



# NEWS RELEASE

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## Judicial Council Takes Action on Continuing Education for Trial Courts

### ***Comprehensive Program Adopted, With Reporting by Courts Required; Rules Effective January 1, 2007***

San Francisco—The Judicial Council of California has unanimously approved a comprehensive minimum education program for trial court judges and subordinate judicial officers, court executive officers, managers, supervisors, and court personnel.

At a public meeting on Friday, the 28-member Judicial Council took the action by acting on a recommendation presented by Judge Fumiko Hachiya Wasserman, on behalf of the Governing Committee of the Center for Judicial Education and Research (CJER).

“California has long been recognized as having the finest judicial education program in the country,” said Administrative Director of the Courts William C. Vickrey. “The CJER Governing Committee’s comprehensive proposal is another important step in broadening our commitment to judicial education and recognizing the importance of the judicial branch’s accountability to the public in providing fair and accessible justice to all Californians.”

Mr. Vickrey continued, “The new program developed by the Governing Committee establishes comprehensive requirements and guidelines for judges, subordinate judicial officers, managers and supervisors, and court staff. It establishes mandatory annual reporting by judges on their participation in educational programs and also gives the trial courts the flexibility to determine the content and subject matter of training taken by subordinate judicial officers and court personnel.”

The new rules were based on an alternate proposal developed by the staff of the Administrative Office of the Courts. The rules made some revisions to a comprehensive educational proposal developed by the Governing Committee after three years of careful review and study.

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The rules, to take effect January 1, 2007, include the following provisions:

- California trial court judges will be expected to complete 30 hours of continuing education in a three-year cycle. This includes current requirements for orientation for new jurists and specialized training for certain categories of judges.
- Subordinate judicial officers and court executive officers will be required to take 30 hours of continuing education in a three-year cycle. Managers and supervisors will be required to take 12 hours of education every two years, and court personnel must take 8 hours every two years.
- Presiding judges will have the authority to determine subject matter for the continuing education of subordinate judicial officers.
- Court executive officers will have the authority to determine the content and length of orientation courses for court personnel, as well as the subject matter for continuing education of those personnel. An exception was created for certain court personnel who do not have roles in court operations or court administration.
- Presiding judges will be required to track and report on the participation of judges in the continuing education program. Presiding judges will provide aggregate reports on judicial participation in such courses at the end of each three-year cycle.
- Reimbursement of expenses for continuing education is clarified under the new rules. A portion of those expenses must be part of every court's budget.

## **OTHER ACTIONS**

In other actions, the council:

- Declared November to be Court Adoption and Permanency Month as it has each year since 1999. The goal of naming the month is to highlight innovative court efforts aimed at expediting adoption and permanency of children while raising awareness of the need for state and permanent homes for children.
- Accepted an interim report from the Probate Conservatorship Task Force, appointed last January by Chief Justice Ronald M. George to improve the management of probate conservatorship cases in California trial courts. The task force is chaired by Administrative Presiding Justice Roger W. Boren, of the Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District (Los Angeles). The final report is expected next year.

- Approved more than 40 new and amended court rules and forms designed to improve the administration of the courts.

## **COURT BUDGET ACTIONS**

- Approved allocation of State Appropriations Limit (SAL) funding for trial courts in the following areas: 1) mandatory security costs where changes have been confirmed and pending funding for courts where changes have not yet been finally confirmed; 2) non-security related operating costs for facilities scheduled to open or transfer during the period July 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007 (security related costs for such facilities have been deferred to the December 1, 2006 council meeting); and 3) the Resource Allocation Study (RAS) model portion of the workload growth and equity funding.
- Adopted criteria for replacement of entrance screening equipment and an equipment replacement cycle for fiscal year 2006–2007, a maximum amount that can be allocated for each type of equipment, and the maximum allocation for the courts that will be affected by the replacement cycle in fiscal year 2006–2007.
- Adopted a fund balance policy that establishes uniform standards for the reporting of fund balances by trial courts.
- Approved fiscal year 2006–2007 recommendations to address various program and policy issues relating to statewide enhanced civil assessments, including a \$16 million current year reduction.

The agenda and meeting materials are on the California Courts Web site at <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/jc/documents/age102006.pdf>.

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*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.*