



Judicial Council of California

Advisory Committee on Providing
Access & Fairness

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ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PROVIDING ACCESS AND FAIRNESS

MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING

August 17, 2023

12:15 - 1:15 p.m.

Zoom

Advisory Body Members Present: Hon. Kevin Brazile (Cochair), Hon. Sue Alexander (Ret.), Hon. Manuel Covarrubias, Hon. Judith Dulcich, Ms. Ana Maria Garcia, Hon. Amy Guerra, Ms. Janet Hudec, Hon. Clare Keithley, Hon. Victoria Kolakowski, Hon. Sunil Kulkarni, Hon. Richard Lee, Ms. Nina Magno, Hon. Lia Martin, Mr. Lawrence Meyer, Ms. Kemi Mustapha, Ms. Julie Paik, Ms. Andrea Pella, Mr. Michael Powell, Ms. Fariba Soroosh, Hon. Terry Truong.

Advisory Body Members Absent: Hon. Victor Rodriguez (Cochair), Ms. Morgan Baxter, Hon. Mark Cullers, Hon. Mary Greenwood, Ms. Shirley Luo, Hon. Elizabeth Macias, Ms. Twila White

Others Present: Ms. Irene Balajadia, Ms. Laura Brown, Mr. Douglas Denton, Ms. Charli Depner, Ms. Anna Maves, Hon. Louis Mauro, Ms. Amanda Morris, Ms. Cristina Resendiz-Johnson, Ms. Elizabeth Tam-Helmuth, Mr. Gregory Tanaka, Ms. Chio Saephanh.

OPEN MEETING

Call to Order and Roll Call

The chair called the meeting to order at 12:15.

Approval of Minutes

The advisory body reviewed and approved the minutes of the June 15, 2023, Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness meeting.

Motion to approve by Mr. Lawrence Meyer and seconded by Judge Judith Dulcich. Judge Manuel Covarrubias, Ms. Ana Maria Garcia, and Ms. Kemi Mustapha abstained. The motion carries.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS (ITEMS 1-2)

Item 1

Equal Access Fund Distribution to the California Access to Justice Commission (Action Required)

Presenter: *Ms. Laura Brown, Sr. Analyst, Center for Families, Children & the Courts*

Ms. Laura Brown briefed committee members on the proposed distribution of the Equal Access Fund from the 2023 budget act to the California Access to Justice Commission and requested committee approval.

No public comments were received on this item prior to this meeting. The committee approved the proposal, and it will be presented to the Judicial Council during their September 2023 meeting.

Action: Motion to approve by Judge Richard Lee and seconded by Judge Clare Keithley. Judge Terry Truong abstained. The motion carries.

Info 1

CLA/CJA Annual Conference: Increasing Judicial Diversity Panel (No Action Required)

Presenter: *Ms. Cristina Resendiz-Johnson, Attorney, Center for Families, Children & the Courts*

Ms. Cristina Resendiz-Johnson informed committee members on the upcoming CLA/CJA Annual Conference happening in on September 23-26, 2023, in San Diego, CA. Several members of this committee will be on a panel discussing judicial diversity and moderated by Justice Victor Rodriguez.

Lastly, Judge Kevin Brazile, as cochair, wanted to thank all members whose term ends on September 15, 2023 for their service to this committee.

A D J O U R N M E N T

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:29 p.m.

Approved by the advisory body on **enter date.**



Judicial Council of California

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REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Item No.:

For business meeting on: January 18-19, 2024

Title

Access and Fairness: Racial Justice Toolkit
for Judicial Officers and Court Staff

Submitted by

Advisory Committee on Providing Access
and Fairness
Hon. Kevin C. Brazile, Cochair
Hon. Victor A. Rodriguez, Cochair

Agenda Item Type

Information Only

Date of Report

October 10, 2023

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Executive Summary

The Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness (PAF), led by its Ad Hoc Racial Justice Working Group, conceived of and created a new online resource for courts entitled *The Racial Justice Toolkit*. The toolkit is a compilation of resources for bench officers, trial court leadership and court staff to find guidance, as a launching point, to incorporate racial diversity, equity, and inclusion into their court operations; train and educate staff; develop and sustain a diverse workforce; build effective community partnerships; and increase public trust. The toolkit will be updated continuously as new information, data, and resources become available over time.

Relevant Previous Council Action

In response to the murder of George Floyd, increase in race-based hate crimes, particularly against the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community, and outcry around the nation for racial justice reform, the Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness (PAF) formed the Ad Hoc Racial Justice Working Group in 2021. The charge and purpose of the working group is to gather information on branch wide efforts in racial justice and bias, work

with stakeholders in promoting those activities, and consider recommendations on racial justice within the branch to the committee.¹

Analysis/Rationale

The Strategic Plan for California's Judicial Branch

Goal I of the judicial branch strategic plan² —Access, Fairness, Diversity, and Inclusion—states that:

the branch must work to remove all barriers to access and fairness by being responsive to the state's cultural, ethnic, socioeconomic, linguistic, physical, gender, sexual orientation, and age diversities, and to all people. Branch efforts in this regard must include ensuring that the courts are free from both bias and the appearance of bias... demonstrating inclusion and remaining receptive to the needs of all branch constituents, ensuring that court procedures are fair and understandable, and providing socially and culturally responsive programs and services. In addition, to serve the people of California effectively, public servants in the judicial branch should be representative of the diversity of the state's population and continue efforts to enhance public trust and confidence by working with other branches of government toward a strongly diverse judiciary.

The Racial Justice Toolkit promotes the advancement of Goal I by offering tangible resources for court leadership and staff to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion into their court practices, partnerships, and programs. The toolkit functions as a starting point and online hub where courts can go to locate empirical studies, practice guides, and third-party affiliate links to local nonprofit organizations that are already engaged in racial justice initiatives in their communities.

Resources provided

The toolkit is organized into three overall sections and/or categories that each contain different links to third party sites and resources that provide additional information related to the specific topic. Each of the sections is then broken down into subsections related to the overall category. On each page, before each section, there is a brief description of the type of resources the user will find. When necessary, specific links also include brief descriptions that explain what the link itself will lead the user to. The categories and sections are further described below.

Community Outreach

This section highlights the principle that court staff and professionals serve to create trust and transparency with court users and people who interact with the court system. It further

¹ Judicial Council of Cal., *Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness Annual Agenda*, <https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/paf-annual.pdf>

² Judicial Council of Cal., *The Strategic Plan for California's Judicial Branch*, https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/Strategic_Plan_Companion_2022.pdf

encourages users to use the resources provided to explore ways to create positive and meaningful interactions with the public and their local community.

This section is then divided into three additional subsections titled, *public interactions at the court, responding to public concerns and potential justice partners*. Under these subsections, the toolkit user will find links to information related to ways the court interacts with the public such as with townhall events, professional conferences, and training sources related to self-help centers. Lastly, under this category, users can also find information on a multitude of community nonprofit organizations, accredited educational institutions, and government sponsored organizations that are dedicated to advancing racial justice initiatives that a court may turn to for outreach as a potential justice partner.

Diversity in the Courts

This section is geared specifically toward court human resources staff or other court executives who are looking to not only add diversity to their court staff but are also seeking resources related to mentorship and increasing judicial diversity initiatives. This section also provides guidance for incorporating racial equity into a court's strategic plan.

Education

This section lays out specific resources related to implicit bias and cultural responsiveness, as it would apply for a specific staff position, such as bench officers, executive staff, or clerical staff.

Fiscal Impact and Policy Implications

Given the nature of the ever-evolving approach to and framework surrounding racial justice initiatives and diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, the committee anticipates continuing costs for council staff resources to update and revise the online Racial Justice Toolkit. This will occur through implementation, user testing, and routine site maintenance.

Attachments and Links

1. Link A: **To be provided**