



# NEWS RELEASE

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## California Court Programs Win Top Awards

### *Judicial Council Honors First Combat Veterans Court and Other Innovative Programs*

San Francisco—The Judicial Council of California today announced the recipients of the 2010–2011 Ralph N. Kleps Awards for Improvement in Administration of the Courts, a biennial awards program recognizing innovation in the state’s courts.

The seven programs, chosen from a field of 16 nominations, include the first Combat Veterans Court in California. Other innovative award recipients include the first automated civil clerk transcript program in a trial court and the first writ processing program in a state Court of Appeal. The awards will be presented at local ceremonies later this year.

Created in 1991 in honor of Ralph N. Kleps, the first Administrative Director of the Courts in California, the awards are given in five categories based on the number of authorized judicial positions (AJPs) in the courts. The programs nominated must be innovative and transferable to other courts and have demonstrated results. Summaries of the recipient programs follow.

### 2010–2011 KLEPS AWARD RECIPIENTS

#### *11–39 AJPs*

#### *Automated Civil Grand Jury Program: Superior Court of California, County of Monterey*

This court-developed, web-based application automates the entire civil grand jury recruitment and selection process. It enables the court to maintain summary demographics information for civil grand jurors and publishes this information on the court’s public website, fostering openness and transparency, in accordance with rule 10.625, of the California Rules of Court. This integrated solution has also streamlined civil grand jury work processes for the jury commissioner’s office, resulting in operational efficiencies and overall cost savings to the court.

## **40+ AJPs**

### ***Automated Mail Payment Processing System aka Magic Money Machine: Superior Court of California, County of San Bernardino***

This system allows the court to centralize and automate the processing of thousands of payments received daily via mail. Work previously performed at 11 locations by 17 employees is now processed by a machine and 4 clerks at a central location, representing a 76.4 percent savings in personnel and facilities costs. In addition to significant cost savings to the court, the improved process enables the court to apply payments to customer accounts within one working day, directly benefiting the public.

### ***Elder Court: Superior Court of California, County of Contra Costa***

This court addresses cases involving harm to seniors, including physical, emotional, and financial abuse. One judge oversees the entire process, hearing all criminal and civil cases, including restraining order requests, small claims cases, and conservatorship cases.

Elder court brings together community partners with services that assist the elderly, giving them immediate access to support services, including volunteer senior peer counselors, a senior self-help clinic, mediation, and volunteer interpreters to assist before and after court.

### ***Electronic Legal File (ELF): Superior Court of California, County of Orange***

This easy-to-use electronic filing system integrates the court's case management systems with a document-viewing tool. ELF anticipates the needs of the users and displays information relevant to them in their roles as judicial officer, clerk, or research attorney. ELF allows users to instantly view department calendars and retrieve electronic documents from any case at the touch of a button. ELF enables judges and staff to work efficiently in a paperless environment—the court no longer maintains paper civil case files and has saved more than \$4 million in labor costs and time.

### ***Orange County Combat Veterans Court: Superior Court of California, County of Orange***

The first program of its kind in California, this veterans court is a dedicated criminal calendar offering therapeutic treatment instead of incarceration for combat veterans with substance abuse issues or diagnoses of posttraumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, or other psychological problems attributable to their service.

Participants receive intensive mental health and substance abuse treatment, appear before the judge often for progress reviews, and are frequently and randomly drug tested. Their program compliance is strictly overseen by their probation officer and a veterans affairs case manager, and they are linked to a wide variety of supportive services.

## ***Special Category—Appellate Courts***

### ***Electronic Writ Processing Program: Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District***

This court-developed project is the first system in California to automate the distribution and disposition of cases in the appellate courts. The program allows Court of Appeal justices, research attorneys, and clerks to work collaboratively on the court's original proceedings, eliminating the need for paper files. Justices and writ staff have the ability to receive, review, research, track case status, communicate with each other, and electronically cast their votes on these cases from any location. The project has improved caseload processing times and increased the number of dispositions per month. It saves judicial and staff time without compromising the integrity of the process.

### ***Special Category—Collaborative Projects***

***Transcript Assembly Program (TAP): Court of Appeal, Fifth Appellate District, and the Superior Court of California, Counties of Fresno and Stanislaus***

This the first program in California that automates the compilation and preparation of civil clerk transcripts. The transcripts are compiled and prepared, including customizable indices, via automation and are electronically transmitted to the Court of Appeal.

The program significantly improves the business processes for these two levels of court by saving staff time, reducing paper use and storage costs, and eliminating shipping costs in forwarding transcripts to the reviewing court. It also gives the public electronic access to voluminous court records.

*Note: No awards were given in courts with 2 to 10 authorized judicial positions.*

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*The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and promotes leadership and excellence in court administration.*