



Judicial Council of California

455 Golden Gate Avenue · San Francisco, California 94102-3688
www.courts.ca.gov

REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Item No.: 25-047

For business meeting on February 21, 2025

Title

Trial Courts: Public Notice of Court Closures
or Reduced Clerks' Office Hours

Report Type

Information

Submitted by

Judicial Council staff
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Leadership Support Services

Date of Report

January 23, 2025

Contact

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Michelle.Brooke@jud.ca.gov

Executive Summary

This report lists six notices of court closures or reduced court services. The notices are for the Superior Courts of Fresno, Riverside (two notices), San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties. Government Code section 68106 directs (1) trial courts to notify the public and the Judicial Council before closing courtrooms or clerks' offices or reducing clerks' regular office hours and (2) the council to post all such notices on its website and relay them to the Legislature.

Relevant Previous Reporting or Action

Since the enactment of section 68106, 70 notices (including those listed in this report) have been issued by courts under its requirements, and the Judicial Council posts such notices on the California Courts website at www.courts.ca.gov/12973.htm as they are received.

Analysis/Rationale

Mandate in Government Code section 68106

In providing fee increases and fund transfers for the courts in the judiciary budget trailer bill in 2010 (Sen. Bill 857; Stats. 2010, ch. 720), the Legislature expressly declared its intention that trial courts remain open to the public on all days that are not judicial holidays and that access to court services for civil litigants be preserved to the extent practicable. Statements in Government Code section 68106 (see Link A) affirmed this intent, and the 2012 amendment of the statute

strengthened it. Section 68106 imposes the following requirements on trial courts and the Judicial Council:

- Trial courts must provide written notice to the public at least 60 days before closing any courtroom or clerk's office or reducing clerks' office hours¹ and provide this notice to the Judicial Council.²
- The notice must describe the scope of the closure or reduction in hours, state the financial constraints or other reasons that make the closure or reduction necessary, and invite public comment.³
- If a court changes its plan during the 60-day notice period, it must immediately notify the public by posting and distributing a revised notice, and the court must also notify the council.⁴
- The Judicial Council must post the notice on the California Courts website within 15 days of its receipt, and forward a copy to the chairs and vice-chairs of both the Senate and Assembly Committees on Judiciary, the chair of the Assembly Committee on Budget, and the chair of the Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review.⁵

New notices received from courts

The Judicial Council has received six new notices (see Attachments A through F) since July 2024.

Superior Court of Fresno County. The court provided notice that it will temporarily close all locations except the main courthouse and Juvenile Justice Court on February 13 and 14, 2025, and consolidate cases for the closed locations to be heard in the main courthouse and Juvenile Justice Court on those two days. Services from the Self-Help Center and Archives Department will be unavailable during this time. Additionally, court filings must be filed electronically or submitted via drop box for the case types below. Drop boxes will be at the following locations:

- Traffic: Main courthouse, 1100 Van Ness Avenue, Fresno, main entrance; and
- Civil, family, and probate: B. F. Sisk Courthouse, 1130 O Street, Fresno, main entrance.

This closure is due to statewide budget constraints and the light caseload during the week of February 10–17, attributable to the presidential holiday closures on February 12 and 17.

¹ Gov. Code, § 68106(b)(1).

² *Ibid.*

³ *Id.*, § 68106(b)(1) & (2)(A).

⁴ *Id.*, § 68106(b)(2)(A).

⁵ *Id.*, § 68106(b)(3).

Superior Court of Riverside County. The court provided notice that, effective December 23, 2024, it has temporarily closed the Temecula Courthouse until further notice owing to significant reductions in state funding for the superior courts. Services at the Temecula Courthouse will be relocated to the Southwest Justice Center located at 30755-D Auld Road in Murrieta.

Additionally, beginning January 2025, the court will furlough staff and reduce services at each location, one day per month. The scheduled furlough and reduced service days are listed below.

- January 17, 2025
- February 14, 2025
- March 28, 2025
- April 18, 2025
- May 23, 2025
- June 20, 2025

Superior Court of San Luis Obispo County. The court provided notice that, effective December 9, 2024, it has reduced its phone hours, and, effective February 3, 2025, it will reduce its clerk window hours until further notice owing to budget and resource constraints.

Phone hours have been reduced from 9 a.m.–noon and 1–3 p.m., Monday through Friday, to:

- 8:30 a.m.–noon, Monday through Friday, at the San Luis Obispo branch;
- 8:30 a.m.–noon, Monday through Friday, at the Paso Robles branch; and
- 9 a.m.–noon and 1–3 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 9 a.m.–noon on Friday, at the Grover Beach branch.

Court windows will be reduced from 8:30 a.m.–noon, Monday through Friday, to:

- 8:30 a.m.–noon, Monday through Thursday, at the San Luis Obispo branch;
- 8:30 a.m.–noon, Wednesday and Friday, at the Paso Robles branch; and
- 8:30 a.m.–noon, Monday through Thursday, at the Grover Beach branch.

Superior Court of Santa Barbara County. The court provided notice that, effective January 8, 2025, it will continue the closure of the juvenile courtroom located at Department 14, 1108 Santa Barbara Street, Santa Barbara. The original closure was implemented in March 2020 when the court consolidated all juvenile matters into the Santa Maria Juvenile Court facility owing to the pandemic. The closure and consolidation have proven to be successful and cost- and resource-effective, so the court will indefinitely continue the closure in light of recent challenges associated with labor shortages and budget restrictions.

Superior Court of Ventura County. The court provided notice that most of its courtrooms and all clerks' offices will be closed on November 27 and December 23, 24, 26, and 27, 2024, to mitigate the reduction in trial court funding for fiscal year 2024–25. A limited number of courtrooms will remain open for criminal custody calendars, preliminary hearings, criminal last-day trials, juvenile detentions, unlawful detainer cases, mental health cases, and all types of

temporary restraining orders. Documents may be submitted through U.S. mail or the drop boxes currently provided outside the Hall of Justice and the juvenile courthouse.

The notices detailed above have been added to the “Reduced Court Services” webpage (www.courts.ca.gov/12973.htm) of the California Courts website. The webpage contains a summary of section 68106 and all notices received from trial courts about closures of courtrooms or clerks’ offices, or reductions in clerks’ office hours. Judicial Council staff have also forwarded the notices from these courts to the designated legislative leaders.

Fiscal Impact and Policy Implications

Posting the notice to the California Courts website fulfills a legislative mandate and has no fiscal impact or policy implications.

Attachments and Links

1. Attachment A: Notice from the Superior Court of Fresno County, October 1, 2024
2. Attachment B: Notice from the Superior Court of Riverside County, September 18, 2024
3. Attachment C: Notice from the Superior Court of Riverside County, November 15, 2024
4. Attachment D: Notice from the Superior Court of San Luis Obispo County, November 21, 2024
5. Attachment E: Notice from the Superior Court of Santa Barbara County, October 28, 2024
6. Attachment F: Notice from the Superior Court of Ventura County, September 25, 2024
7. Link A: Gov. Code, § 68106,
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV§ionNum=68106



CHAMBERS OF
HOURY A. SANDERSON
Presiding Judge

Attachment A

1100 VAN NESS AVENUE
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93724-0002
(559) 457-6348
FAX (559) 457-1707
E-mail: hsanderson@fresno.courts.ca.gov

October 1, 2024

Ms. Shelley Curran, Administrative Director
Judicial Council of California
455 Golden Gate Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: Temporary Consolidation of Services
Notification Pursuant to Government Code section 68106

Dear Ms. Curran:

Due to statewide budgetary constraints and a diminished caseload during the holidays, the Fresno Superior Court intends to temporarily close the "M" Street and B.F. Sisk Courthouses. The Clerk's Offices at the Main and Juvenile Justice Courthouses will be open on the following dates: February 13 and 14, 2025. Court filings for Traffic, Civil, Family Law and Probate, must be submitted via e-filing or drop box. This temporary closure will also include the Self-Help Center and Archives Department.

These changes are a result of the Court's strategic planning for operational efficiency during the slower holiday season. The temporary relocation of departments from the B.F. Sisk and "M" Street Courthouses to the Main and Juvenile Justice Courthouses on these dates will provide the Court with the opportunity to better utilize staff resources.

The Court will have employees available to assist the public for Criminal and Dependency matters. Our Juvenile Justice Courthouse will also be open to serve court users for Juvenile justice matters. Court employees assisting the public during this time will also be able to perform all normal Clerk's Office duties, with no change in the scope of services provided.

Pursuant to Government Code section 68106, this Court has solicited for public comment in writing regarding the Court's plan for closing the Clerk's Office and reducing operations as set forth above. A copy of the public notice is attached.

Thank you again for your continued courtesy and cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "H. A. Sanderson", is written over a horizontal line.

Houry A. Sanderson
Presiding Judge

HAS:jjk

Attachment



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF FRESNO



NOTICE OF LIMITED COURT CLOSURES

February 13 and 14, 2025

Due to statewide budgetary constraints and following the required public comment procedures for 60 days, * the Fresno Superior Court hereby announces that it will temporarily consolidate cases. All essential hearings to be heard only in the Main Courthouse and the Juvenile Justice Courthouse, on the following dates: February 13 and 14, 2025.

Courthouse status will be as follows:

- | | |
|---|--------|
| • Main Courthouse, 1100 Van Ness Ave. (Criminal and Dependency) | OPEN |
| • Juvenile Justice Courthouse, 3333 E. American Ave. (Juvenile) | OPEN |
| • Jail Annex Departments 95 & 96, 1265 "M" St. (Criminal) | CLOSED |
| • Archives Department, 1963 "E" St. | CLOSED |
| • B. F. Sisk Courthouse, 1130 "O" St. (Civil/Family/Probate/Self-Help Center) | CLOSED |
| • "M" Street Courthouse, 2317 Tuolumne St. (Traffic) | CLOSED |

All Clerks' Offices will be closed, with the exception of the following:

- | | |
|--|------|
| • Main Courthouse, 1100 Van Ness Ave.
(Criminal 4 th floor #401 & Dependency 2 nd floor #200) | OPEN |
| • Juvenile Justice Courthouse, 3333 E. American Ave. (Juvenile) | OPEN |

Court filings must be submitted via e-filing or drop box for the following cases types below. Drop boxes will be located as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| • TRAFFIC: | Main Courthouse, 1100 Van Ness Ave., Main Entrance |
| • CIVIL/FAMILY/PROBATE: | B. F. Sisk Courthouse, 1130 "O" St., Main Entrance |

Services from the Self-Help Center and Archives Department will be unavailable.

These changes are a result of the Court's strategic planning for operational efficiency as well as addressing current statewide budgetary constraints. The temporary relocation of departments from the "M" Street and B. F. Sisk Courthouses to the Main Courthouse and the Juvenile Justice Courthouse on these dates will provide the Court with the opportunity to better utilize staff resources.

*Pursuant to Government Code section 68106, this proposal is published for public comment with a deadline of December 2, 2024 (60 days from notice).

After that date, the comments will be reviewed and modifications will be made to the proposal, if necessary.

HON. JUDITH C. CLARK
Presiding Judge

HON. JACQUELINE C. JACKSON
Assistant Presiding Judge

HISTORIC COURTHOUSE
4050 Main Street
Riverside, CA 92501



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

NOTICE

COURT ANNOUNCES INTENTION TO CLOSE TEMECULA COURTHOUSE

The Riverside Superior Court is considering the temporary closure of the Temecula Courthouse, located at 41002 County Center Drive, #100, as of December 23, 2024. The court finds it necessary to take this action because the significant reductions in state funding for superior courts and resulting cuts in the Riverside court's budget. The closure would remain in effect until further notice. Services will be relocated to the Southwest Justice Center located at 30755-D Auld Road in Murrieta.

Pursuant to California Government Code, section 68106(b), the court is seeking input from the public regarding the planned closure. Any interested person or entity who wishes to comment must send the comment to the court in writing or electronically. Written comments should be directed to the court at P.O. Box 1547, Riverside, CA 92502. Those interested in submitting comments electronically should e-mail them to courtexecutiveoffice@riverside.courts.ca.gov.

Comments must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, November 18, 2024.

www.riverside.courts.ca.gov

HON. JUDITH C. CLARK
Presiding Judge

HON. JACQUELINE C. JACKSON
Assistant Presiding Judge

HISTORIC COURTHOUSE
4050 Main Street
Riverside, CA 92501



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

NOTICE

COURT ANNOUNCES INTENTION TO REDUCE SERVICES ONE DAY PER MONTH BEGINNING JANUARY 2025

Pursuant to Government Code §68106(b)(1), the Superior Court of California, County of Riverside, provides this 60-day notice of its intention to reduce services one day per month beginning January 2025.

The court finds it necessary to take this action because of the significant reductions in state funding for trial courts and resulting cuts in the Riverside Superior Court's budget for Fiscal Year 24/25. As a result, the court will be furloughing staff one day per month beginning in January 2025. Consequently, all court locations will have reduced services with only limited emergency services provided at courthouses. The anticipated dates of limited services are as follows:

Friday, January 17, 2025	Friday, February 14, 2025	Friday, March 28, 2025
Friday, April 18, 2025	Friday, May 23, 2025	Friday, June 20, 2025

Any interested person or entity who wishes to comment must send the comment to the court in writing or electronically. Written comments should be directed to the court at P.O. Box 1547, Riverside, CA 92502. Those interested in submitting comments electronically should e-mail them to courtexecutiveoffice@riverside.courts.ca.gov.

Comments must be submitted by Tuesday, January 14, 2025.

www.riverside.courts.ca.gov

**Superior Court of California
COUNTY OF
SAN LUIS OBISPO**



Rita Federman, Presiding Judge

Michael Powell, Executive Officer

Courthouse Annex
1035 Palm St., Rm 385
San Luis Obispo, California 93408
www.slo.courts.ca.gov

**For more information about this news
release, please contact:**

Administrative Office
805-706-3615

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday November 21, 2024

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA: The Superior Court of San Luis Obispo County announces service level reductions in response to state budget cuts...

SAN LUIS OBISPO— In response to the cuts required by the fiscal year 2024-2025 state budget, the San Luis Obispo Superior Court has identified several necessary measures in response to this year's permanent budget deficit of approximately \$1,000,000 for the local court system. The significant service adjustments noted below will also allow us to prepare for expected reductions in fiscal year 2025-2026.

Phone Hour Reductions

Effective Monday December 9th, 2024, the San Luis Obispo Superior Court is reducing its public phone hours. The public phone hours will change as follows:

Branch	Public Phone Hours (Effective December 9, 2024)
San Luis Obispo	Monday through Friday 8:30am to 12:00pm
Paso Robles	Monday through Friday 8:30am to 12:00pm
Grover Beach	Monday through Thursday 9:00am-12:00pm and 1:00pm-3:00pm Friday 9:00am-12:00pm

Effective Monday December 9th, 2024, the Court will eliminate the Civil Attorney line and consolidate the Civil/Family Law line for the Paso Robles and San Luis Obispo Courthouses, creating one centralized line for all Civil/Family Law related Clerk's Office questions.

Clerk's Office Counter Hour Reductions

Effective Monday February 3rd, 2025, the San Luis Obispo Superior Court is reducing its public counter hours. The public counter hours will change as follows:

Branch	Clerk Window Hours (Effective February 3, 2025)
San Luis Obispo	Monday through Thursday 8:30am to 12:00pm
Paso Robles	Wednesday and Friday 8:30am to 12:00pm
Grover Beach	Monday through Thursday 8:30am-12:00pm

Pursuant to California Government Code, section 68106(b), the Court is seeking input from the public regarding the reduction of the counter hours for the Clerk's Office. Those interested in submitting comments electronically should e-mail them to admin@slo.courts.ca.gov. Written comments should be directed to the Court at:

1035 Palm Street, Room 385
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408.

To be considered, comments must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 31st, 2025.

Since the beginning of this fiscal year, July 1, 2024, the Court has held open new employee vacancies and not filled the existing vacancies. Positions critical to ongoing operations or backed by grant funds may be filled. These vacancies will likely result in delays and backlogs throughout the Court system as fewer employees will be available to file and process Court workloads. The reduction in phone and counter hours will permit Court staff to devote more time to the filing and processing of documents to minimize the impact of the budget cutbacks.

There will be a noticeable budget-saving measure during the holidays, when the Court will offer limited services due to a Voluntary Time Off (VTO) program offered to Court employees. The Court's VTO program allows employees to elect to take unpaid leave. For the week of Thanksgiving (November 25, 2024) and from December 23, 2024, through January 3, 2025, the Court will operate with significantly reduced staffing levels. Restraining orders and other urgent matters with statutory deadlines will be scheduled as usual, but other judicial calendars will be reduced.

Several technological improvements implemented over the past few years have made many Court services available online including the ability to file and view cases. Utilizing these services will help mitigate the impact of reduced staffing. Please visit slo.courts.ca.gov and click "Online Services" for more information on different services available.

The Court is leveraging every tool available to minimize impacts on core services; however, reduced staffing from vacancies and the Court's VTO program will result in delays and backlogs throughout the court system as fewer employees will be available to file and process court workloads.

Through these efforts, the Court hopes to avoid layoffs and mandatory furloughs that would further impact service levels, while closing the budget deficit for the current fiscal year.

For more information, please contact Court Administration at admin@slo.courts.ca.gov or by calling (805)706-3615.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Continued Court Closure – Santa Barbara Juvenile Court

PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 68106

INVITATION TO COMMENT BY DECEMBER 27, 2024

CtAdmin@sbcourts.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: October 28, 2024

The Superior Court of California, County of Santa Barbara, intends to continue the closure of the juvenile courtroom of the Superior Court located at Dept. 14, 1108 Santa Barbara St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101. The Court initially closed this location and consolidated all juvenile matters into the Santa Maria Juvenile Court Facility adjacent to the Santa Barbara County Juvenile Hall in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Consolidating all juvenile matters at that location was safer, more efficient for all juvenile justice partners and increased the educational hours available for juveniles. Minors detained by the Santa Barbara County Probation Department are housed in the Juvenile Hall in Santa Maria. That same facility provides education for detained minors. Prior to the pandemic, detained minors attending court were transported by secure van to the South County Courthouse. Transportation time to and from South County along with the time spent in court, reduced the time available for the minor's regular course work. The Court has successfully conducted all juvenile proceedings in the Santa Maria location for over 4.5 years.

The pandemic revolutionized the way courts conducted proceedings. The proliferation of remote proceedings conducted via Zoom required the court and justice partners to introduce state of the art video conferencing equipment. This innovation allowed working parents, or those otherwise unable to attend proceedings, the opportunity to attend via video conferencing. In order to accommodate parents unable to attend minor's court proceedings in the other end of the county, Santa Barbara County Probation offered to host parents at their facilities, in a confidential setting, using probation video conferencing equipment. This new and innovative method of conducting business increased access to justice.

During this same time the court struggled to recruit and retain qualified juvenile court staff. Several seasoned court personnel left the workforce. A generational change in the Santa Barbara employment market has resulted in high turnover of new recruits joining the Superior Court of California, County of Santa Barbara. This tough labor market is exacerbated by 7.95% reductions in the California State Budget. Those cuts saw a \$1.2 million reduction in the Santa Barbara Superior Court budget, further hampering the court's ability to compete with local government not enduring funding reductions.

In addition to the efficiencies gained by consolidating all juvenile cases in the one location, the court lacks the ability to staff two separate operations and will not be able to remedy those staffing concerns in the foreseeable future. Aggravating an already difficult situation is the national shortage of court reporters. The Court has a 25% vacancy rate among its certified court reporters and is unable to staff many daily court calendars. By conducting court proceedings in a single location, the court is ensured that a verbatim record can be obtained in these critical juvenile proceedings. All of these circumstances have culminated in the need for the Court to take this action.

Government Code Section 68106 requires to the court to provide the public 60 days to submit written comments on a such a proposed plan to change/close an operation. While this consolidation of juvenile proceedings has been in place since March of 2020, the decision was driven by the exigency of the COVID-19 pandemic. There was no opportunity for public comment at that time. Since then the court met with stakeholders in the juvenile justice community to hear concerns firsthand. However, having proven the efficacy of the consolidated juvenile operations and experiencing the challenges associated with labor shortages and budget cuts, the Court intends to maintain consolidated juvenile operations with an official effective date of January 8, 2025.

If you would like to submit comments about the proposed reductions, please send them to: Darrel E. Parker, Court Executive Officer, 1100 Anacapa Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101. Additionally, you may submit comments via e-mail at CtAdmin@sbcourts.org

This notice has been posted on the Court's website at www.sbcourts.org and displayed on digital signage throughout each court location.

Pursuant to Government Code section 68106, this proposal has been published for public comment with a deadline of December 27, 2024.



PUBLIC NOTICE

(Government Code §68106)

Superior Court of California, County of Ventura November 27, December 23, 24, 26, and 27, 2024 – Limited Operations

Pursuant to *Government Code* §68106, the Superior Court of California, County of Ventura (“Court”), is providing sixty (60) days’ notice of limited operation days.

The majority of the courtrooms and all of the Clerk’s Offices will be closed on November 27, and December 23, 24, 26, and 27, 2024 to mitigate the reduction in trial court funding for Fiscal Year 2024/25. Limited courtrooms will remain open for criminal custody calendars, preliminary hearings, criminal last-day trials, juvenile detentions, unlawful detainer, mental health, and all types of temporary restraining orders.

These days are not court holidays, so statutory deadlines will not be extended. Documents may be submitted through U.S. mail or drop boxes currently provided outside of the Hall of Justice and the Juvenile courthouse for filing papers or submitting payments. Documents placed in the boxes by 4:00 p.m. are deemed deposited for filing that same business day. eDelivery for applicable case types will be available until 4:00 p.m. The Court also anticipates implementing eFiling for Civil and Probate matters prior to the proposed closure dates, so documents may be submitted through the applicable EFSP (electronic filing service provider) and deemed deposited for filing that same day but will not be processed until after the closures. (Updated filing information will be posted on the Court’s website during the week of November 12, 2024.) Most cases already calendared for hearing will be rescheduled and the affected parties notified by the Court. An exterior walk-up window on the north side of the Hall of Justice near parking lots A, B and C will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on December 24, 2024) for handling criminal/traffic and collections payments only. The East County Courthouse walk-up window will be closed but a drop box will be available in the lobby for traffic and collections payments only (no filings).

These dates were selected to minimize the impact on the public and court staff as Court business is generally slowest during the holiday season.

While the Court regrets having to take the above actions, they are required to address the reduction in funding to the California trial court system. The current California state budget included a \$97 million dollar budget reduction for California Trial Courts. The Ventura Superior Court’s share of the statewide reduction is \$2.1 million, which has resulted in a structural budget deficit.

Anyone wishing to comment on this proposed plan may do so, either by regular mail or e-mail, by November 26, 2024. Please direct your response to:

Brenda L. McCormick, Court Executive Officer
P.O. Box 6489
Ventura, CA 93006-6489
or

closureresponse@ventura.courts.ca.gov