



Courthouse Naming Policy

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ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
OF THE COURTS

JUDICIAL AND COURT OPERATIONS
SERVICES DIVISION

JUDICIAL BRANCH CAPITAL PROGRAM OFFICE

I. Purpose of the Policy

The Judicial Council of California (Judicial Council) is responsible for California's courthouses under the Trial Court Facilities Act of 2002 and related legislation, which includes responsibility for construction of new courthouses and renovation of existing courthouses. It is the policy of the Judicial Council, acting through the Court Facilities Advisory Committee, Subcommittee on Courthouse Names, through its directives to the staff of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), to name courthouses based on standards. This will provide consistency in identifying courthouses in California.

The naming of courthouses will follow the standards set forth in this policy in naming new courthouses, and in naming existing courthouses—including court facilities that are renovated.

II. Application of Courthouse Naming Standards

The Judicial Council's naming standards will be applied to newly constructed courthouses and renovated courthouses which the Judicial Council has financed—in whole or in part—and to existing courthouses, where the judicial branch is the facility owner or majority tenant.

III. Names for Trial and Appellate Courthouses

A. Definitions

Court facility refers to any building that the local court occupies to provide its main services, its branch services, or other services and operations. As used in this policy, the word *courthouse* is considered interchangeable with this term.

Court Facilities Advisory Committee (CFAC) is an advisory body to the Judicial Council on all facilities-related matters. The members of this advisory committee are appointed by the Chief Justice of California. The CFAC, formerly the Court Facilities Working Group, is charged with providing ongoing oversight of the Judicial Branch program that manages new construction and renovations for the superior courts and Courts of Appeal throughout the state. It oversees the work of the AOC in its management of court facilities statewide and in its effort to implement the judicial branch's capital improvement program.

Subcommittee on Courthouse Names (the subcommittee) is the subcommittee of the CFAC charged with responsibility to review and consider options in naming specific new and existing courthouses. The chair of the Subcommittee on Courthouse Names is appointed by the chair of the CFAC. The members of the subcommittee are appointed by the subcommittee chair. Its membership, including the appointed chair, will comprise the following: five superior court judges, an appellate court justice, two members of the State Bar of California, and one professional from the design, construction or real estate industry. The subcommittee is responsible for recommending to the CFAC names for courthouses and in doing so may consider comments from members of CFAC, or refer requests for naming to the Judicial Council where appropriate. The subcommittee's operating protocols, including the term of each member, will be established by the CFAC.

Case type can include but is not limited to the following caseload identifiers: family law, juvenile, criminal, civil, traffic, probate, small claims, mental health, and drug.

Location of a court facility refers to the building’s physical location in either an incorporated (i.e., town or city) or unincorporated (i.e., county or region) geographical area.

B. Naming Standards for Trial and Appellate Courthouses

1. Courthouses will be named based on one of the following two categories:
 - a. Location and case type, which is the category most commonly used; or
 - b. Deceased person, which is a rarely used category.

A courthouse name will not include the name of any business entity, institution, foundation, or other organization, whether for profit or not for profit.

2. An explanation of each category follows. For all name categories, the courthouse name must include “Superior Court” or “Court of Appeal” *and* “California.” In each case, the building name may include the term “Courthouse,” “Justice Center,” or “Hall of Justice.”

- a. Naming Preference 1: Location and Case Type (Most Commonly Used). It is the preference of the Judicial Council to name courthouses after their location and, if applicable, case type. This convention supports the Judicial Council’s goal of enhancing access to justice because naming courthouses after the location and case type provides users with key information about where the courthouse is located and the type of proceedings conducted within the courthouse.

Examples of courthouse names under the preferred naming standard for trial courts are as follows:

Format Examples	Courthouses	Justice Centers	Halls of Justice
Example 1	El Centro Family Courthouse Superior Court of California County of Imperial	Selma Regional Justice Center Superior Court of California County of Fresno	East County Hall of Justice Superior Court of California County of Alameda
Example 2	El Centro Family Courthouse Superior Court of California Imperial County	Selma Regional Justice Center Superior Court of California Fresno County	East County Hall of Justice Superior Court of California Alameda County

Examples of courthouse names under the preferred naming standard for appellate courts are as follows:

Format Examples	Appellate Courthouse Names
Example 1	State of California Court of Appeal First Appellate District Courthouse
Example 2	California Court of Appeal Fourth Appellate District Division Three
Example 3	State of California Court of Appeal Fifth Appellate District

- b. Naming Preference 2: Deceased Person (Rarely Used). Naming a courthouse after a deceased person must be carefully considered to protect the integrity and independence of the judicial branch. A courthouse may be named after a deceased person based on *all* the following criteria:
- i. The person made recognizable, significant contributions to the state or national justice system.
 - ii. The person shall have been deceased a minimum of 10 years. The subcommittee deems that 10 years is a reasonable period of time to establish the individual’s character within which unknown facts would come to light. This 10-year period is consistent with the 10-year practice period requirement for consideration for judgeship in the State of California.¹
 - iii. The person, or the estate of the person, or any otherwise related entity deemed to pose a potential conflict of interest by the subcommittee, does not have any case pending before any court, and no such case is reasonably likely to come before any court, in future litigation.
 - iv. The naming does not present a potential conflict of interest as may be viewed by the public, government entities, or private businesses.
 - v. Consistency with the California Code of Judicial Ethics.

Examples of deceased persons who meet these criteria may include a former president of a state or local bar association, a trial court judge, an appellate court justice, or a state or federal legislator; or may include a former Governor of California or a former Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court, or a member of the United States Supreme Court. Courthouses may not be named for living persons.

¹ Cal. Const., art. VI, § 15. A person is ineligible to be a judge of a court of record unless for 10 years immediately preceding selection, the person has been a member of the State Bar or served as a judge of a court of record in this State.

C. Process for Naming Courthouses

Courthouses will be named by the following process:

1. Requests for courthouse naming will be submitted to the chair of the subcommittee by the presiding judge or assistant presiding judge, or the court executive officer or the administrative presiding justice, or the clerk of the Court of Appeal, or their designee, of the subject court. Concurrently, the chair of the subcommittee will in turn provide the request(s) to the local court or committee as to process and minimum requirements set forth in this policy.
2. The subcommittee will evaluate each proposed name under the standards set forth in this policy.
3. Upon consideration of any request, the chair of the subcommittee will propose requests for names under section 2(a) preference 1, and all requests under section 2 (b) preference 2, for consideration by the CFAC.
4. Upon consideration, the CFAC shall present a recommendation on the name of a courthouse to the Judicial Council, which presentation will include the subcommittee's recommendation.
5. Where appropriate, the chair of the subcommittee will be delegated by the chair of CFAC to approve standard courthouse names under section 2(a) of this policy, on behalf of the CFAC of the Judicial Council. This approval shall be subject to ratification by the Judicial Council. Requests for those names must have been duly submitted under C.1 of this policy.

D. Designation of Courthouse Names in Building Signage and Plaques

Signage and plaques on buildings shall designate the duly approved names under this policy subject to the following requirements:

1. Standards: All signage and plaques must comply with the requirements of the *California Trial Court Facilities Standards*² and its addenda as pertain to signage, use of seals by courts³ and plaques.
2. Application of courthouse names: Subject to the foregoing, each state courthouse shall have reflected in its exterior signage designated under this policy: "Superior Court of California, County of [County name]" and the Great Seal of the State of California.

² Judicial Council's *California Trial Court Facilities Standards*, 2006.

³ Gov. Code §§ 68074, 68076 *et seq.*

Judicial Branch Capital Program
Trial Court Capital Projects - Courthouse Names of Projects Completed and in Construction

April 25, 2014

a	b	c	d
County	Trial Court Capital-Outlay Plan Project Name	Courthouse Names	Project Status
1 Butte	New North Butte County Courthouse	Superior Court of California, North Butte County Courthouse	Construction
2 Calaveras	New San Andreas Courthouse	Superior Court of California, Calaveras County Courthouse	Completed
3 Fresno	New Juvenile Delinquency Court	Fresno County Juvenile Justice Delinquency Court	Completed
4 Fresno	Renovate B.F. Sisk Courthouse	B. F. Sisk Courthouse, County of Fresno	Completed
5 Kings	New Hanford Courthouse	Superior Court of California, County of Kings	Construction
6 Lassen	New Susanville Courthouse	Hall of Justice, Superior Court of California, County of Lassen	Completed
7 Madera	New Madera Courthouse	Superior Court of California, County of Madera	Construction
8 Merced	New Downtown Merced Courthouse	Superior Court of California, County of Merced	Completed
9 Mono	New Mammoth Lakes Courthouse	Mammoth Lakes Courthouse	Completed
10 Plumas/Sierra ³	New Portola/Loyalton Courthouse	Plumas/Sierra Regional Courthouse	Completed
11 Riverside	New Riverside Mid-County Region Courthouse	Banning Justice Center, Superior Court of California, Riverside County	Construction
12 San Benito	New Hollister Courthouse	Superior Court of California San Benito County	Completed
13 San Bernardino	New San Bernardino Courthouse	San Bernardino Justice Center	Completed
14 San Diego ³	New Central San Diego Courthouse	San Diego Central Courthouse	Construction
15 San Joaquin ¹	Renovation and Addition to Juvenile Justice Center	County of San Joaquin Juvenile Justice Center	Construction
16 San Joaquin	New Stockton Courthouse	Superior Court of San Joaquin County Stockton Courthouse	Construction
17 Santa Clara ³	New Santa Clara Family Justice Center	Santa Clara Family Justice Center	Construction
18 Solano ¹	Renovation to Fairfield Old Solano Courthouse	Solano County Courthouse	Construction
19 Sutter ²	New Yuba City Courthouse	Superior Court of California, County of Sutter	Construction
20 Tulare	New Porterville Courthouse	Superior Court of California, County of Tulare South County Justice Center	Completed
21 Yolo	New Woodland Courthouse	Yolo Superior Court, State of California	Construction

Footnotes:

1. The current name on the building is likely to remain the same after the project is completed.
2. Standard name is designated pending formal designation by the court.
3. In some cases, the name of the courthouses and the exterior building signage may differ.