



Judicial Council of California

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REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Item No.: 25-088

For business meeting on April 25, 2025

Title

Judicial Council Update: Release of
Demographic Data on California Justices and
Judges

Report Type

Information

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Executive Summary

This informational report to the Judicial Council is notice of the annual release of aggregate demographic information concerning the gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, and disability status of California's justices and judges by specific jurisdiction, which council staff is required by statute to collect and release annually.

Relevant Previous Reporting or Action

In 2006, Senate Bill 56 (Dunn) authorized 50 new judgeships in California and amended Government Code section 12011.5(n) (see Link A) to require the Judicial Council to collect and report on the demographics of the bench in the aggregate. Similar reporting requirements apply to the Governor and the Commission on Judicial Nominees Evaluation of the State Bar of California. The council has collected and released this demographic data since 2007, with the most current year information release planned for March 1, 2025. Currently, section 12011.5(n) requires that the council report on the composition of the bench by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, and disability status.

Data pertaining to veteran and disability status have been collected since 2014, as a result of an expansion of the legislative mandate for the collection of demographic data from new justices and judges. Beginning in 2023, the demographic category for gender identity included a new response alternative: nonbinary.

Analysis/Rationale

The linked data tables (see Link B) reflect demographic background information self-reported by justices and judges on the bench as of December 31, 2024, with a response rate of over 93 percent of all judicial officers. Responding to the questionnaire is voluntary, and the data only reflects the responses provided. The tables show:

- For the 19th consecutive year, California's judiciary is more diverse across multiple categories;
- Female judicial officers now constitute 43.3 percent of the judiciary across all court levels, representing a 2 percent increase from the previous reporting period and a significant increase of more than 15 percent since initial data collection began in 2006 (when female representation stood at 27.1 percent);
- Representation of Asian, Black, and Hispanic judicial officers has more than doubled during this same time period (2006–2024);
- The percentage of judicial officers identifying as LGBT has increased from 2 percent in 2012 (the first year this demographic information was collected) to 5.3 percent in 2024; and
- Among responding judicial officers, 6 percent reported prior military service, and 3.5 percent reported having a disability.

The data reflect changes resulting from judicial retirements and other departures from the bench as well as new judicial appointees who provided information.

Fiscal Impact and Policy Implications

There are no costs to the courts for the annual collection and release of demographic data on justices and judges (see Link B). The release of this descriptive information is in response to a legislative mandate for descriptive demographic data, and on that basis is not intended to directly impact state or council policy.

Attachments and Links

1. Link A: Gov. Code, § 12011.5(n),
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=GOV§ionNum=12011.5
2. Link B: California Courts website, Judicial Officer Demographics,
<https://courts.ca.gov/news-reference/research-data/judicial-officer-demographics>