



Judicial Council of California

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REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

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For business meeting on April 24, 2026

Administrative Director's Report

Judicial Council Report Details

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Executive Summary

The following information outlines some of the many activities staff are engaged in to further the Judicial Council's strategic goals and priorities for the judicial branch. The report focuses on action since the council's meeting on February 20, 2026, and is exclusive of items on the April business meeting agenda.

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Activities

Legislative Advocacy

- In conjunction with the Chief Justice’s annual [State of the Judiciary](#) address to the joint houses of the Legislature at the state capitol, Bench-Bar Coalition members participated in 67 meetings with members of the Legislature and their staff in ongoing outreach and advocacy on judicial branch priorities. The Chief Justice, Governor, President pro Tempore of the Senate, and Speaker of the Assembly also issued a joint statement marking the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, emphasizing the importance of three separate but coequal branches of government.
- Judicial Council staff and court leadership provided testimony at Senate and Assembly budget subcommittee hearings to present judicial branch proposals included in the Governor’s Budget for fiscal year 2026–27. These hearings are a key part in shaping how the branch’s funding priorities move forward in the state budget process. Testimony also was provided on the implementation of Proposition 36 at the State Assembly, Subcommittee No. 6 Public Safety budget hearing.

Technology Summit

The Judicial Branch Technology Summit brought together court leaders and technology partners with a focus on innovation, cybersecurity, and the evolving use of artificial intelligence in courts. The summit highlighted the growing risks posed by AI-manipulated evidence and the need for stronger verification of digital media, in addition to sessions that showcased practical applications of AI and emerging tools across court operations. The summit also featured exhibitors, demonstrations, and presentations from judicial officers and court leaders emphasizing responsible adoption of new technologies.

Statewide Information Technology Disaster Recovery Exercise

The annual information technology disaster recovery exercise was conducted, testing infrastructure, network services, and branchwide applications.

Traffic Fines and Fees

Informational dashboards for [MyCitations](#), the online tool for requesting deductions in the amount owed for infraction ticket debt, were redesigned for courts and the public. The dashboards for courts provide enhanced insight into decision trends and projected workload impacts, while the public version offers metrics relevant to public users of the tool.

Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Act

- As of February 28, 2026, a reported 4,060 CARE Act petitions have been filed.
- Site visits were conducted at the Superior Courts of San Bernardino and Ventura Counties with state and local justice partners, including representatives from California Health and Human Services Agency and the local behavioral health agency, to observe CARE Act proceedings, visit housing facilities, and receive input from partners.
- The [first](#) in a series of three interviews exploring the perspectives of CARE court judges across California was published on the California Courts public website.

Judicial Resources and Technical Assistance Program

Reviews of juvenile case files were conducted at the Superior Courts of Kings, Lake, Los Angeles, Mendocino, Orange, Riverside, San Joaquin, and Santa Cruz Counties to identify any legal issues and training needs. Reviews are conducted for all trial courts on a rotating basis.

Court Facilities

- For the current fiscal year to date, the council’s Trial Court Facility Modification Advisory Committee has approved 1,484 projects with a cost of \$81.4 million.
- Sixteen real estate transactions were completed, including new lease/license amendments, terminations, memorandums of understanding, and intrabranh agreements in eight counties.

Judicial Branch Education

More than 27 education programs and resource tools were created, updated, or delivered for judicial officers, court personnel, and justice system partners during this reporting period:

- In-person training programs included experienced assignment courses on death penalty trials, environmental law, fundamentals of felony sentencing, and homicide trials; the Presiding Judge and Court Executive Officer Court Management Institute; video remote interpreting; and a pretrial forum for judges focused on the research and policymaking of electronic monitoring.
- Distance education programs included a podcast on being a trauma-informed courtroom and a video on working effectively with court interpreters.
- Publication updates included the *Handbook on Felony Sentencing* and the *On-Call Duty Binder*.

International Visitors Program

As part of the council’s International Visitors Program, members of the Supreme Court of Mongolia met with staff to discuss family court practices.

Advisory Bodies

Advisory Body Meetings

The following [advisory bodies](#) convened since the February 2026 business meeting:

1. Advisory Committee on Audits and Financial Accountability for the Judicial Branch
2. Advisory Committee on Criminal Jury Instructions
3. Appellate Advisory Committee
4. Civil and Small Claims Advisory Committee
5. Collaborative Justice Courts Advisory Committee
6. Court Interpreters Advisory Panel
7. Criminal Law Advisory Committee
8. Data Analytics Advisory Committee
9. Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee

10. Judicial Branch Workers' Compensation Program Advisory Committee
11. Probate and Mental Health Advisory Committee
12. Remote Access to Electronic Court Records Working Group
13. Traffic Advisory Committee
14. Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee
15. Trial Court Facility Modification Advisory Committee
16. Tribal Court–State Court Forum

Meeting Details

Advisory Committee on Audits and Financial Accountability for the Judicial Branch

- Approved audit reports for the Superior Courts of Colusa, Solano, and Ventura Counties.

Advisory Committee on Criminal Jury Instructions

- Reviewed 20 proposals for jury instruction updates, including four new instructions.

Appellate Advisory Committee

- Convened and considered spring cycle rules and forms proposals in areas including California Environmental Quality Act actions involving new projects for expedited review, fee waiver rules and forms, appendixes, and record designation rules and forms in appellate procedure as well as a clarifying rule for record procurement default notice.

Civil and Small Claims Advisory Committee

- Convened and discussed spring cycle rules and forms proposals in areas including court-ordered mediation, California Environmental Quality Act streamlining, service of civil summons, statements of decision, fee waivers, unlawful detainer, and protective orders.

Collaborative Justice Courts Advisory Committee

- Reviewed the draft Juvenile Collaborative Court Resource Repository.
- Received presentations on strategic planning and the Superior Court of San Francisco County's Young Adult Court.
- Received information on a research grant for young adult courts, subcommittee and legislative updates, and plans for future committee activities.

Court Interpreters Advisory Panel

- *Professional Standards and Ethics Subcommittee*: Discussed proposed additions to the California Court Interpreter Credential Review Procedures, including integration and use of a skills assessment process when an interpreter's competence or performance is in question.

Criminal Law Advisory Committee

- Discussed revisions to forms CR-210 (*Prohibited Persons Relinquishment Form Findings*) and CR-184 (*Order for Dismissal (Military Personnel)*), potential rules of court regarding pretrial release, and pending legislation, including a proposal to seal arrest records.

Data Analytics Advisory Committee

- Discussed the Judicial Workload Study Update, the Adjustment Request Proposal on Workload Formula from the Superior Court of Sacramento County, and a data dashboard proposal.

Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee

- Reviewed three rules and forms proposals for the spring 2026 invitation-to-comment cycle:
 - Juvenile Law: Sealing juvenile records under Assembly Bill 1877
 - Family and Juvenile Law: Statements of decision under Assembly Bill 515
 - Family Law: Service of summons under Assembly Bill 747 and Senate Bill 85
- Reviewed mandated education and training programs for court-appointed mediators, evaluators, and child custody recommending counselors, as part of an annual process conducted under California Rules of Court, rules 5.210 and 5.230.
- Reviewed and approved submission of a budget change concept proposal to the council's Judicial Branch Budget Committee to conduct a workload assessment of court-appointed dependency counsel.
- Reviewed a legislative report on the quadrennial review of the statewide uniform child support guideline under Family Code section 4054(a).
- *Guideline Calculator Certification Workgroup*: Reviewed a new child support calculator submitted for certification.

Judicial Branch Workers' Compensation Program Advisory Committee

- Discussed newly developed policies and procedures.

Probate and Mental Health Advisory Committee

- Discussed proposals for the spring 2026 invitation-to-comment cycle, including family preparedness, duties of a probate conservator, and proofs of personal service.
- Reviewed and approved to circulate for comment an update to the *Handbook for Conservators*.
- Discussed the most recent draft of the *Assembly Bill 1194 Conservatorship Study* legislative report.
- *Legislative Subcommittee*: Discussed bills related to conservatorship, decedents' estates, conservatorship, and mental health.

Remote Access to Electronic Court Records Working Group

- Discussed options for how the working group proceeds with its charge.

Traffic Advisory Committee

- Discussed pending legislation and potential form revisions to the trial by written declaration forms, including TR-200 (*Instructions to Defendant*), TR-205 (*Request for Trial by Written Declaration*), TR-210 (*Notice and Instructions to Arresting Officer*), TR-215 (*Decision and Notice of Decision*), TR-220 (*Request for New Trial*), TR-225 (*Order and Notice to Defendant of New Trial*), and TR-235 (*Officer's Declaration*).

Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee

- Reviewed fiscal year 2027–28 budget change concepts from other advisory bodies and provided input on proposals within the committee's purview.
- Approved several key funding allocations for fiscal year 2026–27:
 - Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment Act allocations
 - Pretrial Release Program allocations
 - AB 1058 Child Support Commissioner and Family Law Facilitator allocations
 - Court reporter allocations
- *Revenue and Expenditure Subcommittee*: Approved fiscal year 2026–27 allocations from the State Trial Court Improvement and Modernization Fund and the Trial Court Trust Fund to support court programs and activities.

Trial Court Facility Modification Advisory Committee

- Authorized expenditures of \$5,711,603 for court facility modifications and an additional \$165,570 for security-related projects.
- Received updates on court-funded facilities requests, sustainability initiatives, facilities maintenance performance, and preventative maintenance spotlight projects.
- Amended the annual agenda to add updating the Court-Funded Facilities Request Policy.

Tribal Court–State Court Forum

- Facilitated meetings of the Indian Child Welfare Act Ad Hoc Work Group and Tribal Court Orders Enforcement Ad Hoc Work Group.

Judicial Council Staffing Metrics

Staffing Metrics Summary as of March 31, 2026

Staffing	Judicial Council
Authorized Positions	1003.00
Filled Authorized Positions	812.50
Headcount–Employees	814.00
Vacancies	190.50
Vacancy Rate	18.99%
Judicial Council Temporary Employees	17.00
Employment Agency Temporary Workers	4.00
Contractors	40.60
Total Workforce	874.10

The full [Judicial Council staffing metrics report](#) is updated on a monthly basis and posted to the California Courts public website.

Judicial Appointments and Vacancies

The Governor made 34 new appointments since the February report:

- Courts of Appeal: Second District (1), Fourth District (3), Fifth District (1)
- Superior courts: Alameda (1), Contra Costa (3), Kern (1), Kings (1), Los Angeles (7), Madera (1), Orange (1), Placer (1), Riverside (1), San Bernardino (1), San Diego (1), San Francisco (2), San Joaquin (1), San Mateo (1), Santa Barbara (1), Santa Clara (4), Ventura (1)

Summary of the Number of Judgeships Authorized, Filled, and Vacant as of April 1, 2026

Type of Court	Number of Courts	Authorized	Filled	Vacant	Filled (Last Month)	Vacant (Last Month)
Supreme Court	1	7	6	1	6	1
Courts of Appeal	6	106	98	8	98	8
Superior Courts	58	1,755	1,706	49	1,708	47
All Courts	65	1,868	1,810	58	1,812	56

The full [Judicial Vacancy Report](#) is updated on a monthly basis and posted to the California Courts public website.

Number of Judgeships Authorized, Filled, and Vacant: March 2024–March 2026

Month	Superior Courts				Courts of Appeal			
	Authorized	Filled	Vacancy	Vacancy Rate	Authorized	Filled	Vacancy	Vacancy Rate
Mar-24	1,755	1,651	104	5.9%	106	99	7	6.6%
Apr-24	1,755	1,639	116	6.6%	106	99	7	6.6%
May-24	1,755	1,636	119	6.8%	106	98	8	7.5%
Jun-24	1,755	1,650	105	6.0%	106	101	5	4.7%
Jul-24	1,755	1,647	108	6.2%	106	100	6	5.7%
Aug-24	1,755	1,653	102	5.8%	106	100	6	5.7%
Sep-24	1,755	1,652	103	5.9%	106	101	5	4.7%
Oct-24	1,755	1,666	89	5.1%	106	99	7	6.6%
Nov-24	1,755	1,666	89	5.1%	106	100	6	5.7%
Dec-24	1,755	1,675	80	4.6%	106	100	6	5.7%
Jan-25	1,755	1,680	75	4.3%	106	99	7	6.6%
Feb-25	1,755	1,684	71	4.0%	106	100	6	5.7%
Mar-25	1,755	1,686	69	3.9%	106	99	7	6.6%
Apr-25	1,755	1,679	76	4.3%	106	98	8	7.5%
May-25	1,755	1,685	70	4.0%	106	98	8	7.5%
Jun-25	1,756	1,690	65	3.7%	106	97	9	8.5%
Jul-25	1,756	1,680	76	4.3%	106	96	10	9.4%
Aug-25	1,756	1,690	66	3.8%	106	99	7	6.6%
Sep-25	1,756	1,686	60	3.4%	106	98	8	7.5%
Oct-25	1,756	1,710	46	2.6%	106	98	8	7.5%
Nov-25	1,755	1,711	44	2.5%	106	98	8	7.5%
Dec-25	1,755	1,710	45	2.6%	106	98	8	7.5%
Jan-26	1,755	1,703	52	3.0%	106	97	9	8.5%
Feb-26	1,755	1,708	47	2.7%	106	96	10	9.4%
Mar-26	1,755	1,706	49	2.8%	106	98	8	7.5%

Percentage of Superior Court Judgeships Vacant: March 2024–March 2026

