



NEWS RELEASE

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Judicial Council Approves New Process for Emergency Funding Requests

Other Actions Taken on Court Audits, Special Funds, Technology Award, and New Meeting Rules

San Francisco—The Judicial Council today approved a new streamlined process and revised criteria for the review and approval of trial court requests to the council for urgent needs funding.

“In light of the unprecedented cuts in the judicial branch budget, the council is committed to assisting trial courts with the greatest financial needs,” stated Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye. “With the limited amount of funding available for urgent needs, it is critical that the council have a clear process for evaluating requests from the courts.”

At today’s meeting, the council decided that courts with a negative fund balance may apply for urgent needs funding by submitting an application at least 25 business days before the Judicial Council’s regular business meetings.

The council also approved the specific information that courts must provide that the council will use to evaluate requests for urgent needs fund, as well as terms and conditions that would apply to such requests. Finally, the council directed AOC staff to identify other monies in the trial court special funds that can be used to provide supplemental funding to courts and report back to the council at its February 2012 meeting.

In other actions today, the Judicial Council:

Trial Court Audit Reports: Accepted the final audit report for the Superior Court of San Joaquin County. Presiding Judge Robin Appel discussed how the court is addressing the issues identified in the audit report and the impact that its lack of financial resources has on the court’s

operations. Three other audit reports for the Superior Courts of Alpine, El Dorado, and Napa Counties were accepted as part of the council's consent agenda. The Advisory Committee on Financial Accountability and Efficiency for the Judicial Branch recommended that the council accepted the four audit reports. After the Judicial Council accepts the audit reports, they are placed on the California Courts Web site to facilitate public access and transparency: www.courts.ca.gov/12050.htm .

Parliamentary Procedures: Approved new parliamentary procedures for the Judicial Council that will provide guidance on the conduct of meetings and voting requirements on council matters. The procedures are effective immediately and will also be sent out for public comment.

Distinguished Service Awards: Approved the recipients of five Distinguished Service Awards for significant contributions to the administration of justice. For the winners, see the news releases at www.courts.ca.gov/7408.htm .

Special Funds Allocations: Approved the rollover of \$5.759 million in unused allocations from prior years to fiscal year 2011–2012 from the Trial Court Improvement Fund and the Trial Court Trust Fund for the Domestic Violence Order After Hearing project, Reserve for Workers' Compensation Tail Claims, and the Phoenix Financial and Human Resources Services program. The recommendations to the council were made by the Trial Court Budget Working Group.

National Technology Award: The California Courts Protective Order Registry (CCPOR) was selected as one of two finalists by the National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) for its 2011 NASCIO award for Data, Information and Knowledge Management. The CCPOR creates a statewide repository for restraining and protective orders, containing both data and scanned images of orders that can be easily accessed by judges, court staff, and law enforcement officers. It helps protect both victims of domestic violence as well as law enforcement personnel. Out of hundreds of nominations from across the nation, the NASCIO selects only one winner and two finalists in each category.

Campaign for Justice Month: Heard a presentation on Campaign for Justice Month, which is being celebrated this month, and National Pro Bono Week, being celebrated this week. On behalf of the Judicial Council, the Executive and Planning Committee previously took action to adopt a resolution recognizing both Campaign for Justice Month and National Pro Bono Week to continue the council's efforts to support increased attorney representation and to show appreciation for the valuable pro bono contributions made by lawyers throughout the state.

Reduction in Clerks' Office Hours: Received a report that provided implementation of the notice requirements contained in Government Code section 68106, which was added by the

2010 Judiciary Budget Trailer Bill, Senate Bill 857 and directs (1) trial courts to notify the public and the Judicial Council before closing courtrooms or clerks' offices or reducing clerks' office hours on days that are not judicial holidays, and (2) the council to post on its website and relay to the Legislature all such court notices. Since the last report provided to the council, eleven additional courts—San Mateo, Mendocino, Merced, Humboldt, Nevada, Lake, Placer, Ventura, Kings, Fresno, and Yolo—have given such notice. Since the effective date of section 68106, October 19, 2010, a total of 19 courts have given notice.

Chaired by Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye, the council is the administrative policymaking body of the California courts. The meetings were audiocast live on the California Courts Web site www.courts.ca.gov/policyadmin-jc.htm. The meeting agenda and reports are available at www.courts.ca.gov/15708.htm.

The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and ensures leadership and excellence in court administration.

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