

# CALIFORNIA TRIBAL COURT–STATE COURT FORUM

January 2017

## Accomplishments—Highlights (2010-2016)

Below are some of the key accomplishments of the forum:

1. Sharing of Resources: judicial education and technical assistance to support each other's court capacity to meet the needs of its citizens. Resources have extended to areas of court forms, collaborative justice, court security, grants, human resources, protective order database information, supervised visitation, self-help, and other areas.
  - *Forum E-Update*  
This monthly electronic newsletter disseminates information to forum members (tribal court judge and state court judges) and forum friends (any interested person) on grant opportunities, publications, news stories, and educational events.  
(<http://www.courts.ca.gov/3065.htm>)
  - *Tribal/State/Federal Court Administrator Toolkit*  
This toolkit encourages cross-court site visits and to facilitate shared learning among local tribal, state, and federal courts in California. The toolkit is endorsed by the following groups: California Court Clerks Association, California State-Federal Judicial Council, the California Tribal Court Clerks Association, the California Court Executives Advisory Committee, the National Judicial College, and the Tribal Court–State Court Forum.  
(<http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/courttoolkit-tribalstatefederal-adminclerks.pdf>)
2. Developing New Resources: curriculum on civil and criminal jurisdiction in a Public Law 280 state, educational offerings at tribal and state court sponsored trainings, updates to existing judicial curriculum and benchguides, and creation of a website to serve as a clearinghouse of resources.
3. Collection of Tribe-Specific Data and Information
  - population characteristics  
(<http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/Tribal-ResearchUpdate-NAStats.pdf>)
  - domestic and other violence and victimization statistics  
([www.courts.ca.gov/documents/NatAmStatsAbUpdate.pdf](http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/NatAmStatsAbUpdate.pdf))
  - tribal court directory ([www.courts.ca.gov/14400.htm](http://www.courts.ca.gov/14400.htm)) and map  
(<http://g.co/maps/cvdq8>)
  - tribal justice systems  
(<http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/TribalJusticeSystemRU.pdf>)

### 4. Focus on Innovation and Collaboration Through Judicial Leadership

#### ○ Cross-Cultural Court Exchanges

These exchanges both model the collaborative relationships among tribal and state court judges at a local level and foster partnerships among tribal and non-tribal agencies and service providers. Through these exchanges, which are judicially-convened on tribal lands, participants identify areas of mutual concern, new ways of working together, and coordinated approaches to enforcing tribal and state court orders. Since no court order is self-executing, these exchanges serve to support both state and tribal courts by ensuring that those who are providing court-connected services are working together to meet the needs of their tribal communities regardless of whether citizens walk through the tribal or state courthouse doors. To date, the Tribal/State Programs staff has assisted tribal and state court judges in convening nine exchanges on the following tribal lands: Bishop Paiute, Hopland, Hoopa, Karuk, Quechan, and Yurok.

#### ○ *Documentary on Tribal Justice*

The forum has consulted on and participated in the production of this film, which premiered at the Santa Barbara Film Festival in 2017. This film follows two forum members: Judge Abby Abinanti, Chief Judge of the Yurok Tribe, and Judge Claudette White, Chief Judge of the Quechan Tribe. It shows how they are creating innovative justice systems that focus on restoring rather than punishing offenders in order to keep tribal members out of prison, prevent children from being taken from their communities, and stop the school-to-prison pipeline that plagues their young people. (To learn more about the film and watch a 4 minute trailer, <http://www.makepeaceproductions.com/tribaljustice/spotlight/>)

#### ○ *Joint Jurisdictional Court- Family Wellness Court*

The forum, at its first meeting, made it a priority to learn about and replicate the first joint jurisdiction tribal-state court in the nation, the Leech Lake-Cass County Wellness Court. Thanks to a technical assistance grant obtained from the Bureau of Justice Assistance of the Federal Department of Justice and the mentorship of Judge Korey Wahwassuck and Judge John Smith, who started the first joint jurisdictional court in the country, the forum was able to launch a joint jurisdictional court in California. Forum members, Judge Christine Williams, Chief Judge of the Shingle Springs Tribal Court, and Judge Suzanne N. Kingsbury, Presiding Judge of the Superior Court El Dorado County, created the Family Wellness Court.

(<http://www.wellnesscourts.org/files/Shingle%20Springs%20El%20Dorado%20Family%20Wellness%20Court%20Manual.pdf>)

#### ○ Local Tribal/State Partnerships

The forum fosters tribal court/state court partnerships, such as the Los Angeles Superior Court's Indian Child Welfare Act Roundtable and the Bay Area Collaborative of American Indian Resources— court-coordinated community response to Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) cases in urban areas.

5. Focus on Child Support: rule governing title IV-D case transfers to tribal court  
Developed a rule proposal, which provides a consistent procedure for the discretionary transfer of Title IV-D child support cases from the state superior courts to tribal courts where there is concurrent jurisdiction over the matter in controversy. The Judicial Council adopted the rule proposal, effective January 1, 2014.  
([www.courts.ca.gov/documents/ChildSupportProposalSPR13-17.pdf](http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/ChildSupportProposalSPR13-17.pdf))
6. Focus on Civil Money Judgments  
SB 406: Tribal Court Civil Money Judgment Act, which will simplify and clarify the process by which tribal court civil money judgments are recognized and enforced in California. For Judicial Council reports, see Invitation to Comment 2011: <http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/LEG11-03.pdf>; Invitation to Comment 2012: <http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/LEG11-04.pdf>; and Final Report: [www.courts.ca.gov/documents/jc-20121214-itemG.pdf](http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/jc-20121214-itemG.pdf). For chaptered bill, see [http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/13-14/bill/sen/sb\\_0401-0450/sb\\_406\\_bill\\_20140822\\_chaptered.pdf](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/13-14/bill/sen/sb_0401-0450/sb_406_bill_20140822_chaptered.pdf). In collaboration with Professor Katherine Florey at the U.C. Davis School of Law, the forum conducted a study on the impact of SB 406 that surveyed state court judges, tribal court judges, and tribal practitioners: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/tribalpractitioners>  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/statecourts>  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/tribalcourts>  
Because of this study and the recommendation by the California Law Review Commission, the California Legislature will be considering removing the sunset provision in SB 406.
7. Focus on Domestic Violence: recognition and enforcement of protective orders
  - *Statewide Needs Assessment*. This assessment informs the work of the forum as it implements solutions identified in the California reports relating to domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and teen dating violence in Native American communities ([www.courts.ca.gov/8117.htm](http://www.courts.ca.gov/8117.htm))
  - *California Courts Protective Order Registry*. 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, and avoid conflicting orders. ([www.courts.ca.gov/15574.htm](http://www.courts.ca.gov/15574.htm))
  - *Domestic Abuse Self-Help Tribal Project*. Assistance for litigants with obtaining restraining orders in tribal courts and state courts. In this project, a nonlawyer works under the supervision of a reviewing attorney to assist the litigant. The attorney can supervise from any location with technology, training, and review of the nonlawyer's work. ([www.courts.ca.gov/documents/FactSheetDASH.pdf](http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/FactSheetDASH.pdf))
  - *Efficient and Consistent Process*. Following effective local tribal and state court protocols, the Judicial Council adopted rule 5.386, which provides that state courts, when requested by a tribal court, must adopt a written procedure or local rule to permit the fax or electronic filing of any tribal court protective order that is

entitled to be registered under Family Code section 6404.

([www.courts.ca.gov/documents/SPR11-53.pdf](http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/SPR11-53.pdf))

- *Jurisdictional Tools for Law Enforcement and Judges*  
These educational tools facilitate collaboration among tribal police and county law enforcement. They were developed in collaboration with the following groups: California Department of Justice, California Peace Officers Standards and Training, California Indian Legal Services, California State Sheriff's Association, and the Tribal Police Chief's Association in California.  
(<http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/Tribal-Law-enforcement-tools.pdf>)
- *Information Bulletin on Recognition and Enforcement of Tribal Protection Orders*  
Consulted with the California Attorney General's Office regarding access to California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS) by tribal courts. This consultation, which included federal and other state justice partners, resulted in an Informational Bulletin issued by the California Department of Justice. This Information Bulletin clarifies that verification of a tribal protection order in any statewide database (for example, the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS)) is not a precondition to recognition and enforcement of these orders.  
([http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/tribal\\_bulletin-court-protection-orders.pdf](http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/tribal_bulletin-court-protection-orders.pdf))
- *Judicial Toolkit on Federal Indian Law*  
(<http://www.courts.ca.gov/27002.htm>)
- *Public Law 280 and Family Violence Curriculum for Judges*  
([www.courts.ca.gov/documents/Tribal-FamViolenceCurriculum.pdf](http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/Tribal-FamViolenceCurriculum.pdf))
- *Recognition and Enforcement of Tribal Protective Orders (Informational Brochure)*  
(<http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/Tribal-DVProtectiveOrders.pdf>)
- *Tribal Advocates Curriculum*  
([www.courts.ca.gov/documents/TribalAdvocacyCurriculum.pdf](http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/TribalAdvocacyCurriculum.pdf))
- *Tribal Communities and Domestic Violence Judicial Benchguide*  
(<http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/Tribal-DVBenchguide.pdf>)

## 8. Focus on Elder Abuse and Protection Proceedings

- *SB 940: California Conservatorship Jurisdiction Act*, which will address issues involving conservatorships for members of Indian tribes located in California. The forum initiated a joint working group with the California Judicial Council's Probate and Mental Health Advisory Committee to identify tribal/state issues relating to elder abuse and protective proceedings. This working group reviewed the California Law Revision Commission's (CLRC) recommendation that California adopt a modified version of the Uniform Adult Guardianship and Protective Proceedings Jurisdiction Act (UAGPPJA). Working in coordination with the Policy and Coordination Liaison Committee and the Office of Governmental Affairs, the forum submitted legislative language to CLRC to address issues involving conservatorships for members of Indian tribes located

California. As a result, the CLRC-sponsored legislation, the California Conservatorship Jurisdiction Act (SB 940), incorporates the forum's recommended revisions. [http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/13-14/bill/sen/sb\\_0901-0950/sb\\_940\\_bill\\_20140925\\_chaptered.pdf](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/13-14/bill/sen/sb_0901-0950/sb_940_bill_20140925_chaptered.pdf)

- *Published Tribal Elder Abuse Benchguide* and incorporated into California Judge's Guide: Abuse Later in Life. [http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/Elder\\_Abuse\\_Tribal\\_Communities.pdf](http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/Elder_Abuse_Tribal_Communities.pdf)

9. Focus on Juvenile Cases: rule proposals, legislative proposals, and legislative reports

- *Appeals*: developed a rule proposal to revise the rule governing sending the record in juvenile appeals to clarify that, if an Indian tribe has intervened in a case, a copy of the record of that case must be sent to that tribe. The Judicial Council adopted the rule proposal, effective January 1, 2013. ([www.courts.ca.gov/documents/SPR11-12.pdf](http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/SPR11-12.pdf))
- *Access to Records (AB 1618)*: developed a legislative proposal to amend Welfare and Institutions Code section 827 to share juvenile records between tribal and state courts. This proposal was adopted by the Judicial Council and introduced by Assemblymember Wesley Chesbro. Chaptered as Stats. 2014, Ch. 37, effective January 1, 2015. ([www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/13-14/bill/asm/ab\\_1601-1650/ab\\_1618\\_bill\\_20140625\\_chaptered.pdf](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/13-14/bill/asm/ab_1601-1650/ab_1618_bill_20140625_chaptered.pdf))
- *Comments in support of the proposed regulations*: Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Integration throughout Division 31, ORD No. 0614-05 issued by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). ([www.courts.ca.gov/documents/Tribal\\_JC\\_Comments\\_CDSS.pdf](http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/Tribal_JC_Comments_CDSS.pdf))
- *Comments in support of proposed rule*: Regulations for State Courts and Agencies in Indian Child Custody Proceedings (as published in the Federal Register on March 20, 2015 (Vol. 80 FR No. 54 14880) ([www.courts.ca.gov/documents/Comments\\_by\\_JC\\_to\\_BIA.pdf](http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/Comments_by_JC_to_BIA.pdf))
- *Indian Child Welfare Act rule change*: In response to the California Supreme Court decision in *In re Abigail A.* (2016) (Cal.5<sup>th</sup> 83), the forum recommend amending California Rules of Court, rule 5.482, by deleting subdivision (c) of that rule, which the Supreme Court held is invalid. The Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee and Probate and Mental Health Advisory Committee joined in this recommendation, and on July 29, 2016, the Judicial Council adopted this recommendation.
- *Psychotropic medication*: recommended a rule proposal to provide notice to tribes in juvenile cases where psychotropic medication is being considered. ([www.courts.ca.gov/documents/SPR13-18.pdf](http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/SPR13-18.pdf))
- *Transfers*: recommended a rule and form proposal to improve the procedure for the transfer of court proceedings involving an Indian child from the jurisdiction of the state court to a tribal court. These changes were in response to provisions of Senate Bill 1460 (Stats. 2014, ch. 772) (SB 1460) and the Court of Appeal

decision in *In re. M.M.* (2007) 154 Cal.App.4th 897. SB 1460 requires the state juvenile court to give the tribal court specific information and documentation when a case, governed by the *Indian Child Welfare Act*, is transferred. The *In re M.M.* decision implicates an objecting party's right to appeal a decision granting a transfer to a tribal court. ([www.courts.ca.gov/documents/SPR15-27.pdf](http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/SPR15-27.pdf))

- *Tribal Customary Adoption*: Provided expertise in the preparation of the statutorily mandated report on tribal customary adoption from the Judicial Council to the State Legislature. ([www.courts.ca.gov/documents/lr-Tribal-Customary-Adoption-Report\\_123112.pdf](http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/lr-Tribal-Customary-Adoption-Report_123112.pdf))

### 10. Focus on Parentage

In partnership with the California Department of Public Health-Vital Records, an All County Letter was issued in February 2016 clarifying the statewide policy that all tribal court orders relating to adjudications of facts of parentage would be accepted.