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FACT SHEET

September 2015

California Judicial Branch Facilities Program

California's courthouses are managed at the state level. The Judicial Council of California serves trial and appellate courts, and other judicial branch agencies statewide, by managing real estate, new court construction, renovations, operations and maintenance.

Structure

The Judicial Council, the policymaking body of the California courts, and its two advisory groups—the Court Facilities Advisory Committee and the Trial Court Facility Modification Advisory Committee—provide ongoing oversight and governance of the facilities program. Under the guidance of the council, two offices share responsibility for supporting the court facilities of California's Supreme Court, Courts of Appeal, and trial courts:

- **Capital Program** provides strategic planning for capital outlay and funding, and manages design and construction for new courthouse facilities and major renovations.
- **Real Estate and Facilities Management** manages real estate, business applications, environmental compliance and sustainability, and facility operations, maintenance, and modifications.

Scope

Consolidating management of California court facilities at the state level has created a program unique in its scope and scale:

Judicial branch facilities managed:	More than 20 million square feet in 500+ buildings throughout the state
Facility service requests to date:	Over 500,000
Facility modification projects:	More than 1,000 annually
Leases managed:	383
Construction projects:	21 completed. 25 under way with an estimated total cost of approximately \$3.0 billion.

Milestones

Since 2002, the Judicial Council's facilities program has evolved and expanded.

2002: Trial Court Facilities Act

This landmark legislation finalized the goal of trial court funding reform envisioned in the Lockyer-Isenberg Trial Court Funding Act of 1997 by authorizing the transfer of title and all management responsibility for court facilities from the counties to the state. The transfer process was completed in 2009, making the Judicial Council responsible for all court facilities statewide and enabling a single, comprehensive infrastructure program for court facilities as a final step in the funding and unification of California's trial courts.

2003: Court facilities master plans

The Judicial Council collaborated with superior courts and county governments in California's 58 counties to create facilities master plans for each court.

2005: First Judicial Branch Five-Year Infrastructure Plan

The Judicial Council produced the first plan documenting the urgent need for improvement of the state's courthouses. This five-year plan is updated annually and submitted to the California Department of Finance to provide a context for funding requests on specific projects. The first two court construction projects were funded.

2008: Senate Bill 1407—Court facilities financing

This legislation (Stats. 2008, ch. 311) launched an unprecedented courthouse rebuilding program in California by authorizing up to \$5 billion in lease-revenue bonds to finance new construction and renovation projects. Soon after enactment of SB 1407, the Judicial Council approved 41 projects in 34 counties to be funded by the revenues secured through this law.

2009: Transfers completed

By December 2009, all 532 court facility transfers had been completed.

2010: SB 1407 projects under way

By July 2010, the council had received funding authorization for 40 SB 1407 projects.

2011–2013: State fiscal crisis; projects canceled and delayed

The state's fiscal crisis had a significant impact on the courts and on court construction. More than \$1.5 billion of court user fees originally designated by the legislature to be set aside for court construction were borrowed, transferred to the General Fund, or redirected to court operations. In July 2011, the Chief Justice

formed the Court Facilities Working Group, later an Advisory Committee, to provide oversight of the facilities program. In December 2011, the Judicial Council canceled two SB 1407 projects and directed cost reductions on all others. In October 2012, the Judicial Council indefinitely delayed seven courthouse projects. Early in 2013, the Legislature directed that construction funds be used to pay for the new Governor George Deukmejian Courthouse in Long Beach, rather than the General Fund, as had been originally planned. As a result, the Judicial Council had to indefinitely delay four more projects, leaving a total of 11 previously identified and planned SB 1407 projects indefinitely delayed and desperately in need of funding.

Program progress to present

By the end of August 2015, the Judicial Council had completed 21 courthouse projects, several of which have won awards and national recognition. Another 25 projects are in development: site acquisition, design, and construction.

Meanwhile, another 100 critically needed construction projects require funding. These projects are needed to replace courthouses—most built 50 to 100 years ago—that are undersized for the needs of California’s growing population and cannot meet the seismic, safety, security, and accessibility requirements of modern courthouses.

Services and Programs

The council’s stewardship of court facilities includes the following:

Capital Program has responsibility for business and planning, design and construction, and risk management.

Business and Planning: Performs facility planning and manages related budgets for California’s trial and appellate courts. The office works with courts to identify facility needs and supports all Judicial Council efforts to evaluate and prioritize relative need for court replacements and renovations statewide. The team provides financial analysis for the capital-outlay program as well as facility operating budgets for the state’s courthouses. These teams create the *Judicial Branch Five-Year Infrastructure Plan*, which includes the branch’s Trial Court Capital-Outlay Plan. This plan identifies approximately 100 unfunded trial court facility projects statewide, in addition to the 11 projects indefinitely delayed previously by the council due to redirection of funds.

Design and Construction: Manages new construction and major renovation projects for California’s trial and appellate courts. The office developed the Judicial Council’s

Trial Court Facilities Standards to apply best practices in the design of trial court buildings and maximize value to the state in their construction and operation.

Risk Management: Provides professional risk management support to the judicial branch in the operation, management, and construction of court buildings. The office is responsible for the council's Injury and Illness Prevention Program, offers commercial insurance programs for the courts, and helps ensure that court buildings are safe for the public as well as court employees.

Real Estate and Facilities Management manages transactions and facilities of the branch's real estate portfolio; ensuring environmental compliance, developing sustainability initiatives; assessing and implementing security requirements; and administering business application technologies. The office also develops policy proposals for adoption by the Judicial Council.

Real Estate: Negotiates capital acquisitions and dispositions, operating lease transactions, revenue agreements, event and occupancy licenses; and administers rent payments and other contractual obligations. The unit also manages site selection, property valuation, and market and title due diligence for capital projects.

Facilities Management: Provides operational, maintenance, repair and replacement services for the entire facility portfolio. A 24/7 operations center receives routine and emergency service requests and dispatches work orders through a network of competitive contracts.

Environmental Compliance and Sustainability: Ensures compliance with regulatory law in such areas as equipment permitting, air quality, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and mandatory water usage restrictions. The unit also conducts Phase I and II environmental site assessments, remediates hazardous materials, and plans and administers energy conservation and utility management programs.

Portfolio Management Systems: Implements technology solutions supporting the courts: a computer-assisted facilities management application and ancillary systems.

Security Operations: Provides consultative services, training and contracting support to the courts; develops and implements emergency response and continuity of operations planning for the courts and other judicial branch agencies.

Contacts:

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Additional resources:

www.courts.ca.gov/programs-facilities.htm;

[Video: Immediate and Critical Needs: Courthouses Desperately in Need of Repair](#)