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FACT SHEET

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Family Court Services (FCS)

In accordance with California Family Code 1850, the Judicial Council's Family Court Services (FCS) staff at the Center for Families, Children & the Courts (CFCC) assists the trial courts' approximately 450 Family Court Services directors, managers, supervisors and professional staff who provide the following services:

1. Program management training and consultation; site visits and program review; information pertaining to proposed policy changes affecting family court services, mediation, child custody, and related topics; current rules and forms for:
 - Child custody mediation and child custody recommending counseling.
 - Specialized domestic violence and child safety procedures.
 - Child custody evaluation and investigations.
 - Parent orientation programs.
 - Emerging investigations and safety assessments.
 - Other related services assigned by the local court (e.g., guardianship mediation and investigations, minor marriage assessments, interviewing children, and other services).
2. Statewide statistical reporting on child custody dispute resolution and custody dispositions.
3. A program of small grants to learn about, develop, and test new dispute resolution techniques; obtain technical assistance or consultation; share ideas through court exchange visits.
4. Provide quantitative information on the effectiveness of current practices for the purpose of shaping future procedures.
5. Administer a program to deliver mandated training of court personnel. The FCS program staff collaborate with trial courts staff to plan and provide mandated training and continuing education as required by the

Family Code and California Rules of Court in the following subject matter areas:

- Child custody mediation and child custody recommending counseling.
- Child custody evaluation.
- Domestic violence.
- Family law legal updates.
- Practice and research.
- Program and personnel administration.

Major Training Events

The FCS team produces and coordinates the following in-person trainings:

- Two-day FCS Statewide Educational Institute, held in conjunction with the Judicial Family Law Institute during Child and Family Focused Education (CaFFE).
- One-day regional trainings conducted throughout the state, using Judicial Council offices and local trial court facilities.
- One-day Family Court Services Directors, Managers, Supervisors, and Court Administrators (FCS Directors) Training Symposium.
- One-day New FCS Directors Training Symposium.
- Three-day Institute for New Court Professionals (NCP), providing mandated initial training for new FCS staff.

The frequency of in-person programs is dependent upon trial court program needs and budgetary factors, taking into consideration the most cost effective methods. Currently, most programs take place every other year, with the statewide program one year and regional programs in the alternate year. FCS Directors training generally takes place twice per year while NCP and New FCS Directors training programs are dependent upon staffing changes.

Distance Education Programs

The FCS program staff supplements in-person trainings with the following FCS Distance Education modalities to make content readily accessible year-round and reduce expenses both to the local courts and the Judicial Council:

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- Webinar courses (broadcast to trial courts statewide).
- Online recorded webinar trainings.
- Online video courses (DVD format available on demand).
- Calcourts Moodle website resources.
- Monthly FCS Directors training conference calls or webinars.

Contact: FCS@jud.ca.gov