



Judicial Council of California

Tribal Court–State Court Forum

courts.ca.gov/forum.htm
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TRIBAL COURT–STATE COURT FORUM

MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING

December 11, 2025

12:15 - 1:15 p.m.

Zoom

Advisory Body Members Present: Hon. Abby Abinanti, Cochair, Hon. Shama Mesiwala, Cochair, Hon. Yvette Ayala Henderson, Ms. Janet Bill, Hon. Michele Fahley, Hon. Benjamin Hanna, Mr. Christopher Haug, Hon. Jennifer Lee, Hon. Patricia Lenzi, Hon. Kristina Lindquist, Hon. Nicholas Mazanec, Hon. Karen Riess, Hon. Victorio Shaw, Hon. Gary Slossberg, Hon. Alison Tucher, Hon. Rebecca Wightman, and Hon. Zeke Zeidler.

Advisory Body Members Absent: Hon. Richard Blake, Ms. Laila DeRouen, Hon. Leonard Edwards, Hon. Ana España, Hon. Devin Flesher, Ms. S. Lynn Martinez, Hon. Dorothy McLaughlin, Hon. April Olson, Hon. Stephen Place, Ms. Christina Snider-Ashtari, Hon. Dean Stout, and Hon. Juan Ulloa.

Others Present: Ms. Vida Castaneda, Ms. Audrey Fancy, Ms. Anne Hadreas, Mr. Cyrus Ip, Mr. Ken Kenzaki, Ms. Amanda Morris and Mr. Rodney Trevino.

OPEN MEETING

Call to Order and Roll Call

The chair called the meeting to order at 12:19 p.m. and took roll call.

Approval of Minutes

The advisory body reviewed and approved the minutes of the September 18 and October 9, 2025, Tribal Court–State Court Forum meetings. Judge Kristina Lindquist moved to approve, and Hon. Rebecca Wightman seconded the motion. Justice Shama Mesiwala, Judges Jennifer Lee and Victorio Shaw, and Ms. Janet Bill abstained from voting.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS (ITEMS 1–4)

Item 1

Tribal Court-State Court Forum Ad Hoc Work Groups

Presenter: Vida Castaneda, Senior Analyst, Judicial Council of California, Center for Families, Children, and the Courts

Members of the ICWA ad hoc working group provided committee members with an update on their projects. The group is reviewing ICWA focused educational resources that are available on the courts website to ensure that they are up to date, relevant, and not duplicative. Concurrently, they are identifying areas where additional resources should be created to address current issues.

Judge Victorio Shaw provided committee members with an update on behalf of the Tribal Court Orders Enforcement ad hoc working group. The group was able to identify that a large problem with enforcing tribal court orders is law enforcement not recognizing or refusing to enforce them. At their last meeting, multiple solutions were brought forward to be considered with the group deciding to focus on creating education for law enforcement.

Justice Alison Tucher, as a representative of the DUIs on Tribal Lands working group, informed the committee that their group is delaying projects until the open attorney/committee lead staff position is filled in spring 2026.

Item 2

Debrief of the Beyond the Bench Conference

Presenters/Facilitators: All

Judges Patricia Lenzi and Zeke Zeidler shared their experience attending the Beyond the Bench conference held on November 18-19, 2025, and suggested topics they found were interesting and relevant to the work of the committee.

Item 3

New Educational Opportunities

Presenters/Facilitators: Hon. Abby Abinanti, Co-Chair, Chief Judge of the Yurok Tribal Court; Hon. Shama Mesiwala, Co-Chair, Associate Justice of the Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District

Justice Shama Mesiwala discussed an opportunity for the Forum to take part in developing training courses for new judicial officers that focus on tribal issues and services. Proposed courses will take approximately 2 years to be ready to present to the Judges College for consideration. Justice Mesiwala welcomed members who wish to participate.

Item 4

Tribal Court-State Court Forum Mentorship to Current Law Students & New Attorneys

Presenters/Facilitators: Hon. Abby Abinanti, Co-Chair, Chief Judge of the Yurok Tribal Court; Hon. Shama Mesiwala, Co-Chair, Associate Justice of the Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District

The cochairs facilitated conversations about future opportunities to assist the increasing number of law students who are Native or interested in Native issues to find careers in law. Members spoke about programs and panels they have been involved in at various university events and the importance of mentoring the next generation of legal professionals.

A D J O U R N M E N T

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:58 p.m.

Approved by the advisory body on February 6, 2026.