

BACKGROUND PAPER

Joint Informational Hearing of the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee, Subcommittee No. 5 on Corrections, Public Safety and the Judiciary

“Public Access to Justice in the Wake of Budget Cutbacks”

April 16, 2012
3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 4203

Background

As California’s economy continues to recover from a significant recession, the fiscal impact of that recession has resulted in significant cuts to essential programs, including cuts to the Judicial Branch that have threatened to diminish access to justice across the state. Those cuts have resulted in, among other things, court closures, reduced availability or elimination of self-help services, and other cost cutting measures that directly impact the ability of the courts to adequately serve the public.

With respect to the current fiscal year, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed the 2011 Budget Act in June 2011. The current-year budget made major strides in reducing the out-year structural deficit from \$20 billion to about \$5 billion. The Governor failed to gain two-thirds legislative support for his original balanced plan for voter-approved taxes and spending cuts. Instead, the enacted budget relied primarily on major cuts in most areas of the budget. At the time of enactment, the cuts totaled \$15 billion, bringing General Fund expenditures down to a level of \$85.9 billion against revenues of \$88.5 billion. As a share of the economy, this brought General Fund spending to its lowest level since 1972-73.

Part of the 2011-12 budget solution was recognition of unexpected revenue gains at the end of 2010-11, and a revised revenue forecast that continued this positive trend by adding \$4 billion in 2011-12 revenue. Due to increased risk in the resulting revenue forecast, budget “triggers” were added to reduce spending by an additional amount of up to \$2.5 billion if revenues fell below expectations. The final trigger determination was outlined in a December 13, 2011, letter from the Director of Finance – revenues were projected to exceed the May Revision level, but by \$1.8 billion instead of the prior estimate of \$4 billion. Due to the partial revenue gain, the trigger reduction level was

\$980 million instead of \$2.5 billion – so an additional trigger cut of \$1.5 billion to K-12 schools was avoided.

As noted below, the cumulative reductions to trial court funding currently stand at \$605.8 million. For the upcoming 2012-13 fiscal year, the Governor's budget proposes an additional "trigger" cut of \$125 million to the Judicial branch if the Governor's tax proposal is not approved in November. At today's hearing, a series of witnesses representing a diverse array of interested parties will discuss the impact of the cumulative cuts on the Judicial branch and the potential impacts of additional cuts on access to justice.

I. Overview of Judicial Branch Budget

In 1997, the Lockyer-Isenberg Trial Court Funding Act of 1997 (Chapter 850, Statutes of 1997) was enacted to provide a stable and consistent funding source for the trial courts. Beginning in 1997-98, consolidation of the costs of operation of the trial courts was implemented at the state level, with the exception of facility, revenue collection, and local judicial benefit costs. This implementation capped the counties' general purpose revenue contributions to trial court costs at a revised 1994-95 level. The county contributions become part of the Trial Court Trust Fund, which supports all trial court operations. Fine and penalty revenue collected by each county is retained or distributed in accordance with statute.

Chapter 1082, Statutes of 2002, enacted the Trial Court Facilities Act of 2002, which provided a process for the responsibility for court facilities to be transferred from the counties to the state by July 1, 2007. The Act also established several new revenue sources, which went into effect on January 1, 2003. These revenues are deposited into the State Court Facilities Construction Fund (SCFCF) for the purpose of funding the construction and maintenance of court facilities throughout the state. As facilities transfer to the state, counties will also contribute revenues for operation and maintenance of court facilities based upon historical expenditures.

In enacting these changes, the Legislature sought to create a trial court system that was more uniform in terms of standards, procedures, and performance. The Legislature also wanted to maintain a more efficient trial court system through the implementation of cost management and control systems.

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 (AOC) implements the council's policies.

Currently, the state maintains 58 trial court systems, each having jurisdiction over a single county. These courts have trial jurisdiction over all criminal cases (including

felonies, misdemeanors, and traffic matters). They also have jurisdiction over all civil cases (including family law, probate, juvenile, and general civil matters). In 2009–10, more than ten million cases were filed in trial courts throughout the state.

a. Recent reductions in trial court funding.

Although trial courts have experienced reductions in General Fund support in the past several years, these reductions have been largely offset by fund shifts and additional revenue from court-related fee increases. As a result, although cumulative reductions currently stand at \$605.8 million, the total level of funding for trial courts has remained relatively flat in recent years. For instance, in 2010-11, trial courts actually received an increase in funding as compared to 2009-10 and the actual funding reduction allocated to trial courts for 2011-12 was \$138.3 million.

The following is a summary of reductions and offsets to trial court funding since 2008-09.

(dollars in millions)

Trial Court Reductions	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Unallocated Reduction	\$92.2	\$268.6	\$55	\$320
One-time Reduction		(100)	(30)	
Total	\$92.2	\$268.6	\$55	\$320
Offsets				
	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Use of Local Reserves	\$92.2	\$71	\$25	\$0
Transfer From other Funds		130	130	233.0
Fee Increases		46.7	113.2	107.1
Use of Fund Reserve		3	36	69.4
Total	\$92.2	\$250.7	\$304.2	\$409.5

Funding reductions have been largely offset in the past, but many of the sources used for these offsets have been exhausted. Additionally, although some funding for employee benefit cost increases has been provided, trial courts have not received an inflation or cost-of-living adjustment since 2008-09 (\$70.1 million Consumer Price Index adjustment), which increases the pressure on trial courts to provide a sustained level of service.

b. Many one-time offsets have been exhausted.

As mentioned previously, reductions in funding for trial courts have largely been offset by fund shifts or transfers, use of local funding reserves, fee increases, and court closures. Other than fee increases, many of these offsets have been one-time in nature and may no longer be feasible options to mitigate the impact of previous reductions in trial court funding.

The AOC has indicated that trial courts can operationalize a significant amount of the funding reductions contained in prior budgets. However, the AOC also indicates that, without some level of restoration, trial court services will be further impacted.

c. Previous trial court closures

The 2009–10 budget authorized the Judicial Council to provide that the courts be closed for the transaction of judicial business for one day per month. On July 29, 2009, the Judicial Council designated the third Wednesday of the month from September 2009 through June 2010 as a uniform statewide court closure day. The council directed that on that day, all superior courts, Courts of Appeal, and the Supreme Court would be closed.

The impact of court closures varied considerably from court to court. A few courts reported that there was no discernible impact or only a minimal impact. But most courts reported that there was a noticeable impact on court operations and court users from closure of the courts. Workload did not go away simply because the court was closed one day a month. Just as on existing court holidays, that workload shifted to other days. The Legislature may consider asking the AOC to provide greater detail on the impacts of the previous one-day closure and expected impacts of closing trial courts for three days per month, which is the equivalent of the trigger reduction of \$125 million if the Governor’s tax proposal is not approved in November.

II. Previous reductions continue to impact trial court services

Under Government Code Section 68106, courts must provide written notice to the public and to the Judicial Council at least 60 days before instituting any plan to reduce costs by designating limited services days. The Judicial Council, in turn, must post all such notices on its Web site within 15 days of receipt. Since Section 68106 became operative on October 19, 2010, the Judicial Council currently has received notices from 25 counties, which detail the reductions in court staffing and services implemented by these counties. (See Appendix “Superior Court Service Reductions to Date” beginning on page 11.)

Because of severe cuts to court funding, some counties have had to close courtrooms including:

- San Diego Superior Court, which has reduced the number of assigned judges regularly used by the court and reduced four full-time trial courtrooms.
- San Joaquin Superior Court, which closed courtrooms at the Lodi and Tracy branches and reassigned to other court branches the civil limited, traffic, small claims, domestic violence, civil harassment, and juvenile traffic cases.
- Ventura Superior Court, which closed two civil courtrooms at the East County branch and relocated two civil judges to Ventura.

Other courts have closed entire court branches, including Butte, San Joaquin, and San Luis Obispo Counties, which have closed one court branch each, and Sonoma and Stanislaus Counties, which have both closed two court branches.

Budget cuts have also impacted the availability of civil case self-help and family law assistance services, including:

- Alameda Superior Court, which has eliminated self-help services at two court locations and reduced hours in providing services at another court.
- Riverside Superior Court, which decreased family law facilitator assistance in order to provide more civil self-help services. Additionally, one of the court's justice partners reduced by half family law assistance at two court locations and eliminated self-help assistance at another location.
- Sacramento Superior Court, which reduced domestic violence workshops from five to three days per week, eliminated trial setting and notice of motion workshops, closed the computer room where litigants prepared child and spousal support calculations, prepared legal forms, and obtained family law and probate information, and reduced the number of litigants served annually from 40,500 to 33,900 due to reduced staff resources.

Although court self-help and family law services are decreasing, courts are reporting increases in the number of litigants requesting self-help assistance with civil and family case filings. The reductions in services have led to severely increased wait times for self-help litigants, with many self-help litigants unable to obtain any assistance.

Efforts to reduce trial court expenditures have led to staffing reductions, including:

- San Joaquin Superior Court, which recently laid off 42 employees.
- San Francisco Superior Court, which recently laid off 75 employees.
- Los Angeles Superior Court, which previously laid off 329 employees.

III. Summary of key findings from American Bar Association Report

On August 8, 2011, the American Bar Association (ABA) released its Report on "Crisis in the Courts: Defining the Problem," which discussed the current and future effects of drastic budget cuts to the nation's courts. In this Report, the ABA stated that budget cuts have severely decreased "court staff and related resources . . . at a time when the

demand for the judicial resolution of economic claims has increased dramatically.” (American Bar Assoc., Task Force on Preservation of the Justice System, Report, *Crisis in the Courts: Defining the Problem* (Aug. 8, 2011) p. 1 <http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/house_of_delegates/resolutions/2011_hod_annual_meeting_302.authcheckdam.doc> (as of Apr. 6, 2012).)

Court staffing reductions have impacted the courts’ ability to resolve cases in a timely manner. For example:

- In Minnesota, almost one third of all criminal cases take more than a year to clear.
- Criminal cases in Georgia now take more than a year to resolve, which created a reduction in or deletion of court time for divorce, child custody, business and personal injury cases.
- Resolution of cases in Los Angeles Superior Courts has been delayed from less than two years in 2009 to an anticipated four and a half years by 2012. (*Id.* at pp. 3-5.)

The ABA Report discusses the cost to business of court delays. In Florida, the cost to business of court-related delays in foreclosure cases was nearly \$10 billion. (*Id.* at pp. 1-2.) Decreases in court staff also results in tax losses to states. The Report notes that in California, “the state hopes to save \$480 million through deep reductions in the court’s budget, [but] the resulting economic losses will include more than \$1.6 billion in lost state and local taxes.” (*Id.* at p. 6; citing Weinstein and Porter, Economic Impact on the County of Los Angeles and the State of California of Funding Cutbacks Affecting the Los Angeles Superior Court (Dec. 2009), p. 2.)

The Report also highlights the additional burden on courts when free legal services are scaled back, requiring additional guidance by judges and staff to litigants who would have qualified for legal aid assistance when it was available. (*Id.* at p. 7.) The Report concludes that because the court system is underfunded across the country, “the overall stability of the justice system is in jeopardy.” (*Id.* at p. 8.)

IV. “Hearings on California’s Civil Justice Crisis”

In November and December of 2011, the State Bar of California, CalChamber, and the Commission on Access to Justice co-sponsored the “Hearings on California’s Civil Justice Crisis.” The four hearings, held across the state, included representatives from all facets of Californian’s diverse population – including low-income individuals, seniors, veterans, and representatives from businesses, social services agencies, private foundations, and health care providers. Testimony at the hearings demonstrated the critical role that the civil justice system plays in Californians’ lives and professions.

a. Summary of key findings from the hearings

The following is a summary provided by OneJustice of key findings from the hearings:

Testimony given at the four hearings unanimously conveyed that the civil justice system is the bedrock and foundation of our freedoms and livelihoods – that it serves as a beacon for disadvantaged communities, a pillar for businesses, a shield for domestic violence survivors, and a safety net for veterans and seniors. Every participant in the hearings firmly agreed that the civil justice system requires two things: (1) fully-functioning courts; and (2) access to affordable legal assistance, which for the poor and disenfranchised requires a robust statewide network of legal services organizations.

Sadly, however, the hearings also demonstrated that the civil justice system's viability is being threatened by underfunding of both the courts and the legal services organizations that provide free assistance to low-income Californians. Over the past three years, dramatic slashes in court funding have undercut the judicial branch's important work. . . . Witnesses testified about the tragic effects of the court funding cuts, including prolonged delays in important court proceedings – most notably in cases where the custody of a child or the safety of a domestic violence survivor was in question. For legal services organizations charged with providing essential legal services to Californians in need, funding levels have fallen from low to dangerously-low in the last three years. State funding from interest on lawyers trust accounts ("IOLTA") for over 100 legal services organizations around the state has dropped from a high of \$22 million four years ago to \$5 million in 2012. And, for the eleven of these organizations that also receive funding from the Legal Services Corporation ("LSC"), total available funds dropped by 3.8 percent in 2011 and then by 15 percent in 2012. The 2012 reduction will mean \$8 million less for California organizations, or approximately \$200,000 to \$1 million in cuts for each organization. Witnesses testified about the effects of chronic underfunding, including a reduced ability for low-income Californians to access the free legal assistance needed to access the civil justice system.

b. Examples of impacts on individual Californians and businesses

The hearings also included the following examples of how superior court service reductions have impacted individual Californians and businesses:

- In Alameda County, the court has centralized filings in domestic violence cases and has reduced clerk hours. As such, domestic violence victims face delays in obtaining temporary restraining orders against their abusers. Many victims often arrive after the 2:30 p.m. clerk hours and must return the next day to file applications for restraining orders. They must then return to the court on the

third day to find out if the restraining order was granted. If there are errors in the application, they must continue returning to the court because they cannot be told by fax or telephone of errors in the application materials they need to correct.

- A father in Placer County was trying to stay current with his child support payments, which were set at an amount before he became unemployed and subsequently hired at a job paying much less than his previous salary. At this point, the child support payments were half of his income. He filed a motion to modify the child support order but had to wait a couple months before he could get his hearing set. As a result of the delayed hearing, the father ended up losing his apartment and now has nowhere to visit with his child, who lives in another county and is a special needs child.
- A small limited liability corporation (LLC) tried to file a case in pro per. The LLC representative was instructed by the court that the LLC was required to have attorney representation in the action. During the process of filing the action, the court was closed for a week, which delayed processing and service of the action by several weeks.
- A tenant responding to an unlawful detainer action was turned away at 4 p.m. because of reduced court staff. Accordingly, the tenant missed the response deadline and was subject to a default judgment.
- In Redwood City, a mono-lingual Vietnamese woman asked for help from the Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) Clinic in obtaining a TRO application against her boyfriend, who had forced her to have sex with him for four consecutive days. The court did not act on the application that day. As she was too terrified to return to the apartment she shared with her boyfriend, the woman and her two children stayed at a shelter for the weekend. On top of this displacement, she missed two days of work, Saturday and Sunday, the two most profitable days of the week at the nail salon where she worked, because her boyfriend had taken her car. The court issued the TRO the following Monday, with a permanent restraining order pending. The court requested a Vietnamese interpreter for the next hearing. The court did not have an interpreter at the next hearing, so it was continued for two months. After a call to the court to confirm the interpreter, the court advised that an interpreter was unavailable, so the hearing on the permanent restraining order was delayed an additional two months.

V. Current budgetary outlook

With respect to the 2012-13 fiscal year, the Governor defines the General Fund budget shortfall as \$9.2 billion through the period ending June 30, 2013. Of this budget shortfall, \$4.1 billion is attributed to 2011-12, and \$5.1 billion is attributed to 2012-13.

The budget shortfall in the current year is a result of several factors. Specifically, court orders and delayed federal approval have increased costs in the health and human services area by nearly \$2 billion. Furthermore, final revenues from the 2010-11 fiscal year came in significantly lower than anticipated in June 2011 to account for an additional \$1.9 billion in erosions. Lower state revenues also contributed to the current year shortfall, but were partially offset by lower costs for Proposition 98 and the implementation of “trigger” spending reductions in the current fiscal year. The elimination of redevelopment agencies, which was recently validated by the California Supreme Court, will also result in fewer General Fund savings in the current fiscal year, but more revenue in future years.

a. Governor’s proposal

The Governor proposes \$50 million for the Trial Court Trust Fund from civil court fee increases. These funds would be available to offset the ongoing impact of reductions in funding for trial court operations contained in previous budget acts. Additionally, the budget includes a provision that would grant the Judicial Council the authority to allocate the continuing budget reductions across the branch, and to redirect funding from other court fund sources, as the Judicial Council deems appropriate.

The following shows total trial court funding as proposed in the Governor’s 2012-13 budget.

(dollars in millions)

2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
\$3,218	\$2,667	\$2,819

The Governor proposes a trigger reduction of \$125 million if the Governor’s tax proposal is not approved in November. While the Branch would determine how to implement this reduction, the Governor indicates that it is the equivalent of court closures equal to three days per month.

b. Judicial Branch proposed solutions for trial court funding.

The AOC has proposed that the following solution be considered as a package of components that can provide ongoing funding stability for trial courts.

- **Establish a New Baseline Budget That Reflects an Appropriate Level of Ongoing Funding Based on Cumulative Reductions.** Trial courts will absorb approximately \$350 million as operationalized reductions while recognizing that courts may be unable to provide full access to justice. This is an attempt to more accurately reflect the budget after the successive years of one-time borrowing solutions.
- **General Fund Restoration.** Part of the ongoing solution would include a restoration of \$150 million. This restoration is proposed to be made over the

next three fiscal years: \$100 million in 2012-13, another \$25 million in 2013-14, and a further \$25 million in 2014-15.

- **Additional and/or Increases in Various Civil Fees.** As done in past years, the judicial branch will work with the other branches of government and judicial branch stakeholders, including the State Bar, to develop a range of user-fees. As mentioned above, the proposed budget includes \$50 million in new fee revenue for the trial court trust fund.
- **Transfer and Redirections from other Court Funds.** Part of the solution would include a redirection from other funds, after consultation and negotiation with branch stakeholders. The court's goal is to achieve a consensus on redirections of \$50 million.
- **Improved Efficiencies in Court Operations and Changes in Unnecessary Statutory and Reporting Requirements.** The Judicial Branch would identify areas in which courts can become more efficient without threatening the administration of justice and make changes in those areas.
- **Trial Court Fund Balances.** Part of the solution would include the trial courts using \$100 million of the fund balances in 2012-13, \$75 million in 2013-14, and \$50 million in 2014-15.

APPENDIX

SUPERIOR COURT SERVICE REDUCTIONS TO DATE

Superior Court (by County)	Date of Notice	Summary of Service Reduction	Description	Effective Date of Reduction/Closure	Scheduled End Date
Alameda	July 25, 2011	Reduced all 8 County Clerks' offices by 7.5 hours/week Reduced Traffic Division hours by total of 7.5 hours/week	<u>Reduced Clerks' office hours:</u> Current hours from 8:30 am – 4:00 pm. New hours from 8:30 am – 2:30 pm. A drop box will be maintained to receive documents after 2:30 pm. <u>New Traffic Division hours:</u> 8:00 am – 2:30 pm (per website, currently open 8:00 am-4:00 pm).	October 3, 2011	n/a
Butte	July 1, 2011	Closure of Paradise courthouse	All Paradise courthouse services to be moved to Chico courthouse (15 miles away).	Close of business September 30, 2011	Indefinitely
Calaveras	October 31, 2011	Reduced Court Clerk's office hours by a total of 6 hours and 15 minutes/week Has also left vacant positions open and implemented voluntary furloughs	<u>Current hours:</u> 8:15 am – 4:00 pm. <u>New hours:</u> 8:30 am – 3:00 pm. Drop box available afterhours.	January 1, 2012	n/a
Fresno	October 4, 2011	Temporary closure of Clovis, Firebaugh, Kingsburg and Selma courthouses	<u>Clovis:</u> December 27 – December 30, 2011. <u>Firebaugh:</u> December 28, 2011. <u>Kingsburg:</u> December 20 – December 23,	December 20, 2011	December 30, 2011

Superior Court (by County)	Date of Notice	Summary of Service Reduction	Description	Effective Date of Reduction/Closure	Scheduled End Date
			2011. <u>Selma</u> : December 22 and December 31, 2011.		
Humboldt	August 31, 2011	Reduction in court Clerk's office 10 hours/week Has also eliminated positions, frozen vacant positions, consolidated services, and eliminated COLA increases for employees, among other things	<u>Current hours</u> : 9:00 am – 4:00 pm. <u>New hours</u> : 9:00 am – 2:00 pm. Drop box will be available.	November 7, 2011	n/a
Kings	August 10, 2011	Reduction in Avenal courthouse days of operation by 50%, however the number of operating hours remains the same Has also instituted a hiring freeze, eliminated positions, and negotiated contractual cost-savings	<u>Current hours in session</u> : 8:00 am – 12:00 pm, every Wednesday. <u>New hours in session</u> : 8:00 am – 5:00 pm on the first, third, and fifth (when applicable) Wednesday. Drop box available outside the Avenal courthouse for payment of tickets and filing of paperwork.	November 2, 2011	n/a

Superior Court (by County)	Date of Notice	Summary of Service Reduction	Description	Effective Date of Reduction/Closure	Scheduled End Date
Kings (UPDATE)	October 3, 2011	Temporary closure of all courtrooms and clerks' offices at the Avenal, Corcoran and Lemoore courthouses	Closures from December 27 – December 30, 2011. Any court proceedings required for cases pending at these courthouses will be heard at the Hanford courthouse. Drop boxes will be available at these locations for same day filings.	December 27, 2011	December 30, 2011
Lake	September 14, 2011	13 court closure days in Fiscal Year 2011/2012 (unpaid furlough days for employees) Has also reduced total number of employees by 10% (via layoffs, attrition, and restructuring of positions), implemented mandatory furloughs in Fiscal Year 2009/2010	Closures on various dates from November 21, 2011 to June 1, 2012. Both clerks' offices to be closed on the court closure days, with a drop box available in Lakeport. One Lakeport courtroom to stay open to hear all mandatory last-day criminal matters in custody criminal arraignments, juvenile detention hearings and emergency matters only.	November 21, 2011	June 1, 2012
Lassen	November 12, 2010	Reduction in the Court Clerk's office hours by 10 hours/week	<u>Current hours:</u> 7:30 am –5:30 pm. <u>New hours:</u> 8:00 am – 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm.	January 15, 2011	n/a
Mendocino	January 21, 2011	Reduction in number of days the Covelo and	Currently convene once a month. Both courts	April 1, 2011	n/a

Superior Court (by County)	Date of Notice	Summary of Service Reduction	Description	Effective Date of Reduction/Closure	Scheduled End Date
		<p>Pointe Arena Courts convene by 50%</p> <p>Has also instituted hiring freeze in 2008, and eliminated several positions, resulting in approximately an 18% decrease in staff</p>	will now convene only in odd numbered months.		
Mendocino (UPDATE)	August 24, 2011	<p>Reduction in hours for the Ukiah and Ten Mile Branches by 5 hours/week each</p> <p>Staff reductions are at approximately 21% since Fiscal Year 2009/2010 due to attrition and layoffs</p>	<p><u>Current hours:</u> 8:30 am – 4:00 pm.</p> <p><u>New hours:</u> 8:30 am – 3:00 pm.</p>	November 1, 2011	n/a
Merced	August 25, 2011	<p>Reduction in Merced Superior Court Clerks' office hours by 5 hours/week</p> <p>Limited operating days in November and December 2011</p>	<p><u>Reduced Clerks' office hours:</u> Currently open 8:00 am – 4:00 pm. New hours from 8:00 am – 3:00 pm. Drop box will be available for same day filing before 4:00 pm.</p> <p><u>Limited operating days:</u> November 21, 22 and 23, 2011 and December 27, 28, 29 and 30, 2011. All Clerks' offices and all but two courtrooms to be closed.</p>	October 26, 2011	n/a

Superior Court (by County)	Date of Notice	Summary of Service Reduction	Description	Effective Date of Reduction/Closure	Scheduled End Date
Merced (UPDATE)	February 7, 2012	Limited operating days in April Since August 2011, reduction in staff salaries by 4.5%	Limited operating days on April 6 and 9, 2011. All Clerks' offices and all but two courtrooms to be closed. One courtroom will be open in the main courthouse to conduct criminal arraignments and examinations as required by law, and to allow a judge to sign documents on an emergency basis. A second, Juvenile Division courtroom will be open for time-sensitive matters. A drop box will be available to receive same day filing documents.	April 6, 2012	April 9, 2012
Merced (UPDATE #2)	February 27, 2012	Reduction in Clerk's office house at Plumas Sierra Regional Courthouse, due to loss of clerical position	<u>Current clerk hours:</u> 8:00 am – 4:00 pm. <u>New clerk hours:</u> 8:00 am – 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm.	April 30, 2012	n/a

Superior Court (by County)	Date of Notice	Summary of Service Reduction	Description	Effective Date of Reduction/Closure	Scheduled End Date
Nevada	September 2, 2011	<p>Reduction in Nevada City and Truckee Friday courthouse hours by 2 hours/ week at each location</p> <p>Reduction in Nevada City and Truckee Clerk Friday office hours by 2 hours/week at each location</p>	<p><u>Friday courthouse hours:</u> Currently open 8:00 am – 5:00 pm on Fridays. New Friday hours from 8:00 am – 3:00 pm.</p> <p><u>Friday clerk hours:</u> Currently open 8:00 am – 4:00 pm on Fridays. New Friday hours from 8:00 am – 2:00 pm.</p>	November 4, 2011	n/a
Placer	September 15, 2011	<p>12 limited service days in Fiscal Year 2011/2012 during which all but one courtroom and all clerks' offices will be closed</p> <p>Has also instituted layoffs and furloughs, closed 2 courtrooms, ended funding for both Peer Court and Family Law Case Management Program, and reduced Self-Help Center and operating hours</p>	<p>Days will fall between November 21, 2011 and June 15, 2012.</p> <p>On those days, Dept. 13 at the courthouse in Placer County jail will remain open to handle criminal arraignments, certain time-sensitive juvenile proceedings, any last day criminal matters and emergency matters if circumstances warrant.</p>	November 21, 2011	June 15, 2011
San Bernardino	January 6, 2012	<p>Reduction in services at Big Bear and Needles courthouses by 2 days/month</p> <p>The type and number of cases at each courthouse will remain the same.</p> <p>Reduction in Clerks'</p>	<p><u>Big Bear courthouse and Clerk's office:</u> Courthouse is currently open Monday – Friday of the first full week of each month. Moving forward, will be open Tuesday – Thursday of the first full week. Clerk's office will be open from 8:00 – 3:30 pm, Tuesday – Thursday of the first full week (per</p>	<p>Big Bear: April 2, 2009</p> <p>Needles: April 9, 2012</p>	

Superior Court (by County)	Date of Notice	Summary of Service Reduction	Description	Effective Date of Reduction/Closure	Scheduled End Date
		office hours as well	<p>website, currently open 8:00 am – 4:30 pm during first full week of month).</p> <p><u>Needles courthouse and clerk’s office:</u> Courthouse is currently also open Monday – Friday of the first full week of each month. Moving forward, will be open Tuesday – Thursday of the second full week of the month. Clerk’s office will be open from 8:00 – 4:30 pm, Monday – Friday of the second full week, and 8:00 am – 1:00 pm all other weekdays (per website, currently open 8:00 – 4:30 pm, Monday – Friday of the first full week, and 8:00 am – 1:00 pm all other weekdays).</p>		
San Francisco	November 22, 2010	<p>Reduction in criminal and traffic Clerk’s office hours by 4.5 hours/week, and in civil, family and juvenile delinquency Clerks’ office hours by 4 hours/week</p> <p>Has also instituted hiring freeze for almost 2 years, and mandatory and voluntary furloughs, among other things</p>	Early closing at 12:00 pm every Friday for 24 Fridays in calendar year of 2011.	January 21, 2011	July 8, 2011

Superior Court (by County)	Date of Notice	Summary of Service Reduction	Description	Effective Date of Reduction/Closure	Scheduled End Date
San Francisco (UPDATE)	May 9, 2011	Limited service in Clerk's office on Fridays continues Reduction in workforce by 18% in last 3 years	Specified offices and locations close Fridays at 12:00 pm, including Clerks' offices for Civil and Criminal, Unified Family Court, Traffic Court Division and Juvenile Delinquency divisions.	July 15, 2011	n/a (but see August 2, 2011 update below)
San Francisco (UPDATE)	August 2, 2011	Indefinite closure of 25 courtrooms Reduction in all Clerks' office hours by half hour/day, at start of each day (2.5 hours/week) Criminal Division and Traffic Division Clerks' offices reduced by an additional half hour per day, at end of each day (an additional 2.5 hours/week, for 5 total) Staff reductions Eliminating Limited Service Days previously implemented	<u>Closures:</u> Indefinite closure of 25 courtrooms (leaving only 17 civil trial departments). <u>Reduced operating hours:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All Clerks' offices will open at 8:30 am instead of 8:00 am, Monday – Friday. - Criminal Division and Traffic Division Clerks' offices to close at 4:00 pm instead of 4:30 pm, Monday – Friday. <u>Staff reduction:</u> 40%. At 591 employees 3 years ago, left with 484 after April 2009 hiring freeze, and looking to retaining only 284. <u>Limited Service Day hours change:</u> Currently open 8:00 am – 12:00 pm. New hours for all Clerks' offices from 8:30 am – 4:00 pm.	Layoffs begin September 30, 2011 Closures and reductions in hours effective October 3, 2011	n/a

Superior Court (by County)	Date of Notice	Summary of Service Reduction	Description	Effective Date of Reduction/Closure	Scheduled End Date
San Joaquin	July 19, 2011	<p>Closure of one courtroom and one Clerk's office at Lodi Branch, and closure of Tracy Branch</p> <p>Has also instituted voluntary and mandated furlough days, left positions vacant, removed court reporters from family law, eliminated the Arbitration program, reduced expert psychiatric evaluations and reduced all clerks' office hours, among other things.</p>	<p><u>Lodi</u>: Only one remaining courtroom and one Clerk's office remain open.</p> <p><u>Tracy Branch</u>: Closure of entire court facility, two courtrooms and clerk's office.</p>	October 3, 2011	n/a
San Joaquin (REVISAL)	July 27, 2011	<p>Above closures remain</p> <p>Small claims matters at one courthouse on temporary and limited basis</p> <p>Diversion of Tracy and Lodi Branch services to alternate locations</p>	<p><u>Temporary and limited basis</u>: Schedule small claims hearings ONLY at the Stockton courthouse.</p> <p><u>Tracy branch</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Civil harassment and unlawful detainer cases must be filed at Manteca branch instead; - Domestic violence restraining orders moved to the Stockton court annex; - Infraction arraignments and limited civil matters moved to the main Stockton courthouse. 	October 3, 2011	n/a

Superior Court (by County)	Date of Notice	Summary of Service Reduction	Description	Effective Date of Reduction/ Closure	Scheduled End Date
			<p><u>Lodi branch:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited civil matters, traffic cases, trials, criminal motions, prelim hearings, and probation violations moved to the main Stockton courthouse; - Domestic violence restraining orders moved to the Stockton court annex. 		
San Luis Obispo	October 20, 2011	Suspension of Grover Beach Branch operations	Suspension of Grover Beach operations to take place as of the close of business Friday, December 30, 2011. Grover Beach Branch operations to be consolidated with the SLO Courthouse Annex (15 miles away).	January 3, 2012	n/a
San Mateo	December 1, 2010	<p>Closure of Satellite Clerk's office in Northern Branch</p> <p>Has also reduced workforce by 20%, consolidated trial court services, and reduced wages, among other things</p>	<p>Closed a satellite clerk's office handling certain family law, probate, and civil filings.</p> <p>Re-directing domestic violence and civil harassment restraining orders to the Northern Branch's Criminal Clerk's office, and all other filings to the Family Law, Civil and Probate Clerks' offices to Redwood City.</p>	January 31, 2011	n/a

Superior Court (by County)	Date of Notice	Summary of Service Reduction	Description	Effective Date of Reduction/Closure	Scheduled End Date
San Mateo (UPDATE)	August 18, 2011	<p>Elimination of a Central Branch courtroom 2 days/ week</p> <p>Reduction in the number of traffic arraignment calendars heard by 2 days/week</p> <p>Workforce reduction now at 24%</p>	<p><u>Closure:</u> Courtroom G at the San Mateo Superior Court Central Branch closed Tuesdays and Thursdays.</p> <p><u>Reduced calendars:</u> Each traffic branch will hear two arraignment calendars each week (as opposed to four).</p>	November 1, 2011	n/a
San Mateo (UPDATE #2)	October 31, 2011	<p>Reduction in Civil, Family Law, Juvenile, Probate, records and Small Claims Clerks' office hours by 5 hours/week</p> <p>Reduction in Traffic and Criminal Clerks' office hours by 6.5 hours/week, and elimination of same-day walk in calendar process</p> <p>Reduction in traffic arraignment calendars by 50% a week</p>	<p><u>Civil, Family, Juvenile, Probate, Records, and Small Claims Clerks' office:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current hours: 8:00 am – 4:00 pm. - New hours: 8:30 am – 3:30 pm Monday – Friday. <p><u>Traffic and Criminal Clerks' office hours:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current hours: 7:30 am – 4:00 pm, Monday –Thursday and 8:00 am – 4:00 pm Friday. - New hours: 8:30 am – 3:30 pm, Monday – Thursday and 8:00 am – 3:30 pm, Friday. - Two arraignment calendars/week, as opposed to four - In place of same-day 	January 3, 2012	n/a

Superior Court (by County)	Date of Notice	Summary of Service Reduction	Description	Effective Date of Reduction/Closure	Scheduled End Date
			walk in calendar process, allow for reservation of arraignment date in advance through court's website 24/7, or in person by a court clerk during normal business hours.		
San Mateo (UPDATE #3)	January 19, 2012	Consolidation of clerk's office traffic operations to one location Additional reduction in workforce by April 2012	<p><u>Consolidation:</u> San Mateo and South San Francisco Traffic Divisions (including their clerk's offices) to be relocated to Redwood City Southern Traffic Annex.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All traffic arraignment calendars to be heard at Redwood City, but traffic court trials will still be heard at the three branch locations based on appropriate geographic jurisdiction. - All traffic-related filings and correspondence to be submitted to the consolidated Redwood City location. <p><u>Workforce reductions:</u> Workforce reported to be reduced further by April, but do not specify by how much. Since 2008, San Mateo reports their workforce has already reduced by 24%.</p>	April 2, 2012	n/a

Superior Court (by County)	Date of Notice	Summary of Service Reduction	Description	Effective Date of Reduction/Closure	Scheduled End Date
Santa Clara	December 7, 2011	<p>Reduction in Clerks' office hours by 12 hours/week</p> <p>Night Court traffic arraignment hearings still available, but terminating evening walk-in traffic arraignment hearings</p>	<p><u>Current hours of operation:</u> 8:30 am – 7:00 pm, Monday – Thursday and 8:30 – 4:00 pm, Friday.</p> <p><u>New hours of operation:</u> 8:30 am – 4:00 pm, Monday – Friday. Drop box available after 4:00 for documents, which will be filed the next day.</p>	February 6, 2012	n/a
Santa Cruz	October 28, 2010	<p>Limited service days, closing all but one courtroom, for 7 days</p> <p>Closure of Watsonville Courthouse for those days</p>	<p>Limited service on December 27 – 30, 2010; January 28, February 25, and March 25, 2011 (concurrent with furloughs days).</p> <p>One courtroom at the main Santa Cruz courthouse will be open to hear mandatory last-day criminal matters and arraignments, juvenile dependency and delinquency matters, civil and domestic violence ex-parte. Santa Cruz Criminal and Civil Clerks' offices will be open.</p>	December 27, 2010	After March 25, 2011

Superior Court (by County)	Date of Notice	Summary of Service Reduction	Description	Effective Date of Reduction/Closure	Scheduled End Date
Santa Cruz (UPDATE)	October 25, 2011	Four limited Service Days at Santa Cruz courthouse during Fiscal Year 2011/2012 Closure of Watsonville courthouse for those days	Limited service days scheduled for December 27 – 30, 2011 (concurrent with furlough days), and the limited service will be same as last limited service dates (see above).	October 25, 2011	January 3, 2012
Shasta	July 15, 2011	Closure of Clerks' office in Burney Branch every day but Wednesdays, and reduction in office hours by 2 hours on each Wednesday	<u>Reduced hours:</u> Currently open 8:30 am – 4:30 pm on Monday – Friday. Moving forward, will be open only Wednesdays, with reduced hours from 9:30 am – 3:30 pm. Drop box to be provided. (Note: Closest courthouse is the Redding courthouse, 50 miles away.)	Week of September 12, 2011	Through June 30, 2012 (at which point will consider expanding hours)
Siskiyou	May 27, 2011	Discontinuation of all court sessions in Tulelake which equals one day/month (or 12 days/year)	All matters currently pending in Tulelake to be heard at its Dorris Branch (26 miles away).	August 1, 2011	n/a
Solano	March 9, 2012	Limited operation days, closing all Clerks' offices and all but two courtrooms Has also instituted a hiring freeze the past three years, furloughs, early retirement, and electronic reporting in misdemeanor cases,	Limited operation days scheduled for 8 days spread throughout July, August, November, December, 2012 and March 2013. During limited operation days, two courtrooms will be open in Fairfield to conduct arraignments and examinations as	July 5, 2012	March 29, 2013

Superior Court (by County)	Date of Notice	Summary of Service Reduction	Description	Effective Date of Reduction/Closure	Scheduled End Date
		among other things	<p>required by law, to sign any necessary documents on an emergency basis, and to handle time-sensitive juvenile matters. Time sensitive family law matters will also be handled daily.</p> <p>Drop boxes will be available in Vallejo for same-day filing of documents deposited before 4:00 pm.</p>		
Tehama	April 18, 2011	<p>Reduction in hours at all 3 Clerks' office locations by 6 hours/week</p> <p>Also, through attrition, court clerks' office staff has been reduced by approximately 18% over the past 3 years</p>	<p><u>Current hours:</u> 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday – Friday.</p> <p><u>New hours:</u> 8:00 am – 4:00 pm, Monday – Thursday and 8:00 am – 3:00 pm, Fridays. Drop box will be provided afterhours. Those received before 5:00 pm will be filed that day.</p>	July 1, 2011	n/a
Ventura	September 22, 2011	<p>Closure of the majority of the courtrooms and Clerks' offices surrounding 2011 winter holidays, which will count as furlough days for employees</p> <p>Reduction in all clerks' offices for traffic, civil, small claims, family law, criminal, juvenile, probate appeals and records by 5</p>	<p><u>Closures:</u> November 23, 2011, December 23, 27, 28, 29 and 30 2011. A few courtrooms will remain open to hear urgent criminal, juvenile, unlawful detainer and temporary restraining order issues, and a judge will be available to sign necessary documents on an emergency basis at the Ventura Hall of Justice.</p>	<p>Closures effective November 23, 2011</p> <p>Reduced hours effective January 3, 2012</p>	n/a

Superior Court (by County)	Date of Notice	Summary of Service Reduction	Description	Effective Date of Reduction/ Closure	Scheduled End Date
		hours/week, with one exception	<u>Reduced hours:</u> Current hours from 8:00 am – 4:00 pm, Monday – Friday. New hours from 8:00 am – 3:00 pm, except for Walk in Express Window at the main courthouse for Traffic and Collections.		
Ventura (UPDATE)	November 17, 2011	Reassignment of civil law judges from Simi Valley to main Ventura courthouse and related civil Clerk’s office operations, with exceptions Has also instituted furloughs, left vacancies open, and conducted layoffs, among other things	Reassigned two East County branch civil law judges and all related civil clerks’ offices, except unlawful detainers, family law and small claims from Simi Valley to main courthouse in Ventura.	January 30, 2012	n/a
Yolo	August 4, 2011	Reduction in operating hours for Civil, Criminal, Court Collections and Traffic Division filing windows and phones by 10 hours/ week Has also instituted voluntary furloughs and implemented hiring freeze, among other things	<u>Current hours:</u> 8:30 am –4:30 pm, Monday – Friday. <u>New hours:</u> 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, Monday – Friday.	October 3, 2011	n/a

Superior Court (by County)	Date of Notice	Summary of Service Reduction	Description	Effective Date of Reduction/ Closure	Scheduled End Date
Yolo (UPDATE)	October 17, 2011	Two week reduction in calendaring system for normal hearings and trials	Reduction begins Monday, December 19, 2011 and ends on Friday, December 30, 2011.	December 19, 2011	December 30, 2011