



Judicial Council of California

Tribal Court–State Court Forum

courts.ca.gov/forum.htm
forum@jud.ca.gov

TRIBAL COURT–STATE COURT FORUM

MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING

September 18, 2025

12:30 - 5:00 p.m.

2850 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 100

Sacramento, CA 95833

Advisory Body Members Present: Hon. Abby Abinanti, Cochair, Hon. Shama Mesiwala, Cochair, Hon. Yvette Ayala Henderson, Hon. Richard Blake, Ms. Laila DeRouen, Hon. Michele Fahley, Hon. Devin Flesher, Hon. Benjamin Hanna, Mr. Christopher Haug, Hon. Jennifer Lee, Hon. Kristina Lindquist, Ms. S. Lynn Martinez, Hon. Nicholas Mazanec, Hon. Dorothy McLaughlin, Hon. Karen Riess, Hon. Gary Slossberg, Ms. Christina Snider-Ashtari, Hon. Dean Stout, Hon. Alison Tucher, Hon. Juan Ulloa, and Hon. Rebecca Wightman.

Advisory Body Members Absent: Hon. Leonard Edwards, Hon. Ana España, Hon. Patricia Lenzi, Hon. April Olson, Hon. Stephen Place, Hon. Victorio Shaw, and Hon. Zeke Zeidler.

Others Present: Ms. Janet Bill, Ms. Vida Castaneda, Ms. Sarah Davis, Ms. Laila DeRouen, Ms. Audrey Fancy, Ms. Ann Gilmour, Ms. Anne Hadreas, Hon. Joyce Hinrichs (Ret.), Hon. Lawrence King, Ms. Amanda Morris, Ms. Sarah Saria, Ms. Christy Simons, and Ms. Diana Wagner, Ms. Kate Walker Brown, and Hon. Christine Williams.

OPEN MEETING

Call to Order and Roll Call

The chair called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and took roll call.

Approval of Minutes

The advisory body reviewed and approved the minutes of the June 12, 2025, Tribal Court–State Court Forum meeting.

DISCUSSION ITEMS (ITEMS 1–5)

Item 1

Welcome and Introductions

Presenters/Facilitators: Hon. Abby Abinanti, Cochair, Chief Judge of the Yurok Tribal Court, Hon. Joyce Hinrichs, Cochair (Outgoing), Judge of the Superior Court of California, County of Humboldt (Ret.), and Hon. Shama Mesiwala, Cochair (Incoming), Associate Justice of the Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District.

Forum cochairs, Judge Abinanti and Justice Mesiwala, as well as outgoing cochair Judge Hinrichs (Ret.) called the meeting to order and welcomed members, staff, and guest speakers. The meeting minutes from the June 12, 2025, committee meeting were approved by members

with no objections or abstentions. No public comment was received, both written and in-person. Justice Shama Mesiwala introduced herself to committee members as the incoming cochair, her term started on September 15, 2025.

Item 2

Introductions – New Members

Presenters/Facilitators: Hon. Abby Abinanti, Cochair, Chief Judge of the Yurok Tribal Court, Hon. Joyce Hinrichs, Cochair (Outgoing), Judge of the Superior Court of California, County of Humboldt (Ret.), and Hon. Shama Mesiwala, Cochair (Incoming), Associate Justice of the Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District.

Forum cochairs, Judge Abinanti and Justice Mesiwala, as well as outgoing cochair Judge Hinrichs (Ret.) introduced new members of the committee whose term started on September 15, 2025, and gave a brief orientation and history of the Tribal Court–State Court Forum.

Item 3

Indian Child Welfare Act – California Department of Social Services

Presenters/Facilitators: Diana Wagner, Assistant Deputy Director, Children & Family Services Division, California Department of Social Services, and Laila DeRouen, Director, Office of Tribal Affairs, California Department of Social Services

Ms. Diana Wagner and Ms Laila DeRouen from the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) gave a presentation regarding comments on behalf of CDSS on the Judicial Council of California’s proposed amendments to California Rules of Court 5.481, 5.669, 5.708, and 5.724, and their accompanying Judicial Council forms. A memo to the Forum from CDSS was provided in the meeting materials.

Item 4

VAWEP Updates

Presenters/Facilitators: Kate Walker Brown, Senior Director, Attorney, Collaborative Responses to Commercial Sexual Exploitation Initiative, National Center for Youth Law.

Ms. Kate Walker Brown from the National Center for Youth Law presented to the committee two new tools to support judicial offices and court professionals: The “Guidance Tool for Court Professionals” provides information on how to support young people impacted by commercial sexual exploitation or trafficking, using harm reduction principles, who appear in juvenile or family court. Ms. Walker Brown also presented the draft “AB 124 Survivors of Sexual Violence Bench Cards” which will contain information on the implementation of AB 124 as well as provide a baseline understanding of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and exploitation to understand how to implement AB 124 through trauma informed practices in the courtroom.

Item 5

Discussion of Forum Priorities and Projects

Presenters/Facilitators: All

Committee members reviewed the 2026 Annual Agenda and provided input on how to address new and existing projects, how projects can fit within the scope of work of committees that liaise with the Forum, and next steps to make progress on addressing top priority items.

A D J O U R N M E N T

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Approved by the advisory body on enter date.



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MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING

October 9, 2025

12:15 - 1:15 p.m.

Virtual via Zoom

Advisory Body Members Present: Hon. Abby Abinanti, Cochair, Ms. Laila DeRouen, Hon. Leonard Edwards, Hon. Michele Fahley, Hon. Benjamin Hanna, Mr. Christopher Haug, Hon. Patricia Lenzi, Hon. Kristina Lindquist, Hon. April Olson, Hon. Karen Riess, Hon. Gary Slossberg, and Hon. Rebecca Wightman.

Advisory Body Members Absent: Hon. Shama Mesiwala, Cochair, Hon. Yvette Ayala Henderson, Hon. Richard Blake, Hon. Ana España, Hon. Devin Flesher, Hon. Jennifer Lee, Hon. Nicholas Mazanec, Hon. Dorothy McLaughlin, Hon. Stephen Place, Hon. Victorio Shaw, Ms. Christina Snider-Ashtari, Hon. Dean Stout, Hon. Alison Tucher, Hon. Juan Ulloa, and Hon. Zeke Zeidler.

Others Present: Ms. Vida Castaneda, Ms. Anne Hadreas, Ms. Amanda Morris, Ms. Jamie Shechter, and Mr. Corby Sturges.

OPEN MEETING

Call to Order and Roll Call

The chair called the meeting to order at 12:16 p.m. and took roll call.

DISCUSSION ITEM (ITEM 1)

Item 1

Forum In-person Meeting Debrief

Presenter(s)/Facilitator(s): All

Committee members debriefed topics and issues raised during the in-person meeting held on September 18, 2025, and the Improving Access to Justice Through Recognition & Enforcement of Tribal Court Orders event on September 19, 2025. Some of the discussions included possible proposed amendments to several California Rules of Court and accompanying forms, and the creation of new guidance tools, bench cards, information sheets, and other educational content. The meeting concluded with the creation of three ad hoc work groups to address some of the issues raised.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:43 p.m.

Approved by the advisory body on enter date.