



NEWS RELEASE

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA • COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
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Release: Immediately
Date: 6/20/12

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San Diego Superior Court Faces Historic Budget Cuts

Services Reduced, Hundreds May Be Laid Off, Courtrooms Shuttered

The San Diego Superior Court has announced that due to unprecedented state budget cuts, it will face the most significant reduction of services in its history. The court's tentative plans have been announced to judges and staff in anticipation of both the FY 2012-13 state budget and the impending announcement of the final plan for allocation of funding to the local trial courts.

The San Diego court has estimated that it faces as much as a \$14 million cut for FY 2012-2013. The court is predicting the total cuts for fiscal year 2013-14 could rise to \$40 million or more. If implemented as proposed, the Superior Court's planned cuts will eventually lead to the elimination of more than 250 court employee positions and the closure or restructuring of more than 40 courtrooms during the next two fiscal years.

"The cuts envisioned by our budget reduction plan will affect every judge, court employee and ultimately the litigants, court users and citizens in San Diego County. These cuts will significantly reduce or eliminate access to our court system and are devastating to those of us who have worked so hard to convince the Governor and Legislature that such cuts threaten the stability of our third branch of government," stated Presiding Judge Robert J. Trentacosta.

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Starting July 1, 2012 the court, pending final confirmation of the local allocation, will be forced to make at least \$14 million in cuts. The current plan calls for:

- The elimination of the use of certain types of workers including student workers, retired rehires, law clerks, retired commissioners, and paid juvenile court pro tem hearing officers;
- Significant reduction of management employees and restructuring the administration and administrative services;
- Reductions in non-courtroom staff (75 positions);
- Closing business offices to the public at noon on Fridays;
- Closure and restructuring of 10 courtrooms leading to the elimination of 18 positions:
 - Closing six (6) downtown criminal courtrooms.
 - Closing probate court operations in North County and transferring existing probate cases to the Central Division.
 - Closing one juvenile dependency courtroom in North County and reassigning a judge to another existing calendar.
 - Closing one downtown civil department.
 - Closing the Ramona Branch Court.

The court is also likely to eliminate court-provided court reporters for civil courtrooms at some point during the fiscal year.

During FY 2013/2014, the court will need to cut significantly more. It is estimated to be in a range totaling an additional \$26 million or more. The tentative plans to achieve the full measure of those cuts would include:

- Closure and restructuring of 30 additional courtrooms. These closures and restructuring will result in the elimination of 25 courtroom clerks, two (2) court reporters, five (5)

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independent calendar clerks, seven (7) staff attorneys and twenty-one (21) court commissioners.

- Reductions in Family Court courtroom and support department operations.
- Elimination of 11 independent calendar clerk positions supporting the civil independent calendar departments.
- Additional reductions in non-courtroom staff (17 positions).
- Centralizing the filing and processing of all small claims filings in the Central Division.
- Closure of all civil business office operations in East and South County. All Civil paperwork will be processed at the Downtown Courthouse or North County Courthouse.
- Two days of unpaid work furlough per month for all court employees beginning July 2013.

“The impact of these recommended reductions on the San Diego Superior Court will fundamentally alter the way in which the court does business. No court can reduce its current operating budget by 21% (from \$190.5 million in 2011-12 to \$150 million in 2013-14), on top of reductions incurred during the preceding four fiscal years, without radically altering the structure, composition and capability of the court,” says Judge Trentacosta.

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