shriver Civil Counsel Act

The Judicial Council has chosen seven pilot projects that will provide legal representation to a selected number of low-income Californians. The Legislature, via the Sargent Shriver Civil Counsel Act, AB 590, has funded these projects with $9.5 million per year starting on July 1, 2011. The pilots are administered by the Administrative Office of the Courts.

These seven pilot projects, each in a different area of the state, target cases involving critical legal issues that affect basic human needs such as housing, custody, conservatorship, and guardianship. In these kinds of disputes, low-income litigants are, for the most part, unrepresented—and often unaware of the various options open to them. The pilots target cases in which one side is represented by a lawyer and the other is not.

Each project is a partnership of a lead legal services nonprofit corporation, the court, and other legal services providers in the community. The projects will provide legal representation to low-income Californians at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. When selecting cases, the agencies will consider the complexity of the case and whether the potential client has special challenges, such as limited English proficiency, illiteracy, or disabilities. They will also review how serious the case is and whether the client has a good chance of prevailing. In addition, the agencies will look at whether providing assistance might save money in the long run by reducing the costs of social services such as homeless and domestic violence shelters.

Since the need for services is expected to outpace the available funding, it will not be possible to provide all eligible low-income parties with attorneys. Thus, the court partners will also receive funding to change procedures and practices to ensure that those parties who still lack attorneys have meaningful access to the courts, have their cases heard on the merits, and do not unintentionally give up their rights. These new court services will include expanded mediation assistance, language interpreters, a probate facilitator, a housing inspector, special parenting workshops, and other creative methods to address these important and challenging cases.

The legal services agencies selected for the pilot projects will screen litigants to identify eligible clients and will contract with other legal services providers in the community to provide services. Staff attor-

neys will be hired, but pro bono work by outside attorneys will also be encouraged. The lead legal services agency will be the main point of contact for referrals from the court and other agencies. Some projects will also provide assistance from social workers to help address the issues that clients face.

The AOC will conduct a study to demonstrate the effectiveness and continued need for each project. Those findings and recommendations will go to the Judicial Council, which in turn will present them to the Governor and the Legislature on or before January 31, 2016.

The study will include data on the impact of counsel on equal access to justice and the effect on court administration and efficiency. It will also focus on the enhanced coordination between courts and other government service providers and community resources. It will describe the benefits of providing representation to those who were previously not represented, both for the clients and the courts, and recommend strategies for maximizing the benefit of that representation in the future. In addition, the study will include data on the impact of the pilot program on families and children, as well as an assessment of the continuing unmet legal needs of low-income people.

Robert Sargent Shriver, Jr.

As one of the first programs in the country to combine representation for low-income persons in these types of cases with court innovation, the Sargent Shriver Civil Counsel Act has attracted national attention. The lessons learned should be helpful to other courts working on innovations—and to everyone interested in the best ways of ensuring that all persons coming to court get an appropriate level of legal assistance in these critical cases.

SARGENT SHRIVER AND THE IMPORTANCE OF LEGAL REPRESENTATION

The modern movement to offer legal services to low-income people was spearheaded by Sargent Shriver in 1966, aided by the American Bar Association, which at the time was headed by future United States Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell. The movement has been driven by the great disparity that exists between the small number of lawyers available for low-income Americans compared with the abundant availability of legal services for others.

Over the past few decades, a number of studies have demonstrated that just outcomes are more likely to be reached in civil cases when litigants have legal representation.

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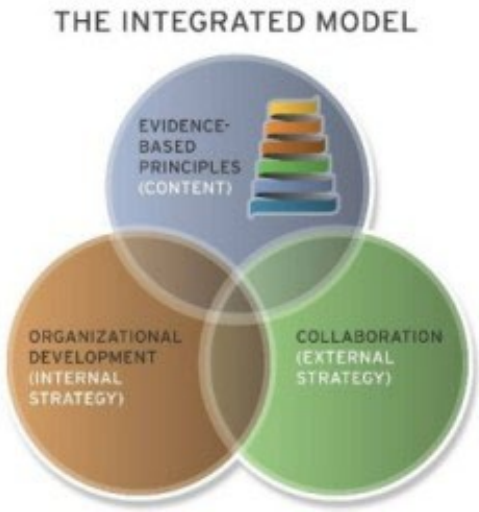
Community Corrections Program



The AOC's Community Corrections Program employs a model developed by the National Institute of Corrections in partnership with the Crime and Justice Institute that maintains an equal and integrated focus on three domains: the implementation of evidence-based principles, organizational development, and collaboration.

The Community Corrections Program was formed in January 2010 by the Administrative Office of the Courts to manage three recent court-related initiatives. All three initiatives are designed to promote public safety by reducing recidivism among felony probationers and parolees and reducing the number of adult felony probationers and parolees sent to prison.

From 2006 to 2008, an average of 7.9 percent of the convicted felons on probation were sent to state prison each year. About 1.2 percent of these had committed a new felony, while 6.6 percent had violated the terms of their probation. In other words, of a statewide population of approximately 330,000 adult felons on probation, approximately 26,000 entered prison each year for violating probation or committing a new crime, accounting for approximately 40 percent of California's new admissions to state prisons.

It's evident from these figures that reducing the number of probation failures would benefit all parties involved: the probationers themselves, the criminal courts, and the state taxpayers who must pay the costs of incarcerating inmates. The present cost of incarcerating an inmate in a California prison is about $47,000 per year, and this cost is rising. Since fiscal year 2000–2001, the average annual cost per inmate has increased by about $19,500.

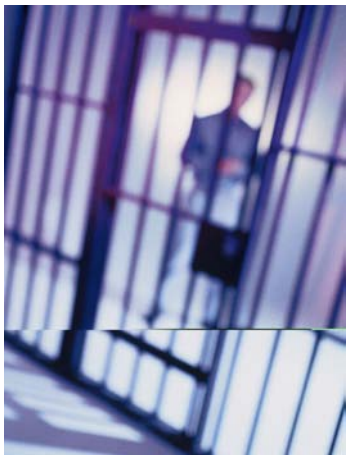
Each of the three initiatives managed by the Community Corrections Program focuses on reducing probation or parole failure in a specific manner. The first, established by the California Community Corrections Performance Incentives Act of 2009 (SB 678), creates a system of performance-based funding for county probation departments to support evidence-based practice in supervising adult felons on probation.

Evidence-based practice is currently one of the most promising reforms in state sentencing and corrections practice. For decades, conventional wisdom held that there was nothing the courts could do to reduce the rate of recidivism among probationers and parolees. Since 2000, however, new research has demonstrated that certain approaches can effectively change the behavior of offenders and significantly reduce recidivism rates. As defined in SB 678, evidence-based practices consist of "supervision policies, procedures, programs, and practices demonstrated by scientific research to reduce recidivism among individuals under probation, parole, or post-release supervision."

SB 678 created a state fund—the State Corrections Performance Incentives Fund (SCPIF)—and authorized the state to allocate money each year from the SCPIF to a Community Corrections Performance Incentives Fund (CCPIF) established in each county. Each county must establish a local community corrections program directed by the county's chief probation officer and based on evidence-based practices. These local programs then track the success of their evidence-based programs and report the outcomes to the AOC.

If the local programs succeed in reducing the number of felony probationers sent to prison, the state saves the cost of incarcerating those offenders. The state will then share a portion of these savings with the jurisdictions that generated the savings. Using a baseline average probation failure rate from the years 2006 through 2008 for comparison, the California Department of Finance calculates the change in the annual failure rate for each county to determine which counties are eligible to receive a portion of the state savings.

Preliminary results for this incentive-based program are very encouraging. In 2010, the first year that the local community corrections programs began using evidence-based practices, 6,182 fewer adult felony probationers were sent to state prison, compared to the baseline years of 2006 through 2008. This represents a 23 percent reduction in the rate of probation failure, for a savings to the state of $179 million.



The AOC's Community Corrections Program also manages another initiative designed to reduce recidivism—this one for offenders aged 18 to 25 placed on felony probation. **The California Risk Assessment Pilot Project (CalRAPP)** is a joint project of the AOC and the Chief Probation Officers of California, and is funded by the National Institute of Corrections and the State Justice Institute. CalRAPP has pilot projects in four counties: Napa, San Francisco, Santa Cruz, and Yolo.

These pilot projects employ risk/needs assessments of probationers, a key part of evidence-based practice, in the sentencing of 18- to 25-year-old offenders. First, a needs assessment is conducted to determine the likelihood that an offender will reoffend or violate the terms of his or her probation. Certain types of needs, or risk factors, have been demonstrated to predict future criminal behavior; these needs include antisocial attitudes and associates, family dysfunction, substance abuse, and lack of employment skills. Using the needs assessment, the project then assesses the risk that the individual will revert to criminal behavior and matches the level of supervision or services that the

offender receives to his or her risk level. Those offenders determined to have a higher risk of recidivism will receive more intensive supervision and services. For example, an offender with a history of substance abuse might be ordered into a closely supervised treatment program and receive frequent drug tests. The offender might also receive encouragement and other positive reinforcements for staying in the program.

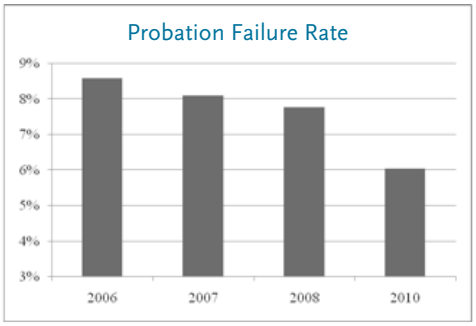
The CalRAPP projects will track the rates of recidivism and revocation of probation for participating offenders for up to three years and compare them to the rates of similar offenders not participating in the project.

With an additional grant from the Public Welfare Foundation, the Community Corrections Program has organized three regional trainings for judges and probation officers to learn more about evidence-based practices and discuss implementation programs for their respective counties. The grant funds are also being used to provide trainings at individual courts.

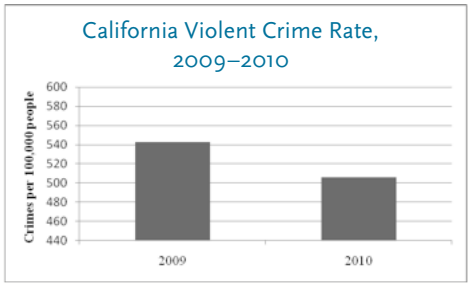
The final initiative managed by the AOC's Community Corrections Program is the **Parolee Reentry Court Pilot Program.** As part of the Corrections Reform package (SB18 3X) and the Budget Act of 2009, the Legislature provided $9.5 million in federal Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant funds to be distributed over a period of three years for the establishment of up to seven reentry pilot courts in California. To date, six reentry pilot courts have been established—in Alameda, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, and Santa Clara Counties.

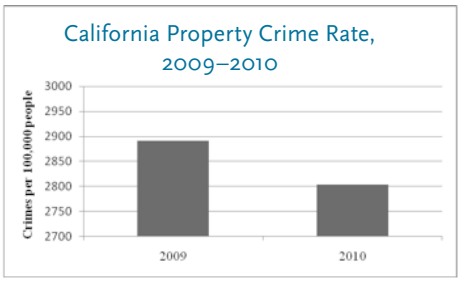
With a goal of reducing recidivism and parole revocation, the pilot courts employ a collaborative model that integrates treatment and social services with enhanced judicial monitoring of parolees. Parolees with a history of mental illness or substance abuse who have broken their parole agreements may be referred to a reentry court instead of being returned to prison.

The project will be evaluated over a period of three years by comparing the revocation and reoffense rates of participants to those of similar parolees who are not participants in the program. The evaluation, conducted by the Community Corrections Program of the AOC, will also consider different models of reentry courts.



In 2010, 6,182 fewer adult felony probationers were sent to state prison than in the baseline years of 2006 through 2008. The rate of probation failure declined to 6.1 percent from 7.9 percent in the baseline period, a 23 percent reduction.





The results in the first year in which SB 678 was implemented coincide with systemic downward trends in crime nationally and statewide. Compared to 2009, California's 2010 arrests for violent and property crime in urban areas declined by 7 percent and 3 percent, respectively. This is in line with a 6 percent reduction in violent crimes and a 3 percent reduction in property crimes at the national level over the same period. Crime rates in both California and the nation have been steadily declining since the mid-1990s, with a decrease of approximately 5 percent each year.

Source: Administrative Office of the Courts, Community Corrections Program, SB 678 Year 1 Report: Implementation of the California Community Corrections Performance Incentive (June 8, 2011).

In addition to evaluating the reentry court program and organizing educational programs about evidence-based practice, the Community Corrections Program works to ensure the accuracy of the data used to determine the funding for county probation departments as authorized by SB 678. Data accuracy is critical to a fair apportionment of state funds to counties that have lowered their rate of probation failure.

The Community Corrections Program will evaluate the three initiatives and report to the Legislature and other funders regarding the effectiveness of each program approximately three years after its inception. While results for the two pilot programs are not yet available, preliminary data for the California Community Corrections Performance Incentives Act (SB 678) shows a positive impact, as mentioned earlier. Evidence-based practices, after proving effective in numerous studies nationwide, are now beginning to demonstrate positive results in California.

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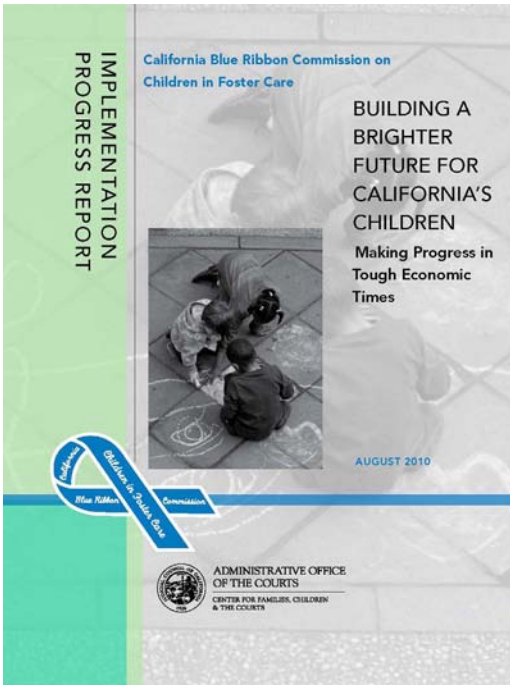
California Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care

In March 2006, Chief Justice Ronald M. George established the California Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care. A wide range of participants with expertise in child welfare made up the commission, including judges, legislators, child welfare directors, tribal leaders, and foster youth. The commission was charged with providing recommendations to the Judicial Council on ways in which the courts and their partners can improve the safety, permanence, well-being, and fairness outcomes for children and families in the child welfare system.

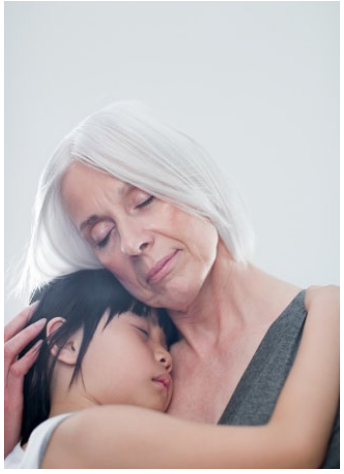
At the time, there was a pressing need for reforms in the foster care system. In 2006, more than 78,000 children were in foster care in California. More than half of these children had been in the system for more than two years, and many of them had lived in multiple foster homes and were separated from their siblings, with no sense of stability or of belonging to a family or community. Although the juvenile courts are vested with providing protection and supervision for children in foster care, juvenile dependency judges and attorneys were overwhelmed by the sheer number of cases.



The Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care issued its first implementation progress report in August 2010.

"I believe that this progress demonstrates the transformative power of collaboration, as all of the state's child welfare partners—courts, social services, education, health, mental health, philanthropic organizations, CASA, tribes, collaborative advisory bodies, and others—both statewide and locally, have taken up the challenge of making a difference for our children in foster care."

—Associate Justice Carlos R. Moreno of the Supreme Court of California, former chair of the California Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care



In 2008, the Blue Ribbon Commission issued its recommendations for sweeping reforms to the state's juvenile dependency courts. The Judicial Council unanimously accepted these recommendations, and in June 2009, the Chief Justice extended the commission for three years and added implementation activities to its charge.

The recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission fell into four areas:

- Achieving permanent placement for foster children. Recommendations in this area include engaging family members as early as possible, encouraging adoption, and extending support for youth to the age of 21, rather than ending services when they turn 18.
- Implementing court reform. Included in this area are recommendations to reduce the caseloads of judicial officers, attorneys, and social workers; ensure that all participants in dependency proceedings have adequate time in court; and ensure that all attorneys, social workers, and court-appointed special advocates are adequately trained.
- Encouraging collaboration among courts and child welfare partners. This area includes recommendations for enhancing the sharing of information with all partners of the court, establishing foster care commissions on the county level to help implement the Blue Ribbon Commission's recommendations, and reaching out to Native American communities to ensure that their children and families receive the services available to them.
- Allocating resources and funding. In this area, the commission recommends prioritizing foster care when allocating resources, advocating for greater flexibility in the use of funds for child-abuse prevention, and expanding educational services for foster children.

In August 2010, the Blue Ribbon Commission issued a report that noted progress in several key areas. Early indications are that active court oversight and better representation in the juvenile dependency

courts is already making a significant difference for the children and families who enter the child welfare system. Commission members believe that much of this progress is due to the collaborative efforts of all the state's child welfare partners, including the courts, social services, court-appointed special advocates, Native American tribes, and philanthropic organizations.

Local foster care commissions are now active in more than 40 counties. These local commissions are working in their communities to identify and address the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission and to build the capacity to provide necessary services to children and families in the foster care system. The Administrative Office of the Courts is providing ongoing support to these local commissions through its Juvenile Court Assistance Team (JCAT).

Beginning in January 2012, a new law will give foster children turning 18 the opportunity to remain in supervised care until age 21 with federal assistance. The California Fostering Connections to Success Act (AB 12) will require youth choosing this option to attend school, college, or career-oriented programs or to work a minimum of 80 hours a month in order to receive funding. The bill also provides transitional housing support until age 21 to those who qualify. This legislation gives young adults in foster care a leg up; previously, youths who remained in care at 18 were often released on their own with few resources.

The number of children in foster care continues to decease. This trend, which began in 2000, has continued in most counties and accelerated in others. In Los Angeles County, the foster care caseload dropped from 25,000 children in 2007 to 18,000 in 2011. Alameda County had a caseload of 5,000 foster care children in 2007; by 2011, this number had fallen to 1,500. Statewide, the number of children in foster care has decreased from 75,000 in 2008 to 63,000 in 2011.

This decrease in the number of children in foster care creates a positive cumulative effect: As courts and social services have more resources

to deal with each individual foster child, they are more likely to find a permanent resolution to each case. This takes more children out of the system—which then frees up additional resources. In a time of reduced funding, the California Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care has created a flourishing collaboration among the juvenile courts and all their partners to further the welfare of children in foster care.

SOME FACTS ABOUT FOSTER CARE IN CALIFORNIA

- California has more than 80,000 children in foster care.
- About 10 percent of the nation's children live in California, yet the state is home to approximately 20 percent of the country's foster-care population.
- California spends an estimated $4.7 billion a year on child welfare and related issues, half coming from the federal government, and the other half from state and county funds.
- Fewer than 150 full-time and part-time judicial officers preside over the entire dependency court system.
- Juvenile dependency court attorneys, who represent children and parents in court, had an average caseload of 273—in some counties caseloads rose to 500 or 600—far exceeding the recommended maximum caseload of 188 adopted by the Judicial Council.

Sources for these statistics can be found on the California Courts website at www.courts.ca.gov/4184.htm.

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All other photos are provided by the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Sources

The following publications are good sources of further information on Ralph N. Kleps and the history of judicial administration in California.

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