



Judicial Council of California · Administrative Office of the Courts

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REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

For business meeting on: August 23, 2013

Title	Agenda Item Type
Judicial Branch Administration: Adjusted Travel Reimbursement Rates for Lodging and Meals	Action Required
Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected	Effective Date
None	August 23, 2013
Recommended by	Date of Report
Administrative Office of the Courts Zlatko Theodorovic, Director, AOC Fiscal Services Office	August 16, 2013
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Executive Summary

The Administrative Office of the Courts recommends that the Judicial Council approve adjustments to travel reimbursement rates for lodging and meal expenses incurred by judicial branch constitutional officers and employees. The council is encouraged to act on this recommendation to align certain lodging and meal reimbursement rates with those implemented by the executive branch in July 2013.

Recommendation

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) recommends that the Judicial Council, effective August 23, 2013, approve the following adjustments to previously established travel reimbursement rates for judicial branch constitutional officers and employees:

1. Lodging (actual lodging cost per night, not to exceed the following rates supported by a zero balance receipt, plus applicable tax if not waived by the lodging establishment):

County	Current Rate	Proposed Rate
San Francisco	\$140	\$150
Monterey, San Diego	\$110	\$125
Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura	\$110	\$120

All other counties will remain at existing maximum reimbursement rates (\$140 for Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties; \$110 for all others).

2. Meals (actual cost of meal incurred, not to exceed):

Meal	Current Rate	Proposed Rate
Breakfast	\$6	\$8
Lunch	\$10	\$12
Dinner	\$18	\$20

Previous Council Action

The Judicial Council has previously adopted rule 10.106 (Judicial branch travel expense reimbursement policy) of the California Rules of Court, which delegates to the Administrative Director of the Courts the authority to make technical changes and clarifications to branch travel reimbursement policies. Existing travel reimbursement rates were previously communicated by memoranda¹ distributed by the AOC Fiscal Services Office and in the *Trial Court Financial Policies and Procedures Manual*.²

Rationale for Recommendation

In July 2013, the California Department of Human Resources announced increased lodging and meal reimbursement rates for most executive branch employees. Given this change for other state employees, the council is encouraged to approve adjustments for California bench officers and court employees to minimize any potential disparities in reimbursements rates (example: most hotel chains have already adjusted to the new rates).

In addition, this issue is being brought to the council for approval in lieu of action by the Administrative Director of the Courts given the heightened focus on branch fiscal resources.

Comments, Alternatives Considered, and Policy Implications

No comments were solicited for these items and no alternatives were considered. If these adjustments are not approved, judicial officers and court employees would not be eligible for reimbursement for any difference between the current judicial branch reimbursement rates and the higher rates now in effect for executive branch employees.

Implementation Requirements, Costs, and Operational Impacts

The change in lodging rates for the affected counties is expected to provide additional lodging options and negotiating leverage for judicial and court staff attending training and statewide conferences, and judges sitting on assignment, among others.

¹ Finance Memo AE 2001-006, Travel Reimbursement Provisions/Rates

² FIN 8.03, Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy for Trial Court Judges & Employees