

Criminal Jury Instructions Advisory Committee Annual Agenda—2026–2027

Approved by Rules Committee: October 22, 2026

I. COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Chair: Lisa B. Lench, Judge, Superior Court of Los Angeles County

Lead Staff: Kara Portnow, Supervising Attorney, Criminal Justice Services

Advisory Body's Charge/Membership:

[Rule 10.59](#) of the California Rules of Court states the charge of the Advisory Committee on Criminal Jury Instructions (CALCRIM), which is to regularly review case law and statutes affecting jury instructions and to make recommendations to the Judicial Council for updating, amending, and adding topics to the council's criminal jury instructions.

[Rule 10.59](#) also sets forth the membership position of the committee. The Advisory Committee on Criminal Jury Instructions has 13 members. The current committee [roster](#) is available on the committee's webpage.

Subgroups of the Advisory Body:

The committee has one subcommittee, the CALCRIM Workgroup, currently consisting of six members who meet to review and evaluate all materials before they go to the full committee for review.

Advisory Body and Subgroup Meetings Planned for 2026–2027:

Two full in-person committee meetings in San Francisco: October 9, 2026, and May 2027 (date TBD). Two CALCRIM Workgroup meetings ahead of the full committee meetings: September 11, 2026, and April 2027 (date TBD) by videoconference.

☒ Check here if more than one in-person meeting is approved by the internal committee oversight chair.

II. COMMITTEE PROJECTS

Priority Levels and Branch Goals Key

Priority Levels for Non-Rules/Forms

- 1 – Must be done
- 2 – Should be done

Priority Levels for Rules/Forms Proposals

1a (Legal Compliance) – Proposal urgently needed to conform to or accurately reflect the law.

1b (Council Directive) – Council has directed the committee to consider new or amended rules and forms.

1c (Urgent Remedial Action) – Change is urgently needed to remedy a problem that is causing significant cost or inconvenience to the courts or the public.

1d (Financial/ Legal Risk Mitigation) – Proposal is otherwise urgent and necessary, such as a proposal that would mitigate exposure to immediate or severe financial or legal risk.

2a (Useful Changes in Law) – Useful, but not necessary, to implement changes in law.

2b (Responsive to Concerns) – Responsive to identified concerns or problems.

2c (Helpful Advancing Branch Goals) – Helpful in otherwise advancing Judicial Council goals and objectives

Judicial Branch Strategic Plan–Branch Goals

- I. [Access, Fairness, Diversity, and Inclusion](#)
- II. [Independence and Accountability](#)
- III. [Modernization of Management and Administration](#)
- IV. [Quality of Justice and Service to the Public](#)
- V. [Education for Branchwide Professional Excellence](#)
- VI. [Branchwide Infrastructure for Service Excellence](#)
- VII. [Adequate, Stable, and Predictable Funding for a Fully Functioning Branch](#)

New or One-Time Projects

- 1. None.**

Ongoing Projects and Activities

1. *Project Title:* Maintenance—Case Law and Legislation

Priority: 1

Supported Strategic Plan Branch Goals:

I. Access ☐	II. Independence ☐	III. Modernization ☐	IV. Quality ☒	V. Education ☐	VI. Infrastructure ☐	VII. Funding ☐
---------------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

Project Summary: Review case law and new legislation affecting jury instructions to determine whether changes to the criminal jury instructions are required. Judicial Council direction: Draft and maintain jury instructions that accurately and understandably state the law.

Status/Timeline: Ongoing, with delivery to Judicial Council at February and October meetings.

Fiscal Impact/Staff Resources: Committee staff.

☐ Check this box if this project may result in an allocation or distribution of funds to the courts. *Advisory body staff will coordinate with Budget Services to ensure its review of relevant materials.*

Internal/External Stakeholders: Not applicable.

AC Collaboration: Not applicable.

2. *Project Title:* Maintenance—Comments from Users

Priority: 1

Supported Strategic Plan Branch Goals:

I. Access ☐	II. Independence ☐	III. Modernization ☐	IV. Quality ☒	V. Education ☐	VI. Infrastructure ☐	VII. Funding ☐
---------------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

Project Summary: Review comments received from jury instruction users and propose any necessary changes and improvements. Judicial Council direction: Draft and maintain jury instructions that accurately and understandably state the law.

Status/Timeline: Ongoing, with delivery to Judicial Council at February and October meetings.

Fiscal Impact/Staff Resources: Committee staff.

☐ Check this box if this project may result in an allocation or distribution of funds to the courts. *Advisory body staff will coordinate with Budget Services to ensure its review of relevant materials.*

Internal/External Stakeholders: Not applicable.

AC Collaboration: Not applicable.

3. **Project Title:** New Instructions and Expansion into New Areas

Priority: 1

Supported Strategic Plan Branch Goals:

I. Access ☐	II. Independence ☐	III. Modernization ☐	IV. Quality ☒	V. Education ☐	VI. Infrastructure ☐	VII. Funding ☐
---------------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

Project Summary: Review suggestions received from jury instruction users, new legislation, and case law and propose new criminal jury instructions as appropriate. Judicial Council direction: Draft and maintain jury instructions that accurately and understandably state the law.

Status/Timeline: Ongoing, with delivery to Judicial Council at February and October meetings.

Fiscal Impact/Staff Resources: Committee staff.

☐ Check this box if this project may result in an allocation or distribution of funds to the courts. *Advisory body staff will coordinate with Budget Services to ensure its review of relevant materials.*

Internal/External Stakeholders: Not applicable.

AC Collaboration: Not applicable.

4. **Project Title:** Technical Corrections

Priority: 2

Supported Strategic Plan Branch Goals:

I. Access ☐	II. Independence ☐	III. Modernization ☐	IV. Quality ☒	V. Education ☐	VI. Infrastructure ☐	VII. Funding ☐
---------------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

Project Summary: Make any necessary corrections or editing changes to the jury instructions. Judicial Council direction: Draft and maintain jury instructions that accurately and understandably state the law.

Status/Timeline: Ongoing, with delivery to Judicial Council at February and October meetings.

Fiscal Impact/Staff Resources: Committee staff.

☐ Check this box if this project may result in an allocation or distribution of funds to the courts. *Advisory body staff will coordinate with Budget Services to ensure its review of relevant materials.*

Internal/External Stakeholders: Not applicable.

AC Collaboration: Not applicable.

III. LIST OF 2025–2026 PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Project Highlights and Achievements

1. **Maintenance—Case Law and Legislation:** Reviewed case law and new legislation affecting jury instructions to determine whether changes to the criminal jury instructions are required. Releases presented to Judicial Council for approval in February 2026 and October 2026. Updated 66 instructions (approved by the Judicial Council in February 2026) and 27 instructions (approved by the Judicial Council in October 2026).
2. **Maintenance—Comments From Users:** Reviewed comments received from jury instruction users and proposed necessary changes and improvements. Releases presented to Judicial Council for approval in February 2026 and October 2026.
3. **New Instructions and Expansion into New Areas:** Reviewed new legislation and case law and suggestions received from jury instruction users and proposed new criminal jury instructions as appropriate. Releases presented to Judicial Council for approval in February 2026 and October 2026. Drafted four new instructions based on user requests and case law (approved by the Judicial Council in February 2026), two new instructions based on case law (approved by the Judicial Council in October 2026).
4. **Technical Corrections:** Made necessary corrections or editing changes to the jury instructions. Releases presented to Judicial Council for approval in February 2026 and October 2026.