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## FACT SHEET

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### **2006–2007 Ralph N. Kleps Award Recipient: Court Clerk Career Progression Opportunity (3C-P-O) Program, Superior Court of Butte County**

A self-directed program that allows any deputy court clerk to promote to the advanced journey level through a structured certification process that comprises technical skill testing, review of the employee's demonstrated interpersonal skills, professionalism, and other work-related behavioral factors.

#### Why This Program Is Innovative

Traditional promotional opportunities require candidates to compete with other employees in a competitive selection process. The 3C-P-O program provides every deputy clerk with an opportunity to "self"-promote to a senior court clerk position upon demonstration of skill mastery at the advanced journey level. Skill mastery is verified through a formal certification process.

#### Problems the Program Was Designed to Address

- Approaching a 20% clerk turnover rate
- Increasing number of employee grievances
- Rapidly diminishing skilled worker pool
- Heavy backlogs and high incidence of errors
- Low morale
- No effective succession plans
- Increasingly hostile labor relations

#### Program Goals and Desired Outcomes

- Reduce turnover, improve staff morale, and attract higher-quality employees.
- Identify new court leaders and provide training opportunities for them in support of the court's succession plan.
- Enhance staff confidence in management's decisions and in the overall integrity of the court as an employer.
- Create a work environment that encourages and rewards employees for increasing their technical skill, taking responsibility, continuously improving

their work product, remaining flexible, and demonstrating behaviors that are consistent with the court's core values.

#### Actual Program Outcomes and Benefits

- All 57 court clerk positions are now part of the career progression program.
- Currently 18 clerks hold single certifications; 5 hold advanced journey certifications.
- Two advanced journey clerks were promoted to leadership positions since 2005.
- Exit interviews indicate turnover due to job dissatisfaction has decreased by 75%.
- Clerks have individual plans and clear goals to work toward.
- Clerks have incentive and are actively working to increase their skills.
- Clerks' willingness and desire to transfer to other court divisions increases the court's ability to respond effectively to workload shifts.
- Certification test results serve as tools to focus staff's ongoing training needs.
- Staff development plans have been prepared for all court clerks, and the plans are being implemented and monitored uniformly.
- There has been a reduction in promotion-related grievances.
- The frequency and effectiveness of employee/supervisor/management communication has increased.

#### How This Program Was Originally Funded

The program grew out of the award of a multicourt AOC grant to Butte, Glenn, Sutter, and Yuba Counties in April of 2002 to provide consulting services to design a career progression plan and uniform job descriptions for the court clerk series.

#### Ongoing Budget and Staffing Impacts

Oversight responsibilities were absorbed by existing staff. Increased costs associated with promotions were primarily offset by a reduction in turnover and overtime costs.

#### How the Program Is Sustained

The Certification Committee continuously reviews and refines these instruments to conform to changes in law or procedure. As clerks are certified, they are encouraged to participate as members of certification review panels. This instills a pride in and ownership of the program.

#### Recommendations for Courts Wanting to Replicate This Program

- Invite staff to participate in the design of the promotion requirements.
- Be specific and document the promotion requirements and testing instruments.
- Ensure integrity of the process.
- Celebrate individual and team successes.
- Reward with additional promotion opportunities.
- Listen openly to criticisms/suggestions from any and all stakeholders.

#### Contact:

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#### Additional resources:

Ralph N. Kleps Award information, [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/innovations](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/innovations)  
Superior Court of Butte County's Web site: [www.buttecourt.ca.gov](http://www.buttecourt.ca.gov)