



JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA

520 Capitol Mall, Suite 600 • Sacramento, California 95814-4717
Telephone 916-323-3121 • Fax 916-323-4347 • TDD 415-865-4272

TANI G. CANTIL-SAKAUYE
Chief Justice of California
Chair of the Judicial Council

MARTIN HOSHINO
Administrative Director

CORY T. JASPERSON
Director, Governmental Affairs

Overview of Judicial Branch Legislative Priorities for 2019

The Judicial Council has adopted the following legislative priorities for 2019. These priorities embody the Chief Justice's Access 3D framework for increased access to the courts.

1. Advocate for continued investment in the judicial branch to include a method for stable and reliable funding for courts to address annual cost increases in baseline operations and plan for the future; and for sufficient additional resources to improve physical access to the courts by keeping courts open, to expand access by increasing the ability of court users to conduct branch business online, and to restore programs and services that were reduced over the past few years.
2. Increase the number of judgeships and judicial officers in superior courts with the greatest need.
 - Seek funding for 10 of the 48¹ previously authorized but unfunded judgeships, to be allocated to courts with the greatest need based on the most recently approved Judicial Needs Assessment.
 - Seek funding for one additional justice in Division Two of the Fourth Appellate District (Inyo, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties).
 - Advocate for legislative ratification of the Judicial Council's authority to convert up to 16 vacant subordinate judicial officer (SJO) positions to judgeships in eligible courts, and sponsor legislation for legislative ratification of the council's authority to convert up to 10 additional vacant SJO positions to judgeships, in eligible courts, if the conversion will result in an additional judge sitting in a family or juvenile law assignment that was previously presided over by an SJO.

¹ Senate Bill 847 (Stats. 2018, Ch. 45) provided two judgeships to the Superior Court of California, County of San Riverside. Leaving 48 of the 50 judgeships statutorily authorized in 2007 that remain unfunded. SB 847 also added 1 new justice in Division Two of the Fourth Appellate District.

3. Seek legislative authorization, if needed, for the disposition of unused courthouses as authorized by the Judicial Council in 2019 in a fair market value transaction with the proceeds to be directed to the Immediate Critical Needs Account of the State Court Facilities Construction Fund established by Senate Bill 1407 (Perata; Stats, 2008, Ch. 311) or any other Judicial Council facilities fund authorized by the Legislature.
4. Continue to sponsor or support legislation to improve judicial branch operational efficiencies, including cost savings and cost recovery measures.
5. Advocate for legislation to implement the recommendations of the Commission on the Future of California's Court System (Futures Commission) as recommended by the Judicial Council and its advisory bodies.
 - Civil adjudication of minor traffic infractions: The Chief Justice appointed the Futures Traffic Working Group to collaborate with the Judicial Council's Traffic Advisory Committee, the Civil and Small Claims Advisory Committee, the Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness, and the Criminal Law Advisory Committee, to develop for Judicial Council consideration a proposal to implement and evaluate a civil model for adjudication of minor vehicle infractions.
 - Revision of civil case tiers and streamlined civil procedures: The Judicial Council's Civil and Small Claims Advisory Committee is currently assessing and making recommendations to the Judicial Council on advancing a legislative proposal for increasing the maximum jurisdictional dollar amounts for limited civil cases to \$50,000, creating a new intermediate civil case track with a maximum jurisdictional dollar amount of \$250,000, and streamlining methods for litigating and managing all types of civil cases.
 - Assistance for self-represented litigants: The Judicial Council's Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness is considering the structure, content, and resource requirements for an education program to aid the growing number of self-represented litigants (SRLs) in small claims and civil cases where SRLs are most common.
 - Expansion of technology in the courts: The Judicial Council's Information Technology Advisory Committee is considering the feasibility of and resource requirements for developing and implementing a pilot project to allow remote appearances by parties, counsel, and witnesses for most noncriminal court proceedings. Further, the committee is exploring available technologies and making recommendations to the Judicial Council on the potential for a pilot project using voice-to-text language interpretation services at court filing and service counters and in self-help centers, as well as exploring the potential for a pilot project using intelligent chat technology to provide information and self-help services.
6. Advocate for legislation to implement Pretrial Detention Reform.