



EXECUTIVE AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING

January 14, 2026
12:10 to 1:00 p.m.
Videoconference

Advisory Body Members Present: Hon. Brad R. Hill (Chair), Hon. Maureen F. Hallahan (Vice-chair), Hon. Stacy Boulware Eurie, Hon. Charles S. Crompton, Hon. Ryan Davis, Hon. Judith K. Dulcich, Hon. Maria D. Hernandez, Hon. Patricia L. Kelly, Hon. Ann C. Moorman, Hon. Tamara L. Wood, Ms. Gretchen M. Nelson, and Ms. Dena Stone

Advisory Body Members Absent: Ms. Kate Bieker

Committee Staff Present: Amber Barnett, Josely Yangco-Fronza, and Donna Ignacio

Staff Present: Tamer Ahmed, Jollen Allgood, James Barolo, Deborah Brown, Randie Chance, Lisa Chavez, Karyn Chung, Marshall Comia, Cathal Conneely, Blaine Corren, Jessica Devencenzi, Michael Etchepare, Sarah Fleischer-Ihn, Michael Giden, Jenny Grantz, Stanley Ha, Jason Haas, Tracy Kenny, Youn Kim, Maria Lira, Chris Magnusson, Ray Mata, Anna Maves, Shannon Moore, Zayna Osborne, Hisham Qutob, Scott Parker, Sal Pipert, Becky Porter, Kara Portnow, Leah Rose-Goodwin, Jonathan Sibayan, Melanie Snider, Zlatko Theodorovic, and Steven Warner

OPEN MEETING

Call to Order and Roll Call

The chair called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m. Staff made the opening announcements and took roll call.

Approval of Minutes

The committee reviewed the following draft minutes:

- November 6, 2025, open with closed meeting
- November 18, 2025, open meeting, and
- November 25, 2025, action by email.

Action: *The committee approved the minutes of the November 6, 2025, open with closed meeting, November 18, 2025, open meeting, and November 25, 2025, action by email.*

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEM (ITEM 1)

Item 1

Agenda Setting for February 20, 2026, Judicial Council Meeting (Action Required)

Review draft reports and set the agenda for the Judicial Council meeting in February.

Action: The committee set the agenda for the February 20, 2026, Judicial Council meeting by approving reports for placement on the business meeting agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:24 p.m.

Approved by the committee on _____.

DRAFT



EXECUTIVE AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF ACTION BY EMAIL

January 30, 2026

2:00 p.m.

Advisory Body Members Present: Hon. Brad R. Hill (Chair), Hon. Maureen F. Hallahan (Vice-chair), Ms. Kate Bieker, Hon. Stacy Boulware Eurie, Hon. Charles S. Crompton, Hon. Ryan Davis, Hon. Judith K. Dulcich, Hon. Maria D. Hernandez, Hon. Patricia L. Kelly, Hon. Ann C. Moorman, Hon. Tamara L. Wood, Ms. Gretchen M. Nelson, and Ms. Dena Stone

Others Present: Mr. Robert Oyung, Ms. Amber Barnett, Ms. Josely Yangco-Frona, and Ms. Donna Ignacio

ACTION BY EMAIL

As provided in the California Rules of Court, rule 10.75 (o)(1)(B), the chair concluded that prompt action was needed. This action by email concerned matters that would otherwise be discussed in an open meeting; therefore, in accordance with rule 10.75(o)(2), public notice and the proposal were posted on Thursday, January 29, 2026, to allow at least one complete business day for public comment before the committee took action. No public comments were received.

ACTION ITEMS (ITEM 1)

Item 1

Agenda Setting for February 20, 2026, Judicial Council Meeting (Action Required)

Review and consider the following draft council reports listed below for placement on the February 20, 2026, Judicial Council business meeting agenda.

- 26-020 (Consent) Rules and Forms | Technical Form Revisions to Reflect Federal Poverty Guidelines (Action Required)
- 26-063 (Information) Report to the Legislature | Fiscal Year 2024–25 Court Facilities Trust Fund Expenditures
- 26-032 (Information) Report to the Legislature | Trial Court Operational Metrics: 2026 Report

Action: *The committee approved the reports above for placement on the February 20, 2026, Judicial Council business meeting agenda.*

CLOSURE OF ACTION

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:52 p.m. on January 30, 2026.

Approved by the committee on _____.



Judicial Council of California

Meeting Agenda

Judicial Council

Please visit
courts website:
courts.ca.gov
to view live meeting on
April 24, 2026.

Meeting materials
are available through
the hyperlinks in
this document.

*Open to the Public Unless Indicated as Closed
(Cal. Rules of Court, rule 10.6(a))*

*Requests for ADA accommodation should be directed to
JCCAccessCoordinator@jud.ca.gov*

Friday, April 24, 2026

Videoconference

CLOSED SESSION (RULE 10.6(b))—PLANNING, PERSONNEL, AND DISCUSSION PROTECTED BY THE ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE

Session: 9:30–9:45 a.m.

OPEN SESSION (RULE 10.6(a))—MEETING AGENDA

A link to the live videostream will be available in the Meeting Information Center at the start of the open session. If the closed session adjourns late, the start time of the open session may be delayed.

Open Session Begins: 10:00 a.m.

Call to Order

10 minutes

Public Comment

10 minutes

The Judicial Council welcomes public comment on general matters of judicial administration or specific agenda items. Written comments are encouraged in advance of the meeting for specific agenda items so council members can consider them prior to the council meeting.

For more information about meeting attendance and public comment procedures, visit:

<http://courts.ca.gov/28045.htm>

Submit advance requests to speak and written comments for this meeting by 12:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 23, by email to:

judicialcouncil@jud.ca.gov

Chief Justice's Report*15 minutes***Administrative Director's Report****26-002 Administrative Director's Report***15 minutes***CONSENT AGENDA***5 minutes*

A council member may request an item be moved from the Consent Agenda to the Discussion Agenda. Please notify Josely Yangco-Fronza at 415-865-7626 at least 48 hours before the meeting.

[26-007](#) Minutes of February 20, 2026, Judicial Council Meeting**[26-050](#) Allocations and Reimbursements to Trial Courts | Midyear Reallocation of Pretrial Release Funding (Action Required)**

Summary: The Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee recommends approving a one-time methodology as outlined in this report for the fiscal year 2025-26 reallocation of pretrial release funding to trial courts with a demonstrated need. This methodology reallocates \$194,000 in voluntarily returned, unspent funds and provides it to courts in which their additional funding need could be most fully supported based on the limited amount of funding available.

[26-065](#) Judicial Branch Administration | Judicial Branch Workers' Compensation Program (Action Required)

Summary: The Judicial Branch Workers' Compensation Program Advisory Committee recommends approval of the workers' compensation cost allocation of \$17.96 million for the trial courts and \$1.29 million for the state judiciary for fiscal year 2026-27 to cover the cost of claims for the next fiscal year while maintaining a positive fund balance. The committee also recommends a one-year extension of the clinical consultation pilot program as a benefit for its membership and with the aim of reducing the number of claims filed. This extension would effectively continue the pilot program through June 30, 2027.

26-075 Judicial Council | Appointment to the California Access to Justice Commission (Action Required)

Summary: TBD

26-075: Judicial Council report pending and will be considered by the Executive and Planning Committee at a later date.

[26-058](#)**Juvenile Law | 2025-26 Allocations for Dependency Counsel Collections Program and Expected Unspent Program Funding (Action Required)****Summary:**

The Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee recommends two redistributions for court-appointed juvenile dependency counsel funds for fiscal year 2025-26. These allocations ensure that statutorily restricted funds collected under the Juvenile Dependency Counsel Collections Program are allocated according to the Judicial Council methodology and that unspent court-appointed juvenile dependency counsel funds are reallocated to eligible courts able to utilize the funding. This action promotes equitable distribution of resources and supports effective representation for children and families in dependency proceedings.

[26-038](#)**Report to the Legislature | Pretrial Services Program: Year 4 Report to the Legislature, 2026 (Action Required)****Summary:**

The Budget Act of 2024 (Assem. Bill 107; Stats. 2024, ch. 22) allocated \$70 million of ongoing funding to the Judicial Council for the operation of ongoing court programs and practices that promote safe, efficient, fair, and timely pretrial release of individuals booked into jail. The Judicial Council is required to submit annual reports on the program's progress. Judicial Council staff recommend that the council approve *Pretrial Services Program: Year 4 Report to the Legislature, 2026* and direct the Administrative Director to submit it to the Legislature, as required under the Budget Act. The report describes key components of the Pretrial Services Program and documents the local and statewide activities in the fourth year of the program.

[26-078](#)**Rules and Forms | Access and Fairness: Gender Inclusivity of Juror Identification and Juror Questionnaires (Implementation of Assembly Bill 1899) (Action Required)****Summary:**

The Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness recommends adoption of a new standard of judicial administration to ensure gender inclusivity in juror identification and juror questionnaires, consistent with the directive in Assembly Bill 1899 (Cervantes; Stats. 2024, ch. 812). In line with AB 1899's directive and the recommended new standard, the committee also recommends conforming changes to three rules of court, two forms, and two standards of judicial administration; these materials currently use language directed to jurors that is not gender inclusive. In addition, the committee recommends minor changes to conform to style guidelines and to improve accuracy, consistency, clarity, and usability of the materials.

[26-055](#)**Rules and Forms | Appellate Procedure: Increased File-Size Limit for Electronic Filings (Action Required)****Summary:**

Rule 8.74 of the California Rules of Court currently limits the file size for electronic filings in the Courts of Appeal to 25 megabytes. When adopted, this limit corresponded to the file size limitation of the e-filing program used by the Courts of Appeal. The Courts of Appeal and Judicial Council Information Technology have worked with a vendor to transition to a file-size limit of 100 megabytes for the e-filing

program. Because rule 8.74 currently contains a 25-megabyte file-size limit, the Appellate Advisory Committee recommends amending the rule to accept 100-megabyte files.

[26-068](#)**Rules and Forms | Civil Practice and Procedure: Name Change and Gender Change Rules and Forms (Action Required)****Summary:**

The Civil and Small Claims Advisory Committee recommends adopting, approving, revising, and revoking various Judicial Council forms that individuals use to request a change of name and recognition of a change of gender or sex identifier. The committee also recommends amending two related rules of court. Changes are needed to implement Assembly Bill 1084 (Stats. 2025, ch. 723) and Senate Bill 59 (Stats. 2025, ch. 738), as well as to update the rules and forms to better serve participants in the Secretary of State's address confidentiality program, make various technical or clarifying changes, and respond to feedback from members of the public regarding clarity and ease of use.

[26-069](#)**Rules and Forms | Civil Practice and Procedure: Revise Civil Case Cover Sheet (Action Required)****Summary:**

The Civil and Small Claims Advisory Committee recommends revising *Civil Case Cover Sheet* (form CM-010) to add a case type for Song-Beverly Act motor vehicle lemon law cases. Judicial officers and court executive officers at several courts have requested this revision to address significant increases in the number of Song-Beverly Act motor vehicle case filings. The recommended form revision will allow courts to more easily and effectively collect data about the number of these cases being filed and the court resources they require. The committee also proposes revising page 3 of the form to add introductory text, use consistent terminology, and clarify the meaning of several items.

[26-070](#)**Rules and Forms | Civil Practice and Procedure: Revisions to Enforcement of Judgment and Wage Garnishment Forms to Implement Assembly Bill 774 (Action Required)****Summary:**

Assembly Bill 774 (Stats. 2025, ch. 708), makes several changes to the laws regarding enforcement of judgment, including creation of a new procedure by which the judgment creditor may seek reinstatement of a judgment lien on real or personal property. The Civil and Small Claims Advisory Committee recommends adopting three forms and revising five forms to implement AB 774 and improve clarity and readability.

[26-072](#)**Rules and Forms | Collaborative Justice: Guidelines for Adult Collaborative Treatment Courts (Action Required)****Summary:**

Senate Bill 910 (Stats. 2024, ch. 641) amended Health and Safety Code section 11972 to require counties and courts with treatment court programs to design and operate these programs in accordance with specified state and national best practices and guidelines. Health and Safety Code section 11972(b), as amended, also requires

the Judicial Council to revise standards of judicial administration to reflect the specified best practices and guidelines. To fulfill this statutory requirement, the Collaborative Justice Courts Advisory Committee recommends amending standard 4.10 of the California Standards of Judicial Administration to expand the scope of its application from diversion drug court programs to adult collaborative treatment courts.

[26-073](#)**Rules and Forms | Criminal Law: Advisements on the Felony Plea Form (Action Required)****Summary:**

Before accepting a plea of guilty or no contest, courts must advise a defendant on the record that if they are not a citizen, conviction of the charged offense may result in specified immigration consequences. Recent legislation requires courts to advise defendants of these immigration consequences with the verbatim language of Penal Code section 1016.5(a). Additionally, when a defendant pleads guilty or no contest to a sexually violent offense, the California Supreme Court has directed trial courts to advise defendants about the possibility of being referred to sexually violent predator civil commitment proceedings. The Criminal Law Advisory Committee recommends amendments to the optional felony plea form to incorporate the verbatim immigration advisement and to clarify the advisement in cases involving sexually violent offenses.

[26-074](#)**Rules and Forms | Criminal Procedure: Rule and Form Revisions Related to the Racial Justice Act (Action Required)****Summary:**

The Racial Justice Act prohibits the state from seeking or obtaining a conviction or sentence based on race, ethnicity, or national origin. To implement recent legislation related to the Racial Justice Act and address urgent issues identified by courts on existing court forms that are used to make a claim under the act, the Appellate Advisory Committee and the Criminal Law Advisory Committee recommend amending two rules of court and revising three forms.

[26-067](#)**Rules and Forms | Juvenile Law: Update to Racial Justice Act Forms (Action Required)****Summary:**

Assembly Bill 1071 ((Kalra); Stats. 2025, ch. 464) requires counsel for represented applicants alleging a violation of the Racial Justice Act by a law enforcement officer to serve a copy of the petition on the law enforcement agency that employed the officer. The Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee recommends revising two forms to memorialize this requirement and to make clarifying nonsubstantive changes.

[26-071](#)**Rules and Forms | Mental Health Law: Implementation of CARE Act Legislation (Action Required)****Summary:**

To implement recently enacted legislation regarding the Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Act, the Probate and Mental Health Advisory Committee recommends amending a heading of an article of the California Rules of Court, amending four rules of court, repealing one rule of court, approving two forms, and revising five forms. Senate Bill 27 (Stats. 2025, ch. 528) amended both

substantive and procedural aspects of the CARE Act, including changes to eligibility criteria and processes for initiating proceedings. The committee recommends making these changes to rules and forms to conform with SB 27. The committee also recommends minor changes to improve form usability and clarity and maintain rule consistency.

[26-077](#)**Rules and Forms | Miscellaneous Technical Changes
(Action Required)****Summary:**

Various members of the judicial branch, members of the public, and Judicial Council staff have identified errors in the California Rules of Court and Judicial Council forms, as well as minor changes needed to conform to changes in law or previous council actions. Judicial Council staff recommend making the necessary corrections to ensure that the rules and forms conform to law and to avoid causing confusion for court users, clerks, and judicial officers.

[26-087](#)**Trial Court Budget: Fiscal Year 2025-26 Reallocation of
Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Act
Funding (Action Required)****Summary:**

The Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee recommends reallocating fiscal year 2025-26 Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Act funds among trial courts. The CARE Act funding methodology requires a midyear reallocation process to redistribute unspent funds to courts requesting additional program funding. This recommendation, approved by the Judicial Branch Budget Committee, ensures that available resources are directed to support trial court needs and improve program implementation.

[26-037](#)**Trial Court Budget | Minimum Operating and Emergency Fund
Balance Policy (Action Required)****Summary:**

The Judicial Council's suspension of the minimum operating and emergency fund balance policy will expire on June 30, 2026. This policy requires trial courts to maintain a designated percentage of funds for use in emergency situations or due to budget shortfalls. Since fiscal year 2012-13, the council has repeatedly suspended the policy due to statutory changes and the availability of other emergency funding options. The Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee recommends extending the suspension for one additional year until June 30, 2027. This will provide sufficient time to revise the policy so that it better aligns with the current financial realities and reserve needs of the trial courts.

DISCUSSION AGENDA**26-059 California Access to Justice Commission Presentation
(No Report. No Action Required.)**

Speakers: Hon. Gail Ruderman Feur, Vice-Chair, California Access to Justice Commission
Mr. Jack Londen, Executive Director, California Access to Justice Commission

30 minutes

**[26-086](#) Judicial Branch Administration | Rule for Reporting Civil Arrests
in Court Facilities (Action Required)**

Summary: The Trial Court Presiding Judges Advisory Committee and the Court Executives Advisory Committee recommend adopting a rule of court requiring reporting of civil arrests in superior court facilities, as defined. The recommended rule will help ensure consistent and coordinated statewide collection and reporting of data. The collected data is intended to help the judicial branch better understand the statewide impact that civil arrests in court facilities have on courts and access to justice, while also promoting public trust and confidence through transparency.

Speakers: Hon. Patricia L. Kelly, Chair, Trial Court Presiding Judges Advisory Committee
Hon. Scott R. L. Young, Co-Chair, Trial Court Presiding Judges Advisory Committee and Court Executives Advisory Committee Joint Rules Subcommittee
Mr. Sharif Elmallah, Co-Chair, Trial Court Presiding Judges Advisory Committee and Court Executives Advisory Committee Joint Rules Subcommittee
Ms. Jessica Devencenzi, Policy & Research
Ms. Saskia Kim, Policy & Research

15 minutes

**26-079 Report of the 2025 Proposition 66 Counsel Working Group
(No Action Required)**

Summary: TBD

Speakers: Hon. Laurie Earl, Chair, 2025 Proposition 66 Counsel Working Group
Mr. Michael Giden, Legal Services

20 minutes

26-079: Judicial Council report pending and will be considered by the Executive and Planning Committee at a later date.

INFORMATION AGENDA (NO ACTION REQUIRED)[26-088](#)**Judicial Branch Technology | AB 716 Implementation Outcomes on Remote Public Access****Summary:**

This report summarizes the significant progress the trial courts have made in implementing Assembly Bill 716 (AB 716), which requires courts to provide public audio access to courtroom proceedings when courthouses are physically closed. It presents information the Judicial Council collected from trial courts on the use of one-time funding of \$66.4 million provided through the Budget Act of 2022 to upgrade courtroom audio and video systems. Through a two-year effort, 1,171 courtrooms have been modernized, and projects are underway in another 210 courtrooms. This report highlights key outcomes and direct feedback from participating courts, including improved accessibility, reduced disruption, as well as cost savings and operational efficiencies.

[26-080](#)**Judicial Council Update | Release of Demographic Data on California Justices and Judges****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.

[26-085](#)**Judicial Council Update | Trial Court Facility Modifications Report for Quarter 2 of Fiscal Year 2025-26****Summary:**

This informational report to the Judicial Council outlines the allocations of facility modification funding made to improve trial court facilities in the second quarter (October through December) of fiscal year 2025-26. To determine allocations, the Trial Court Facility Modification Advisory Committee reviews and approves facility modification requests from across the state in accordance with the council's *Trial Court Facility Modifications Policy*.

[26-082](#)**Report to the Legislature | 2025 Training for Judicial Officers Pursuant to Gov. Code, § 68555.5****Summary:**

In accordance with Government Code section 68555.5, the Judicial Council submitted the required report to the Legislature, *2025 Training for Judicial Officers Pursuant to Gov. Code § 68555.5*. The attached report conveys the titles of the training courses offered by the Judicial Council pursuant to Government Code section 68555 and the number of judicial officers who participated in each training.

[26-089](#)**Report to the Legislature | Annual Proposition 36 Court Implementation Report (January 2025-December 2025)****Summary:**

The Budget Act of 2025 (Stats. 2025, ch. 5) provides funding for the courts to support the implementation of Proposition 36, the Homelessness, Drug Addiction, and Theft Reduction Act. It appropriated \$20 million to the Judicial Council and the trial courts to support the increased workload and expand or establish collaborative courts for the implementation of the act. Item 0250-101-0001 of the act requires the Judicial Council to submit a report annually, by March 1, for three years to the Legislature. This report provides background information on the proposition, presents statewide data on cases filed, and describes the implementation and spending activities for the courts and Judicial Council. It also includes details on county behavioral health department allocations and activities-related funding provided to county behavioral health departments from the California Department of Health Care Services. Judicial Council staff submitted *Annual Proposition 36 Court Implementation Report (January 2025 to December 2025)* to the Legislature on March 6, 2026, to fulfill this mandate.

[26-084](#)**Report to the Legislature | California's Access to Visitation Grant Program (Federal Fiscal Years 2024-25 and 2025-26)****Summary:**

Family Code section 3204(d) requires that the Judicial Council submit a report to the Legislature, on the first day of March of each even-numbered year, on the Access to Visitation Grant programs administered by the Judicial Council. *California's Access to Visitation Grant Program (Federal Fiscal Years 2024-25 and 2025-26): 2026 Report to the Legislature* provides information on the programs funded for federal fiscal years 2024-25 and 2025-26 under California's Access to Visitation Grant Program for Enhancing Responsibility and Opportunity for Nonresidential Parents.

[26-083](#)**Report to the Legislature | Compliance With Education Requirements of Welfare and Institutions Code Section 304.7****Summary:**

In accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code section 304.7(c), the Judicial Council submits the required compliance report to the Legislature, Juvenile Dependency Training Completion Report. The attached report demonstrates compliance by judges, commissioners, and referees with the juvenile judicial officer training and education requirements of the statute. The information provided in this report was gathered from the courts by staff of the Judicial Council's Center for Judicial Education and Resources.

[26-076](#)**Trial Courts | Quarterly Investment Report for Second Quarter Fiscal Year 2025-26****Summary:**

This quarterly investment report covers the period from October 1 through December 31, 2025, and provides the financial results for the funds invested by the Judicial Council on behalf of the trial courts as part of the judicial branch treasury program. The report is submitted under the Resolutions Regarding Investment Activities for the Trial Courts, approved by the Judicial Council on February 27, 2004.

Judicial Council Internal Committee Reports

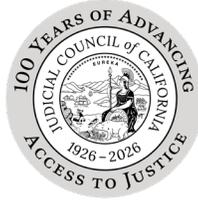
26-012 Written Reports

Circulating Orders

26-066 Circulating Orders since the last business meeting.

Adjournment

DRAFT



Judicial Council of California

455 Golden Gate Avenue · San Francisco, California 94102-3688

Telephone 415-865-4200 · Fax 415-865-4205

MEMORANDUM

Date

March 4, 2026

Action Requested

Approve Staff Recommendations

To

Members of the Executive and Planning Committee

Deadline

March 24, 2026

From

Judicial Council Staff
Francine Byrne, Director
Criminal Justice Services

Contact

Deirdre Benedict, Supervising Analyst
Criminal Justice Services
415-865-7543 phone
deirdre.benedict@jud.ca.gov

Subject

Extension of Temporary Subordinate Judicial Officer for Support of the Pretrial Release Program in the Superior Court of Kern County

Executive Summary

Criminal Justice Services (CJS) staff recommend that the Executive and Planning Committee approve the extension of a temporary subordinate judicial officer (SJO) position in the Superior Court of Kern County through June 30, 2027. The temporary nature of this request will allow the Judicial Council to continue to evaluate the long-term need for additional SJO positions to support the Pretrial Release Program.

Recommendation

CJS staff recommend that the Executive Committee confirm the request of the Superior Court of Kern County for the extension of a temporary SJO position in the court. Authorization for this position is requested through June 30, 2027. This temporary request will enable the court and the Judicial Council to continue to evaluate additional workload demands necessitated by the Pretrial Release Program and to determine a long-term approach to adding necessary SJO positions.

Relevant Previous Council Action

Government Code section 71622(a) grants authority to the Judicial Council to determine the number and type of SJO positions in each trial court. In 2007, the council adopted a policy for the review and approval of requests from trial courts to change the number of SJO positions and delegate approval authority to its Executive and Planning Committee.

More specifically, the Judicial Council adopted a policy pertaining to changes in the number and status of SJO positions that, for the purpose of the current request, contained the following elements:

1. To establish a new SJO position, permanently eliminate an SJO position, or change the time base of an existing SJO position, a court must request and obtain approval from the Executive Committee. The court requested must fund and bear all costs associated with an additional or augmented SJO position.
2. If an increase in the number of SJO positions is sought, the court must submit a request in writing to the appropriate Judicial Council regional administrative director. A request must contain a certification by the presiding judge that the court has sufficient funds in its ongoing budget to cover the cost of any additional or augmented position. Judicial Council staff must provide the Executive Committee with (a) an estimation of the requesting court's ability to fund one-time and ongoing costs resulting from the establishment or augmentation of a new position, and (b) confirmation of need, both SJO workload and overall judicial need, based on the most recent council-approved Judicial Needs Assessment.
3. The Executive Committee will authorize new or augmented SJO positions only if (a) the court can continuously fund the associated increased costs, and (b) the most recent council-approved Judicial Needs Assessment demonstrates that the requesting court's SJO workload justifies additional SJO positions and cannot be handled with existing judicial resources. The committee's decision to change the number or type of SJO positions must be in writing and contain an analysis of the factors underlying the decision.
4. The Executive Committee will eliminate or decrease the time base of an SJO position on the request of a trial court.

Analysis/Rationale

The Pretrial Release Program originally received funding through Senate Bill 129 (Stats. 2021, ch. 69), which amended the Budget Act of 2021. SB 129 provides funding for "the implementation and operation of ongoing court programs and practices that promote the safe,

efficient, fair, and timely pretrial release of individuals booked into jail.” (Sen. Bill 129, § 4, item 0250-101-0001, provision 9.)

The purpose of the funding, as specified in SB 129, and continued in subsequent Budget Acts, is to provide superior courts with information and resources to support judicial officers in making pretrial release decisions. The funds must be used by the courts for pretrial programs and practices and may be spent on the “costs associated with judicial officer pretrial release decisions prior to or at arraignment.” (Sen. Bill 129, § 4, item 0250-101-0001, provision 11(a).)

As outlined under the Relevant Previous Council Action section, Government Code section 71622(a) grants authority to the Judicial Council to determine the number and type of SJO positions in each trial court. The council has adopted a policy for the review and approval of requests from trial courts to change the number of SJO positions, delegating approval authority to its Executive and Planning Committee. The *Pretrial Release Program Guidance Memorandum*, released to all courts in October 2021, outlined the process for courts without authorized vacant SJO positions to submit a request for a temporary SJO position from the council’s Executive and Planning Committee. The position would be tied to pretrial funding, and the SJO would be required to maintain a grant time sheet (filed with the court) to ensure that the SJO’s time is spent on pretrial release duties.

CJS has received an extension request from the Superior Court of Kern County.

Superior Court of Kern County

The Superior Court of Kern County requests extension of one authorized SJO position for the Pretrial Release Program (see Attachment A).

The court had previously obtained approval to add one subordinate judicial officer for fiscal year (FY) 2022–23, FY 2023–24, FY 2024–25, and FY 2025–26. This position has been filled and currently presides over misdemeanor and felony arraignments and makes determinations regarding pretrial release. This SJO performs a vital function in the Kern court’s criminal court operation and allows the court to centralize a significant portion of its arraignments and pretrial determinations, thus freeing up other courtrooms for postarraignment court proceedings and trials. It allows the SJO to spend the time necessary to review the Pretrial Safety Assessment produced for each in-custody defendant and make an individualized determination about their suitability for pretrial release. This subordinate judicial officer position is also expected to play a large role in a new prearraignment review of pretrial release that the court expects to implement within the next six months.

The Kern court currently has 40 judges and 8 SJOs (including this temporary SJO position) with currently one vacancy and approximately one retirement expected in the next fiscal year.

Approval of this request will continue the temporary increase of the Kern court's SJO positions from 7.0 FTE to 8.0 FTE through June 30, 2027, with the designation of "FTE Limited Term" to apply to the temporary SJO.

Policy implications

Confirming the extension of temporary SJO position for the purposes described above is consistent with well-established tenets of council policy on SJO positions.

Comments

This proposal, which is consistent with council policy on the status and funding of SJO positions, did not circulate for comment.

Alternatives considered

The proposed increase of extension in SJO FTEs is consistent with council policy. On that basis, no alternatives were considered.

Fiscal and Operational Impacts

The court's request aligns with the legislative intent of pretrial funding provided to the courts through the program. No additional council funding will be sought in conjunction with this request.

The court has performed the necessary budget analysis to confirm that they have sufficient funds to pay for the costs associated with this request. Implementing the recommendation would generate no fiscal or operational costs beyond the allocation previously awarded to the court as part of their dedicated pretrial funding.

Attachments and Links

1. Attachment A: Letter from Presiding Judge John W. Lua, Superior Court of Kern County, to Administrative Presiding Justice Brad R. Hill (Feb. 6, 2026)



John W. Lua
Judge

Superior Court
State of California
COUNTY OF KERN

1415 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93301
(661) 610-6000

February 6, 2026

Honorable Brad Hill, Chair
Executive & Planning Committee
Judicial Council of California
455 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, California 94102

Re: Kern County – Extension of Temporary Commissioner Position

Dear Justice Hill:

The Superior Court of California, County of Kern, requests an extension of our temporary commissioner position through the end of FY 2026-27. This position is funded through SB 129 Pretrial Release Program Funding.

This commissioner position currently presides over misdemeanor and felony arraignments and makes determinations regarding pretrial release. The workload among judicial officers in Kern County is heavy, and the arraignment calendars are very busy. Kern County currently has 40 judges and 8 commissioners (including this temporary commissioner position) with currently one vacancy and approximately one retirement expected in the next fiscal year. The judicial workload assessment from November 22 shows that Kern County needs 11 more judges, over and above those currently authorized positions. I do note the 2024 Judicial Needs Assessment Report was deferred as the planned 2023 workload study was delayed and conducted in 2025. While the 2026 Judicial Needs Assessment Report is pending, I fully expect that Kern County will still be high on that report as needing additional judges.

The arraignment commissioner performs a vital function in Kern County's criminal courts operation and allows us to centralize our metro arraignments and pretrial determinations, thus freeing up other courtrooms for other criminal court proceedings such as trials and post-sentencing matters. It allows the commissioner to spend the time necessary to review the Pretrial Safety Assessment produced for each in custody defendant and make an individualized determination about his or her suitability for pretrial release. The commissioner has played a large role in a pre-arraignment magistrate review protocol that is being implemented throughout Kern County Superior Court. The commissioner's continued participation and input regarding the implementation of the magistrate review protocol is essential to improving those practices and procedures.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John W. Lua".

John W. Lua
Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California, Kern County