



NEWS RELEASE

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Judicial Council Adopts Procedures to Regulate Court-Funded Judicial Benefits

Council Takes Other Actions to Improve Court Administration at Public Meeting

San Francisco—The Judicial Council of California has adopted interim procedures to regulate the administration of court-funded local judicial benefits for trial court judges authorized by Senate Bill 11, which was recently approved by the Legislature.

The procedures are designed to ensure that trial court funds allocated by the Judicial Council are managed efficiently, effectively, and responsibly.

The new procedures, effective May 21, 2009, will do the following:

(1) Require trial courts to keep specified records of and report on court-funded benefits; (2) establish a presumption that cash allowances for certain benefits, such as professional development, be specifically for payment or reimbursement of expenses; and (3) prohibit new court-funded benefits or an increase in any existing court-funded benefits.

The council also noted it that welcomes additional comments on the new interim procedures. Nineteen trial courts offer court-funded judicial benefits to judges at this time.

Chaired by Chief Justice Ronald M. George, the council is the 27-member policymaking body of the California courts.

OTHER ACTIONS

Kleps Awards: The council announced the recipients of the 2008–2009 Ralph N. Kleps Awards, which honor innovative programs in eight California courts. (*See news release #21:* www.courtinfo.ca.gov/presscenter/newsreleases/NR21-09.pdf.)

(more)

Subordinate Judicial Officers: The council approved minor modifications to a December 2007 report on the conversion of subordinate judicial officer (SJO) positions. The modifications (1) allow for greater flexibility in the allocation of SJO conversions across different court groups and (2) establish clear criteria for granting courts temporary exemptions to SJO conversions.

Civil Jury Instructions: The council approved the publication of revisions and additions to the Judicial Council of *California Civil Jury Instructions (CACI)*. The report includes 43 new and revised instructions and verdict forms. Among them are revisions to the instructions and verdict forms on product liability and elder abuse, as well as new instructions on statutes of limitation.

The Judicial Council also approved 10 reports proposing new and amended rules of court and court forms, other changes in civil jury instructions, and a revision in the *Prioritization Methodology for Modifications to Court Facilities*.

The complete agenda and accompanying reports are available online at:
www.courtinfo.ca.gov/jc/documents/age042409.pdf.

The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and promotes leadership and excellence in court administration.

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