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Judicial Council to Hold Public Meetings In San Francisco on August 25, 26

San Francisco—The Judicial Council of California will usher in new procedures to increase public access to its work to improve statewide court administration when it holds two meetings on August 25 and 26, 2011, at the Judicial Council Conference Center, Hiram Johnson State Office Building, Third Floor, 455 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco. The agenda for both meetings is available on the California Courts Web site at <http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/age20110826.pdf>.

An educational session from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 25, will be the first council “issues” meeting in memory to be open to the public and courts. The session will feature a panel discussion by trial court leaders on how to effectively manage courts in times of declining resources.

A regular business meeting will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 3:20 p.m. on Friday, August 26, that will include a variety of reports, ranging from budget issues to the ranking of statewide court facility maintenance projects. This meeting will include an expanded public comment period, as a result of new procedures announced last week by the council’s Executive and Planning Committee. In addition, public comments relating to specific discussion agenda items will be welcome at the time items are presented to the council (<http://www.courts.ca.gov/15171.htm>).

Chaired by Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye, the council is the administrative policymaking body of California courts. A live audiocast of both meetings will be available at <http://www.courts.ca.gov/policyadmin-jc.htm>.

Reports on the Judicial Council’s business meeting agenda include the following:

Trial Court Audit Reports: The Advisory Committee on Financial Accountability and Efficiency for the Judicial Branch (A&E Committee) recommends that the council accept four audit reports on the financial practices and operations of the Superior Courts of Amador, Imperial, Inyo, and Sonoma Counties. This complies with the policy approved last year that specifies Judicial Council acceptance of audit reports as the last step to finalizing the reports, before they are posted to the California Courts public Web site to facilitate public access.

Judicial Branch Contracting Manual: The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) recommends that the Judicial Council adopt a Judicial Branch Contracting Manual that addresses the procurement of goods and services by judicial branch entities effective October 1, 2011, and that the AOC continue to collaborate with a working group and present any additional proposed amendments to the council for consideration in December. Public Contract Code (PCC) section 19206 requires the council to adopt a manual that sets forth policies and procedures that are consistent with the PCC and substantially similar to the provisions contained in the *State Administrative Manual* and the *State Contracting Manual*.

Court Facilities Priority List: The Trial Court Facility Modification Working Group and the AOC's Office of Court Construction and Management recommend a budget of \$30 million for statewide court facility modifications and planning in fiscal year 2011–2012. The budget request reflects the current legislatively authorized funds for court facility modifications. The council will also consider a prioritized list of facility modifications, which ranks hundreds of needed facility modifications according to their relative criticality and necessity.

Budget Proposals for Fiscal Year 2012–2013: The A&E Committee recommends that the Judicial Council approve proposed fiscal year 2012–2013 budget requests for the Supreme Court, Courts of Appeal, trial courts, and Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts. Development and transmittal of budget change proposals (BCPs) is the standard process for proposing funding adjustments. This year, the BCPs will be submitted to the state Department of Finance by September 12, 2011.

Criminal Justice Funds for Trial Courts: The Trial Court Budget Working Group recommends that the Judicial Council approve the allocation of \$17.689 million in operational funding and \$1.149 million in court security–related funding contained in the Budget Act of 2011 (Stats. 2011, ch. 33). This will address the increased workload of the trials court as a result of the passage of the Criminal Justice Realignment Act of 2011.

Special Funds for Trial Courts: The Judicial Council has statutory authority to allocate funding from statewide special funds for projects and programs that support the trial courts. This report contains a recommendation to allocate \$7.4 million to trial courts for the

replacement of personal computers and printers, and also authorizes courts to redirect these funds to offset the impact of budget reductions this fiscal year, as deemed necessary by each court.

Subordinate Judicial Officers: The AOC recommends that the Judicial Council authorize, in accordance with Government Code section 71622(a), two positions for subordinate judicial officers (SJOs) at the Superior Court of San Bernardino Court. These positions will improve access to justice in San Bernardino, which has a court workload for subordinate judicial officers that exceeds its current authorized SJOs plus a demonstrated need for more judicial officers. These positions will replace two existing hearing officer positions in the court; the court will pay for the cost out of its budget.

Kleps Awards for Trial Courts: Recipients of the Ralph N. Kleps Award for Improvement in the Administration of Justice will be profiled for the Judicial Council. The council approved the 2010–2011 award recipients at its April business meeting.

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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 ensures leadership and excellence in court administration.