

Superior Court of California
COUNTY OF ALAMEDA



Morris Jacobson, Presiding Judge

Chad Finke, Executive Officer

René C. Davidson Courthouse

1225 Fallon Street

Oakland, California 94612

 @AlamedaSuperior

www.alameda.courts.ca.gov

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, October 21, 2016

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA: With the exception of the Wiley W. Manuel courthouse located in Oakland, all courthouses in Alameda County will be closed from Friday, December 23, 2016, through Monday, January 2, 2017.

*** PUBLIC NOTICE ***

PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 68106

NOTICE OF TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF COURT LOCATIONS

For several years during the Recession, California's trial courts were subject to severe budget reductions. But while the State's economy has improved in recent years, only a small percentage of that funding has been restored. Further, certain courts—including the Superior Court of Alameda County (Court)—have been deemed to be "donor" courts, which means that large portions of the Court's ongoing funding and any "new" monies restored to the courts through the budget process are actually diverted to other courts that have been deemed to be more under-resourced.

In light of these factors, the Court began Fiscal Year 2016-2017 with a budget deficit of over \$5,000,000. The Court has engaged in ongoing efforts to balance the budget by reducing costs. The many cost-saving solutions implemented by the Court include—but are not limited to—the following:

- Eliminating a number of vacant staff positions;
- Instituting a "hard freeze" of no less than 12 months on filling other positions;
- Instituting a "soft freeze" on all other positions, meaning that any vacant position will be kept vacant for no fewer than 90 days after it opens up;
- Reducing the use of outside contractors and consultants;
- Eliminating the use of overtime or comp time for staff except in certain very narrow instances;
- Utilizing the entire 1% fund balance reserve that the Court is permitted to carry from year to year, thus eliminating any funding "safety net" for this year;
- Reducing expenditures on office supplies;

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- Reducing printing costs by switching to a postcard format for jury summonses; and
- Deferring plans to move a juvenile courtroom from Oakland to San Leandro.

In addition, the Court has identified ways to save money on staff salaries—the Court’s largest item of expense—without having to resort to staff layoffs. Specifically, the Court is offering a Voluntary Time-Off Program (VTOP) for staff from December 23, 2016, through January 3, 2017. Staff who participate will take five business days off without pay, resulting in savings in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. While the Court regrets the impact these closures will have on the public’s access to justice, they represent the Court’s most viable option for addressing the dire economic circumstances imposed upon it and all other similarly situated “donor courts.”

As required under Government Code section 68106, the details of the upcoming courthouse closures are as follows:

- With the exception of the Wiley W. Manuel courthouse (WWM) located at 661 Washington Street in Oakland, all courthouses in Alameda County will be closed to the public from Friday, December 23, 2016, through Monday, January 2, 2017, reopening on Tuesday, January 3, 2017.
- The courthouses that are closed during this period will offer no Court services to the public, including but not limited to drop box filing services. The sole exception to this is that certain cases will be heard at the Juvenile Justice Center (JJC) in San Leandro, and parties to those cases will be able to access the courthouse. However, the JJC will be closed to the public generally.
- During this period, limited staff will be on hand at WWM from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Friday, December 23, 2016, and from Tuesday, December 27, 2016, through Friday, December 30, 2016, to accept filings in all case types.
- As required under rule 2.210 of the California Rules of Court, drop boxes will be available at WWM during this period for filings made after the clerk’s office closes at 2:30 p.m. and before 4:00 p.m.
- The Court’s Self-Help Center and Family Law Facilitator’s Office will be closed during this period.
- A limited number of courtrooms will be staffed at WWM during this period for the purposes of hearing time-sensitive criminal matters, reviewing restraining order applications, and other requests for emergency relief.
- The Court’s Fax Filing service will continue to operate during the closure period. More information about Fax Filing can be found on the Court’s web site at <http://www.alameda.courts.ca.gov/Pages.aspx/Fax-Filing>.
- Because the Court anticipates having a significantly reduced staffing level during the closure period, the time in which the Court is able to respond to phone calls, voicemail messages, and emails will be increased, and delays are likely.

- The Court has established a dedicated web page for up-to-date information about the specifics of the upcoming closures, including which judicial officers will be presiding in which departments during that time. The web page is located at <http://www.alameda.courts.ca.gov/Pages.aspx/Notice-of-Temporary-Closure>.
- The public can also follow the Court on Twitter [@AlamedaSuperior](https://twitter.com/AlamedaSuperior) for additional up-to-date information regarding the closures.
- The public may provide public comment on these planned closures in writing, either (a) by mail, directed to Executive Office, 1225 Fallon Street, Room 209, Oakland, CA 94612, ATTN: PRO; or (b) via email at pcomments@alameda.courts.ca.gov.