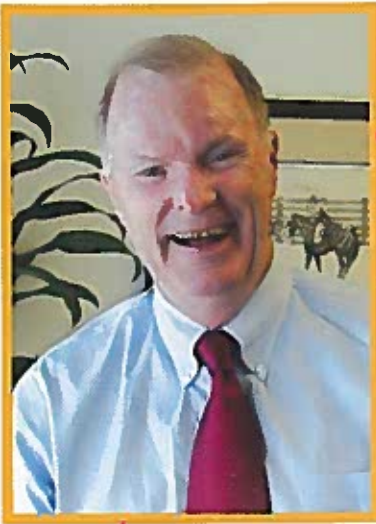




Los Angeles Superior Court
ANNUAL
REPORT

2005 Edition

(Incorporating financial data for Fiscal Year 2003-2004)



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDING JUDGE

Dear Community Member:

Today, having successfully undergone historic evolution during the past five years, the Los Angeles Superior Court continues to adapt to rapid change innovatively, yet carefully and thoughtfully. We want you to know more about us, especially since the reality is that millions of people will have some contact with us during the coming year.

Think of the different ways the court system can touch your life, ranging from jury duty to traffic tickets, domestic violence to juvenile care, marital dissolution to adoptions, small claims to complex litigation and minor to serious crimes. You, or someone close to you, could be a juror, victim, witness or litigant.

We are the largest trial court in the country, in which the approximately 2.7 million annual case filings are handled by nearly 600 judicial officers and a staff of more than 5,000 located at more than 50 different court locations.

This is our Annual Report, which tells our story of service and commitment to the community. We are, most of all, **your** court. We hope you will have a better understanding of what we do as you read about us in these pages. We look forward to serving you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "William A. MacLaughlin".

William A. MacLaughlin
Presiding Judge

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Los Angeles Superior Court
Annual Report 2005 Edition



Introduction	2
Section 1	
Our Court Today	3
Section 2	
The Judicial Branch	6
Section 3	
What Is Our Core Work?	8
Section 4	
Touching The Community	18
Section 5	
Our Year In Review	24
Section 6	
How We Use Our Resources	26
Section 7	
Los Angeles Judiciary	28

This Annual Report is intended to increase broad public understanding of the justice system. Its publication was made possible by support from the Administrative Office of the Courts.

To obtain additional copies, please contact:

Los Angeles Superior Court
Public Information Office
111 N. Hill Street, Room 107
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 974-5227

Or visit the Court Web site: www.lasuperiorcourt.org



INTRODUCTION

As the primary court system for Los Angeles County, we proudly include the scales of justice on our official seal. We strive to embody the best characteristics of the justice system. Yet there is another meaning of "scale" that applies to us, as well, our sometimes breathtaking size.

It is often said that we are the largest—in the state, the country and even the world—in almost every category by which to measure courts. With 2.7 million new cases each year, our sheer size and scope defy easy categorization.

The Court has 12 judicial districts and operates nearly 600 courtrooms presided over by 583 bench officers, including judges, commissioners, referees and judges *pro tempore*. The Court has 52 separate facilities. Helping judicial officers serve the public is a staff of more than 5,200, including more than 700 judicial assistants, more than 500 interpreters, over 650 court reporters, and nearly 2,100 legal processing support personnel.

We serve 88 cities and 118 law enforcement agencies countywide.

All of this occurs in an area of more than 4,000 square miles. The distance from our northernmost (and newest) courthouse in Lancaster to our smallest courthouse on Catalina Island is 111 miles. Nearly 60 miles separate our westernmost courthouse, Malibu, from the easternmost, Pomona.

In fiscal year 2003-2004, more than 95 percent of our budget of \$618.5 million came from state sources. You will find our complete financial picture in Section 6 of this report. We are part of the Judicial Branch of state government, and we operate under the governance of the Judicial Council of California with the assistance of the Administrative Office of the Courts, based in San Francisco.

Our size, however, does not inhibit us from embracing new ideas and technology. Nothing about our scale reduces our commitment to serving customers individually. Nor does it inhibit our belief that we are the neighborhood court for 10 million people.

Like much of the terminology of the law, "innovate" has its roots in Latin, from the word *innovare*, literally "to renew." So it is natural that the lexicon of the nation's largest trial court, the Los Angeles Superior Court, embraces innovation.

This Annual Report is our opportunity to tell you who we are and what we do. Your confidence in our ability to deliver justice services is our very highest priority.

A sheer recitation of the numbers associated with the Los Angeles Superior Court is at the same time breathtaking and daunting. Los Angeles County is a stunning array of cultures, politics, geography and lifestyles. All have implications for the administration of justice.

In 2000, the county population of nearly 10 million people was 46 percent Latino, with Latinos projected to become a majority in 2010. Los Angeles often finds itself, as well, as the home to the largest population of specific ethnic groups outside of their native country.

Los Angeles County has the greatest diversity in the United States. For us in the court system, diversity brings challenges—to administer justice evenhandedly but also to heighten comfort levels with the justice system among all of our disparate communities.

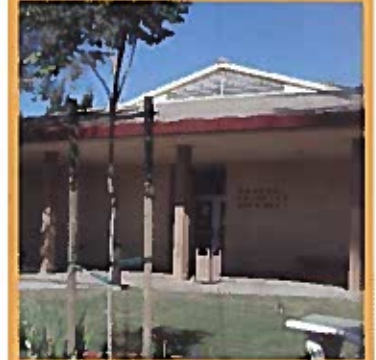
It is often said that justice delayed is justice denied. It is equally true that barriers related to differences in language, lifestyle or culture may result in denial of justice. Such barriers cause us to focus not only on our core work of case-processing but also on initiatives designed to reach communities where justice is either not sought or not received. Our programs routinely seek to eliminate impediments to justice. With that as our focus, we have expanded self-help centers, increased and improved the entire menu of our Family Law and Children's Court services and broadened awareness of mediation-focused options to litigation, such as Alternative Dispute Resolution.

Increased reliance on technology supports virtually all of our initiatives. This ranges from the inauguration of greatly expanded e-commerce to creating self-help kiosks, to assisting visitors to the courthouses and to improving our award-winning Web site, www.lasuperiorcourt.org.

For Family Court customers, we have also worked to make processes simpler and more user-friendly. Family Law Information Centers, staffed with attorneys and paralegals, child waiting areas and specialized filing windows help people involved in family matters solve their problems in a faster and more efficient manner. We provide divorce and paternity workshops, parenting

Los Angeles County, one of California's original 27, was established in 1850. Originally, the county occupied a comparatively small area along the coast between Santa

Barbara and San Diego, but within a year its boundaries expanded from 4,340 square miles to 34,520 square miles, sprawling from the Pacific Coast to the Colorado River.





classes, social service referrals and mediation at no charge in order to assist families during times of crisis.

Customers use our Traffic and Small Claims Courts more than any others. We have recently made access easier by allowing customers to file small claims cases, pay traffic tickets and sign up for traffic school via the Internet. In fact, the Court's Web site is quickly becoming the first place residents and lawyers look for information about the Court and their cases. Our e-commerce services are among the most sophisticated in the country among trial courts.



We offer a large menu of services for people who represent themselves in disputes ranging from divorce to landlord-tenant law. Our self-help centers, with the help of JusticeCorps trained college students, provide a national model for assisting those who cannot afford, or choose not to retain, a lawyer.

Complex Litigation Court speeds resolution of disputes from product liability actions to those involving thousands of victims of everything from earthquakes to business disputes to mass torts.



Our Children's Court originated Adoption Saturday to finalize thousands of adoptions of children who would otherwise languish in foster care. It is just one example of our efforts at reaching out to the legal community to partner for justice.



Despite the many challenges confronting our ability to render justice, we remain ever more committed to tailoring our services, as best we can, to the needs of each individual touched by our work and to removing barriers to justice.



OUR PROUD HISTORY

The roots of California's judicial branch reach back to the days of Spanish rule, when California was officially organized as a territory and vested its judicial power in a superior court, inferior courts and justices of the peace. The state's first constitution in 1849 placed judicial power in a Supreme Court and created District, County, Probate and Justice of the Peace courts.

By the mid-1870s, many Californians had become disaffected with the court system. The collapse of mining stocks in 1875, a drought in 1876 and bank failures wreaked economic havoc with many Californians. Strong antimonopoly sentiments—particularly directed against the unregulated Southern Pacific Railroad—fueled further indignation. The public demanded widespread reform. The court system was viewed as rigid, overcrowded and unresponsive to the growing population in many counties.

On September 28, 1878, delegates gathered at the state capitol in Sacramento to draft a new constitution. By March 1879, the state's judicial system was completely reorganized to provide a Superior Court for each county and Justice of the Peace courts for communities. The new constitution provided for regular court hours and speedy trials and it overhauled almost all of the laws relating to civil and criminal procedure.

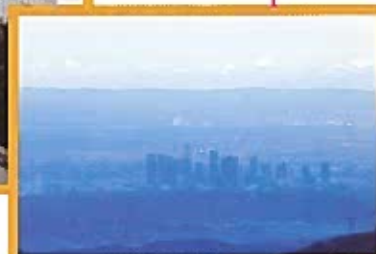
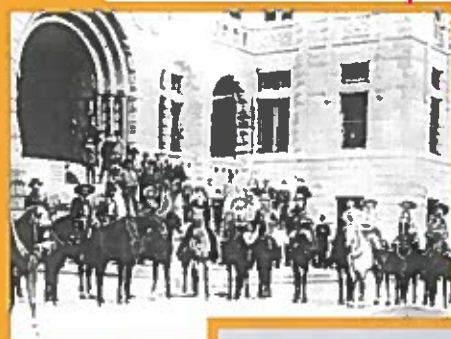
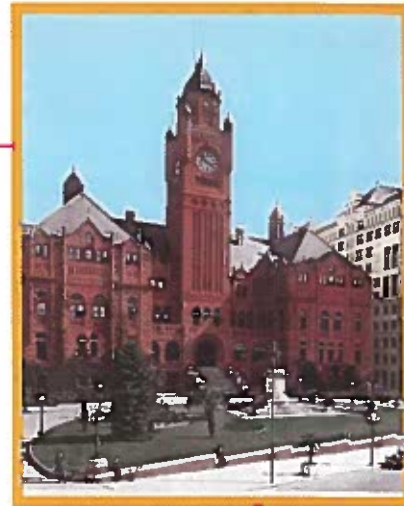
Counties with larger populations could elect more than one judge to serve on the Superior Court, whose salaries would be shared equally by the state and county. The Legislature was empowered to increase the number of judges as demand for judicial services increased. The citizens of Los Angeles County elected two well-respected men to become Los Angeles's first Superior Court judges: District Court Judge Ygnacio Sepulveda and lawyer Volney Howard. In 1880 the Los Angeles County population was 33,381 and there

were 57 lawyers and 633 new cases filed in court.

The first permanent court facility, the Clock Tower Courthouse, opened in 1861. Before it was constructed, court was held in hotel rooms, private homes and offices throughout downtown Los Angeles. Subsequently, the Red Sandstone Courthouse served as the Los Angeles County Courthouse from 1891 to 1933. On Friday, March 10, 1933, a 6.2 magnitude earthquake shook Los Angeles County. The earthquake resulted in 120 fatalities and \$60 million in damage and caused serious structural damage to the Red Sandstone Courthouse. The Board of Supervisors ordered the Courthouse razed, but fixtures, such as the courthouse clock, were salvaged for the future.

During the 26 years between the 1933 closing of the Red Sandstone Courthouse and the 1959 opening of the current County Courthouse (now called the Stanley Mosk Courthouse), the Los Angeles Superior Court used and improvised many temporary locations, such as City Hall, the Hall of Records, the Hall of Justice, the Brunswig Building and Patriotic Hall.

With the growth of the judicial workload and county population, the Board of Supervisors and local governments approved construction of new courthouses to house additional judgeships created by the Legislature. This process has resulted in the construction and establishment of the 52 court locations currently operating in Los Angeles County.



2 THE JUDICIAL BRANCH



California's statewide court system is the largest in the United States, serving more than 35 million residents in one of the most diverse and dynamic societies in the world. More than 2,000 judicial officers and 18,000 court employees handle nearly 8 million cases filed each year statewide.

As in so many segments of commerce and industry, California's courts are at the leading edge of innovation in the administration of justice, responding to the shifting needs of a changing and rapidly growing population. Reforms are apparent in every area of court operations, from jury service and court interpreting to court technology and assistance for self-represented litigants and troubled families.

Major Judicial System Reforms

As the largest court system in the nation, California's judicial branch is working to address the attendant challenges and to realize the many opportunities for positive change.

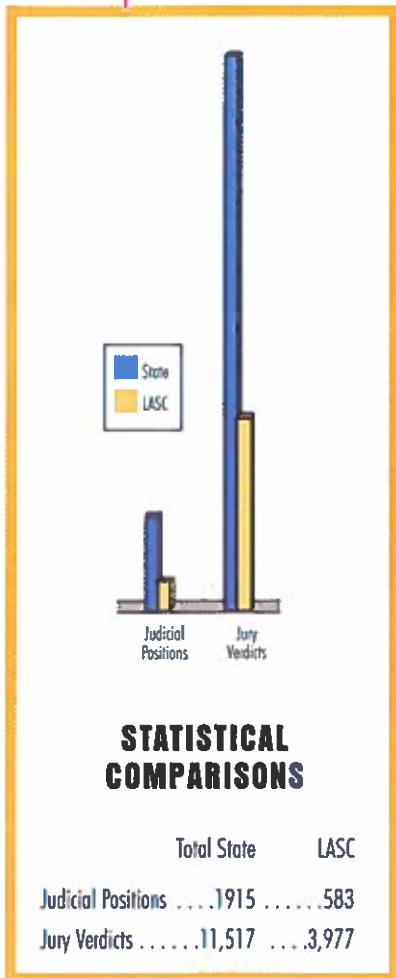
Two momentous and long-sought structural reforms—the Trial Court Funding Act of 1997 and the subsequent unification of the superior and municipal courts into a single level of trial court—have given the judicial branch and local courts greater flexibility in realigning resources to meet the needs of the public. Unification merged a total of 220 trial courts into 58 countywide superior courts.

During the recent recession, from which we are now slowly emerging, courts statewide were confronted with budget reductions. While this necessitated difficult decisions at every level of the branch, we were fortunate that the greater stability achieved through state funding of the courts and the consolidation of resources through unification enabled local courts to better manage reductions to protect core services for those seeking access to justice.

Looking Ahead

The Judicial Council of California, the governing body for the state court system chaired by Chief Justice Ronald M. George, works with judges and court administrators, law and justice system partners and sister branches of government in Sacramento to ensure equal access to justice.

While continuing to set standards and goals to protect the judicial independence in the decision-making process and enhance the reality of a constitutionally co-equal third branch of government, the branch is also striving to modernize systems of administration. At the same time, the branch is reaching out to educate our communities so the public better understands and trusts the role of the courts in society.



Current branchwide priorities include:

Stable and adequate funding to ensure equal access: In 2004, with bipartisan support from the Legislature and the Governor, the judicial branch budget process was revised to allow for an annual automatic adjustment to the base funding for trial court operating costs to protect courts' base budgets from future erosion. Efforts to establish standards and build a system of accountability are continuing so that resources are placed where they are most needed in the courts.

Branchwide administrative infrastructure: The branch continues to accelerate the pace to establish a reasonable statewide infrastructure to support the court system, using integrated technology systems to improve, for example, case management, legal services, and day-to-day transactional activities.

Adequate, safe court facilities: The Trial Court Facilities Act of 2002 provided for the transfer of responsibility for all trial court facilities from the counties to the state by 2007. Transfer negotiations are under way in Los Angeles and all other counties. Voters will be asked to approve a bond measure to begin to address facility deficiencies affecting trial courts and their communities.

More judges to serve: California's population is expected to increase by 12 million in the next 15 years. In addition to adding new judgeships and staff support to serve a growing population and expanding justice workload, efforts are ongoing to attract and retain judicial officers of the highest caliber.

Helping children and families: Many far-reaching efforts are underway to assist those who are most vulnerable in our society, expediting court processes to reduce the time children spend in the system and expanding on-site as well as online services.

The governance system of California's judicial branch comprises a constitutionally established Judicial Council to set statewide policy, locally elected presiding judges to advocate for their courts, and decentralized local management. This unique approach allows California's courts to meet the challenges of today, seize the opportunities of tomorrow, and continue to ensure that our system of justice remains the best in the world.



LEADING JUSTICE

The Judicial Council's Long-Range Strategic Plan for the California judicial branch, *Leading Justice Into the Future*, contains a detailed action plan for the council's advisory committees and its staff agency, the Administrative Office of the Courts. The plan sets forth the council's vision of a judicial system that is responsible for managing the fair administration of justice across the state while encouraging local management and discretion in court operations. The Judicial Council's six overarching goals for the state court system are as follows:

1. Access, fairness, and diversity
2. Independence and accountability
3. Modernization of management and administration
4. Quality of justice and service to the public
5. Education
6. Technology

CALIFORNIA COURTS

THE JUDICIAL BRANCH OF CALIFORNIA

California Courts Online

The California Courts Web site is recognized as one of the nation's top court Web sites and includes a comprehensive Online Self-Help Center for navigating court processes. Visit the courts at www.courtinfo.ca.gov.

Top photo from left, Justice Carlos R. Moreno, Judges James A. Boscue, Victor E. Chavez, Chief Justice Ronald M. George, Judges Robert A. Dukes, William A. MacLaughlin and J. Stephen Czuleger

3

WHAT IS OUR CORE WORK?



Throughout California, superior courts like the Los Angeles Superior Court have jurisdiction over all criminal and civil cases countywide except for matters that fall exclusively under the authority of federal law.

Criminal cases range from relatively minor offenses, such as traffic infractions, to serious ones, like robbery and murder. A criminal case typically begins when a prosecutor files formal charges, a person is arrested or a grand jury issues an indictment. The prosecution—a city attorney or a county district attorney—files a charge against the accused (defendant) and must prove to a judge or jury that the defendant is guilty. In all criminal cases, the prosecution must prove each element of the crime beyond a reasonable doubt. There were more than 404,000 Los Angeles County felony and misdemeanor filings in 2003-2004.

If a defendant charged with a felony or misdemeanor cannot afford to hire an attorney, the Court can appoint one. State and local laws define crimes and specify punishments. Generally, a misdemeanor is a crime punishable by a year or less in a county jail and felonies carry longer sentences that are served in a state prison.

Civil cases are brought against individuals or organizations by other entities or organizations. In most of our 164,000 annual new civil cases the plaintiff—the party who starts a lawsuit by serving or filing a complaint—seeks money damages to be paid by the defendant although other kinds of remedies, or court-ordered sanctions can also be sought. "Limited civil" actions involve situations in which values of less than \$25,000 are at issue. Disputes of greater financial magnitude are called "unlimited civil" actions.

Family Law Court annually hears 114,000 matters like divorce (dissolution), legal separation of spouses, annulment of marriage, child custody and support and domestic violence petitions. In more than 80 percent of cases heard in the Family Law Court, at least one side appears without an attorney. To assist self-represented litigants in navigating the system, we have introduced self-help programs to provide legal information and assistance with filling out and filing required documents. The Court also sponsors free do-your-own-divorce workshops.

Probate Court annually hears more than 11,000 matters concerning the appointment of caretakers for adults who cannot care for themselves (conservatorship), the appointment of someone to care for a person under age 18 or to manage the minor's estate (guardianship), or both, as well as the wills and estates of people who have died.

Juvenile Dependency Court hears cases where there may be abuse or neglect in the home and provides protection for the children in the family. The goal of these courts is to reunite the family, but this is not always possible.

If reunification cannot be achieved, the Court is responsible for suitable placement or adoption.

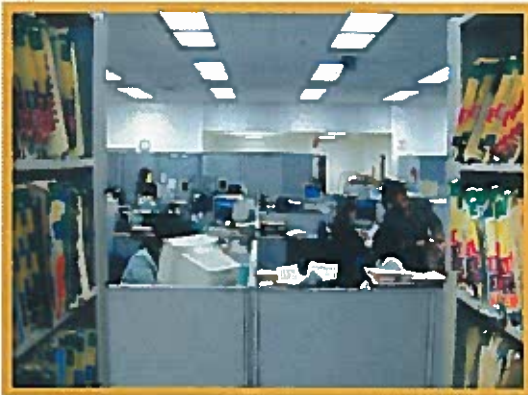


Juvenile Delinquency Court adjudicates cases that involve minors accused of breaking the law. The Court can make orders that let the child live with his or her family under Court supervision, or put the child in an open or locked facility. The Court will consider age of the child, the seriousness of the crime and the child's criminal record, if any.

Small Claims Court is where civil disputes of not more than \$5,000 can be resolved quickly and inexpensively. The parties are not represented by lawyers and the rules are informal and simple. In Small Claims Court, only the defendant can file an appeal of a judge's decision.

Unlawful Detainer (or Landlord/Tenant) Courts handle cases involving the rightful occupancy of real property. "Unlawful detainer" also refers to a case in which a landlord tries

to evict a tenant that, according to the landlord, no longer has the right to live on the property.



Traffic Court handles cases in specialized departments where a judge or

judicial officer will hear the matters instead of a jury. The Court processed more than 1.7 million traffic matters in approximately 22 traffic departments in 2004.





JURY SERVICE

If you live in Los Angeles County, you may be one of the 10,000 people we call to jury duty every day. Once summoned, you may participate in one of the more than 5,900 juries we swear in each year. Because some cases settle after a jury is empaneled, or for other reasons, juries in our system reach nearly 4,000 verdicts per year.

What those numbers do not say directly is that jury duty, regardless of the scale on which it operates, remains a fundamental element of American democracy. Some see jury duty as a burden; however, more and more people recognize it as a critical guarantee of equity and justice.

Until about five years ago, citizens did not participate equally in jury duty. There was a perception that some professions or socioeconomic classes were more—or less—likely than others to be required to serve on juries.

Under a new system called One Trial, which reached full implementation in Los Angeles County in 2002, the Court grants fewer excuses from jury duty than ever before and, as a result, more people share the obligation of jury service.

In One Trial jury service, you may be called for jury duty for a one-week period, but you must only report to a courthouse if you are needed—and, even then, only for one day, unless you are actually seated on a jury. If you are required to go to a courthouse, it will be to one of our 34 jury assembly rooms located throughout the county—as close to your home as possible.

If you end up actually serving on a jury, most cases last only a week or less.

On average, people called to jury duty—including those placed on a jury panel and those not needed after they report to a courthouse—must set aside only an average of a little more than one day to fulfill this obligation of citizenship.

The Court also supervises two grand juries. Separately, they investigate allegations of criminal and civil misconduct. Criminal grand juries are randomly selected from the general jury pool, serve 30 days and may subpoena witnesses before deciding whether they will issue an indictment. Members of the civil grand jury volunteer for 12 month's service and investigate government and other alleged irregularities. Both grand juries are comprised of 23 members.



- Jury Trials.....5,908
- Juror Summons Mailed.....3,117,620
- Jurors Qualified801,891
- Average Days Served.....1.17 days

SPECIALTY COURTS

As the nation's biggest trial court system, operating in a county as large and diverse as ours, the Los Angeles Superior Court is faced constantly with balancing the costs and benefits of specialized courts. Many factors, ranging from case-management concerns to identification of urgent social need, influence the decision to create a specialty court.

From this process have emerged Drug Court, Community Court, Homeless Courts, Teen Courts, Mental Health Courts and others. Despite their considerable programmatic differences, these courts share a common approach: Judicial specialization requires acquisition of specialized knowledge by the judge to dispense justice effectively and efficiently. Studies of such courts show compelling evidence that they benefit litigants.

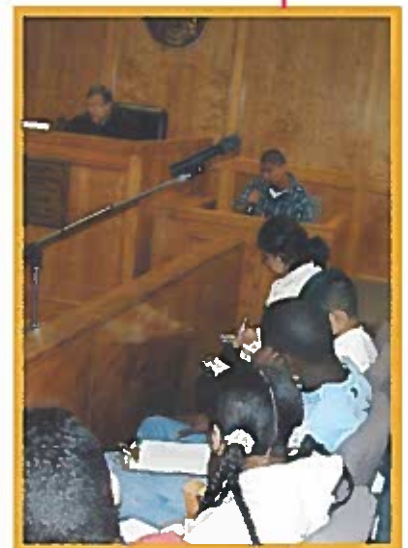
Drug Court is specifically designed and staffed to supervise nonviolent drug offenders. One of the key features of a Drug Court is its intensive judicial supervision. Drug Court participants make frequent appearances before a judicial officer who takes an active role in monitoring their rehabilitation.

Proposition 36 Courts help implement a ballot initiative passed by voters in 2000. It enacted a new sentencing structure for defendants convicted of nonviolent drug offenses. The Court must place these defendants on probation and order them to complete a drug treatment program as a condition of probation. If a defendant successfully completes Proposition 36 probation, he or she may ask the Court to set aside the conviction and dismiss charges. On the other hand, if the Court terminates the probation, the person may be incarcerated.

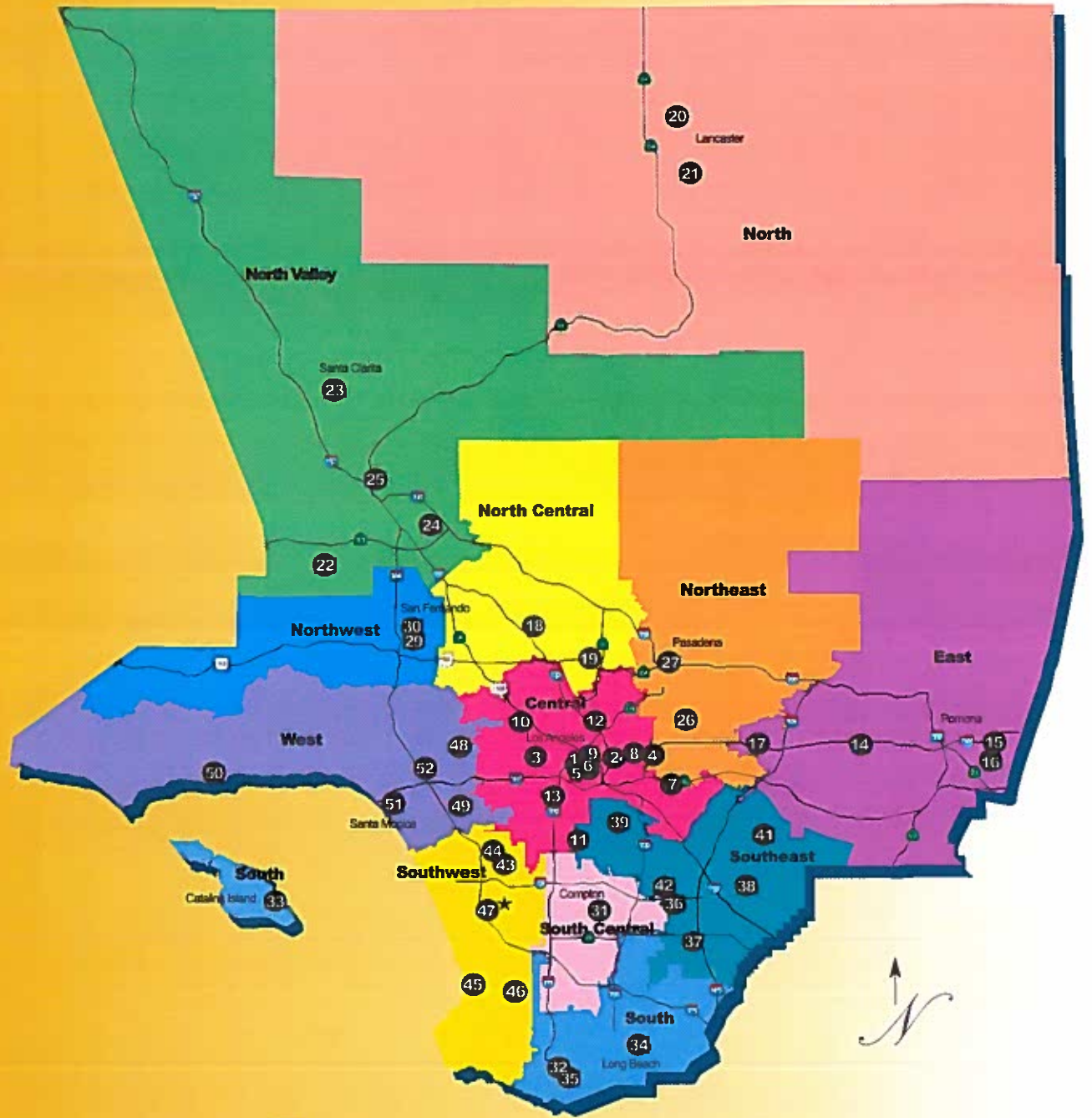
Teen Court provides an alternative noncriminal forum for adjudicating minor misdemeanors. Juvenile offenders are tried and sentenced by juries of their peers. The Court holds Teen Court proceedings in mock courtrooms on high school campuses.

DUI Court is similar to Drug Court except the emphasis is on alcohol treatment and counseling. Defendants are required to complete an intense rehabilitation program under strict judicial supervision. Participants in DUI (shorthand for "Driving Under the Influence") Court make frequent appearances before a judicial officer, who monitors their progress. Participation in DUI Court is required under the terms of a defendant's sentence.

Mental Health Court handles cases that require psychiatric evaluations, treatment, investigations, hearings and trials relating to involuntary detention of mentally ill people. There are three courtrooms handling 17 different types of civil proceedings for mental illness, developmental disabilities or drug addiction. In addition, the Court supervises 21 mental health hearing officers conducting review hearings in the more than 50 mental health facilities countywide.



LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT DISTRICTS AND LOCATIONS



LEGEND

CENTRAL

County Records Center	1
Central Arraignment Court	2
Central Civil West	3
Edmund D. Edelman Children's Court	4
Stanley Mosk Courthouse	5
Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center	6
East Los Angeles Courthouse	7
Eastlake Juvenile Court	8
Hall of Records	9
Hollywood Courthouse	10
David V. Kenyon Juvenile Justice Center	11
Mental Health Courthouse	12
Metropolitan Courthouse	13

EAST

El Monte Courthouse	14
Pomona Courthouse, North	15
Pomona Courthouse, South	16
West Covina Courthouse	17

NORTH CENTRAL

Burbank Courthouse	18
Glendale Courthouse	19

NORTH

Lancaster Juvenile Justice Center	20
Antelope Valley Courthouse	21

NORTH VALLEY

Chatsworth Courthouse	22
Santa Clarita Courthouse	23
San Fernando Courthouse	24
San Fernando Juvenile Court	25

NORTHEAST

Alhambra Courthouse	26
Pasadena Courthouse	27

NORTHWEST

Van Nuys Courthouse, East	29
Van Nuys Courthouse, West	30

SOUTH CENTRAL

Compton Courthouse	31
--------------------	----

SOUTH

Beacon Street Courthouse	32
Catalina Courthouse	33
Long Beach Courthouse	34
San Pedro Courthouse	35

SOUTHEAST

Downey Courthouse	36
Bellflower Courthouse	37
Norwalk Courthouse	38
Huntington Park Courthouse	39
Whittier Courthouse	41
Los Padrinos Juvenile Court	42

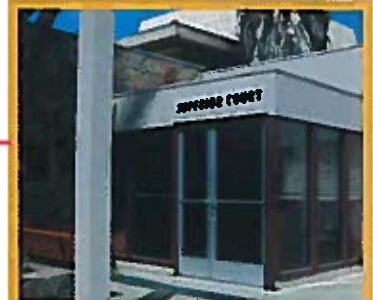
SOUTHWEST

Inglewood Courthouse	43
Inglewood Juvenile Court	44
Redondo Beach Courthouse	45
Torrance Courthouse	46

WEST

Airport Courthouse*	47
Beverly Hills Courthouse	48
Culver City Courthouse	49
Malibu Courthouse	50
Santa Monica Courthouse	51
West Los Angeles Courthouse	52

* Geographically located in Southwest District





Juvenile Mental Health Court is highly specialized and funded separately by statute. It is a comprehensive, judicially monitored program of individualized mental health treatment and rehabilitation services for juvenile offenders who suffer from diagnosed mental or developmental disorders.

Community Court addresses minor quality-of-life crimes in the Van Nuys area. Defendants receive a combination of community and social services to help the community and rehabilitate the defendant.

Domestic Violence Court ensures that defendants convicted in domestic abuse and related cases receive comprehensive treatment. This may include substance abuse counseling, psychological counseling and life-skills training.



Homeless Court sessions are held year round at homeless shelters throughout Los Angeles County. The Homeless Court judge (with the consent of the prosecutor and defense attorney) dismisses minor offenses in exchange for an agreement to participate in rehabilitation.

Informal Juvenile Traffic Court provides early intervention and prevention programs for young offenders. More than three-quarters of the cases are misdemeanors and infractions not related to traffic. However, drivers under 18 must appear in these courts, which hear approximately 200,000 cases each year at 12 locations.



The Appellate Division handles appeals from traffic cases, misdemeanors and civil matters under \$25,000. An appeal at this level causes internal review by a panel of judges. It only decides if there were errors of law serious enough to have prevented a litigant from having a fair trial. The Appellate Division handles approximately 1,000 appeals and 150 civil petitions per year. Our Appellate Division is an internal part of our operations. It should not be confused with the higher appellate levels of the state court system.

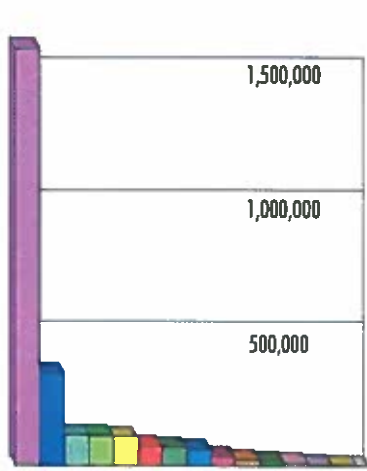


NUMBER OF SPECIALTY COURTS

Adult Drug Court	13	Mental Health Court	3
Juvenile Drug Court	2	Juvenile Mental Health Court	1
Community Court	1	Teen Court	6
Domestic Violence Court	4	Informal Juvenile Traffic Court	13
Proposition 36 Court	20	Homeless Court	1
Early Disposition Court	13	Sexually Violent Predator Court	1
DUI Court	1	Complex Litigation Courts	8



2002-2003 ANNUAL CASE FILINGS

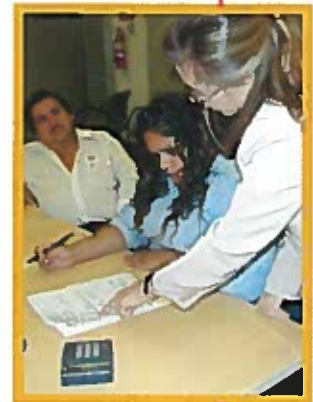


Traffic	1,696,741
Misdemeanor	370,020
Family Law (Dissolution, Nullity, and Legal Separation)	114,241
Small Claims	101,151
Civil Limited (excluding Small Claims)	96,568
Civil Unlimited	66,866
Limited Felony (Preliminary Hearing)	64,176
Unlawful Detainers	61,973
General Felony (Trial)	34,972
Juvenile Delinquency	21,194
Juvenile Dependency	16,315
Probate	11,347
Mental Health	2,559
Appellate	1,114
Total	2,659,237

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

A key to our success is an innovative emphasis on resolving disputes outside official court proceedings, or Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). The program relies on mediation and arbitration, and it saves both the Court and litigants their time and money. Volunteer attorneys, arbitrators and mediators provide these services to litigants for free. Grant funding pays for the full-time staff that recruits volunteers, manages cases and coordinates ADR activities. The program relies on the services of 35 retired judges, nearly 1,600 attorneys and 265 other professionals.

The growing use of ADR processes, particularly mediation, has transformed the program's role in the Court. Last year, volunteers logged more than 27,000 hours completing over 22,000 ADR proceedings. The overall resolution rate of cases sent to ADR was 57 percent. The resolution rate of family law cases sent to ADR was 68 percent. Although this program is administered centrally, services are available at all civil courthouses.





COMPLEX LITIGATION

We started a complex litigation program in April 2002, in cooperation with the Administrative Office of the Courts. It is headquartered in our Central Civil West Courthouse near downtown Los Angeles.

Judges in this unit handle a variety of cases including class actions; environmental and toxic tort claims; sophisticated insurance coverage claims; complicated business, securities, and antitrust matters; and construction defect litigation. These cases often include large numbers of parties and witnesses and extensive documents and evidence.

The Complex Litigation panel includes seven judges who handle approximately 2,000 individual cases, 32 groups of coordinated cases from counties throughout the State, and approximately 285 class action cases. The case management methods employed by the Complex Litigation panel allow judges and the attorneys to develop effective case management approaches from the outset of each matter.

Common goals in managing complex cases include early identification of the most important elements, identification of issues that might promote settlement, and focused discovery, all of which seeks to avoid traditional and less efficient approaches to large-scale litigation. This approach is a team effort that reaches resolution of cases as quickly and fairly as possible. Another objective is to avoid long trials. These results have been achieved using fewer judicial resources, at considerably reduced cost to the litigants.

The program is successful because of the quality and experience of the attorneys and judges involved and their willingness to experiment with often new and untried approaches.

Complex litigation courts have become an incubator for innovation. Web sites have been developed for attorneys and the Court to share information, schedule hearings, serve documents and to post orders. Document and evidence disputes are kept to a minimum by hands-on judicial management before problems arise. Depositions are generally pre-approved by the judge and limited to those most relevant to key issues.

Weekly meetings of complex litigation judges facilitate discussion of issues and often lead to the development of innovative solutions. Regular meetings with members of the bar provide the judges with important insights useful for developing fresh approaches and for evaluating the success of newly implemented techniques. Members of the panel share techniques adopted and lessons learned with the bar and judges practicing and presiding in other courts. Panel members speak regularly at local and statewide educational events and have co-sponsored three full-day seminars devoted solely to issues facing courts and lawyers in complex civil litigation.

INTERPRETER SERVICES

Courts provide specially trained interpreters for non-English speaking witnesses, victims and defendants in criminal, juvenile, and certain other cases. They interpret proceedings both in and out of court. In our courtrooms, we provide interpreters for parties and witnesses speaking more than 120 different languages. This results in a huge demand for interpreters.

Currently, the state certifies interpreters in 12 languages: Arabic, Armenian, Cantonese, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and American Sign Language. Interpreters of languages for which there is no state certifying examination must pass an English proficiency test covering basic vocabulary, grammar, word usage, reading comprehension and ethics.

Interpreters for the Hearing-impaired

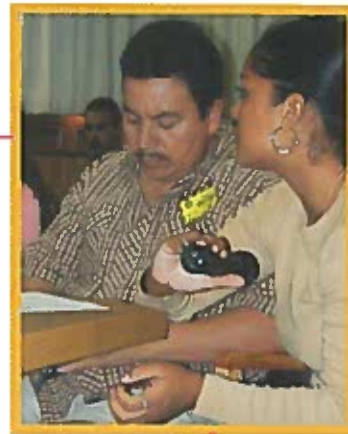
CART—Communication Access Realtime Translation—is a computer-aided realtime translation reporter who acts solely as an interpreter for the deaf or hearing-impaired. The CART provider uses two computers linked together to translate spoken language into written words on a computer screen.

10 Most Requested Languages, Los Angeles Superior Court 2000-2002

2000	2001	2002
Spanish	Spanish	Spanish
Sign	Sign	Armenian
Korean	Korean	Korean
Armenian	Armenian	Sign
Mandarin	Mandarin	Cambodian
Vietnamese	Vietnamese	Mandarin
Russian	Russian	Vietnamese
Cantonese	Farsi	Russian
Farsi	Cambodian	Cantonese
Cambodian	Cantonese	Farsi

SECURITY

Ensuring safety for all of our customers is a top priority. We have an annual security budget of more than \$106 million—one-sixth of all of our expenditures. State law requires that Superior Courts contract with their respective county Sheriff's department for security services. The Sheriff provides each courthouse with bailiffs, weapon-screening equipment, lockups and security officers. The Sheriff's department also provides inmate transportation between jails and courthouses.





4

TOUCHING THE COMMUNITY

ASSISTANCE TO SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS

Customers are more likely than ever to come to our courthouses without attorneys. Sometimes, they come to participate in a hearing or trial; other times they may come to file a case or review case files. Regardless, most find themselves in unfamiliar territory.

Informational kiosks were developed to assist our customers. Kiosks provide basic information about the courthouse. Kiosks use touch screens to let people access information without assistance. Several courthouses also have staffed public information booths.

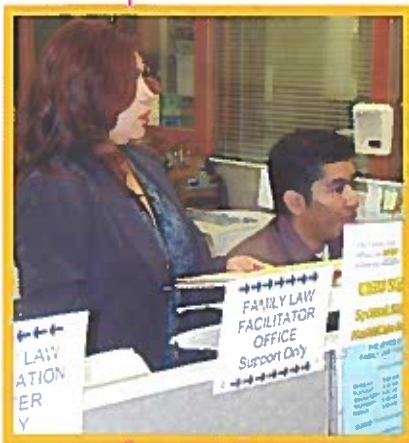
Domestic Violence Clinics are one of the frequently used services for people without lawyers who come to us. Police often tell victims of domestic violence that they need a restraining order against someone who threatened or harmed them. We partner with various community agencies and legal services providers to host domestic violence clinics at 15 courthouses with more planned. Clinics assist victims by helping with preparation of paperwork and referral services.

Victims of domestic violence often live in fear of their abusers and have no way to contact police if they are stalked. **Donated cellular phones** are distributed at several clinics to allow victims without ready phone access to dial 911.



Family law litigants are often not represented by lawyers and are unaware of how the legal system operates. Many have the unrealistic expectation that divorce and child custody cases should be as simple as getting married. Unfortunately, that is not true. Family law matters are complex and time-consuming and are especially difficult whenever children are involved. In late 2004, the Supervising Judge of Family Law began sending individual letters to people who file new cases to encourage them to use mediation and other alternatives to having a judge decide the issues in court.

We sponsor workshops to provide parents with information about the causes of parental conflict and the destructive impact of such conflict on children. The workshops, called **PACT** (Parents and Children Together), teach parents and caregivers techniques for improving their communication skills and how to understand the legal system. More than 12,000 parents attend PACT each year.



Child Waiting Rooms are located at several courthouses. They serve children who are waiting to testify or whose parents must appear in court. These rooms are safe, comfortable, friendly areas staffed by professional child care specialists. Child waiting rooms benefit families but they also benefit the Court because parents are able to concentrate on court business without worrying about their children's safety and well-being.



CASA

One of the first such programs in the nation, our Court Appointed Special Advocates office is now one of over 900 CASA programs in the United States. The program aims to provide screened, trained, and supervised community volunteers to advocate for the best interest of abused, neglected and abandoned children.

Court-appointed special advocates are powerful voices for abused and neglected children. CASA volunteers investigate, mediate, report and monitor the children for whom they are advocating. CASA volunteers get to know the children and families in such a way that allows them to make recommendations to the Court. CASA's objective is to find out what is best for each child without political, partisan or ideological considerations. Ultimately, it is the hope of each CASA volunteer to find safe, permanent homes for the children they advocate.

The Los Angeles Superior Court's CASA unit is almost entirely volunteer and grant-funded. We are honored by the work CASA volunteers perform on behalf of the children in our Dependency Courts. Without them, many dependent children in Los Angeles County would be lost in the system without a chance to reclaim their childhood and become productive and successful adults.

There are two **Family Law Information Centers**: one at our main downtown Los Angeles civil courthouse and one in Norwalk. These offices provide information to self-represented litigants about divorce, annulment, paternity and legal separation.

Free monthly divorce workshops are conducted by reservation at several courthouse locations. These workshops, available in Van Nuys, Pomona, Lancaster, downtown Los Angeles, Norwalk, Long Beach and Torrance, are done in three stages that track the way a case progresses through the system. The first reviews the divorce process and emphasizes the complexity of handling a divorce without an attorney. This session also offers alternative approaches such as mediation. The second session provides information about the forms and hearings that take place as the case progresses. The third session focuses on preparation of the judgment.

In addition to family law information centers and free divorce workshops, the Office of the **Family Law Facilitator's** staff of paralegals and lawyers assists people with child support, spousal support and health insurance issues.

Self-Help Centers at the Van Nuys, Pomona, Lancaster, Compton and Inglewood courthouses assist in civil matters for all litigants who need help regardless of income or immigration status. Currently, most other free legal service providers can only assist low-income citizens of the United States due to funding restrictions. Each center assists dozens of self-represented litigants per day. Although the bulk of their customers needs help with family and housing matters, the centers also help with other civil matters like small claims and name changes.

JusticeCorps is a collaborative project funded through an AmeriCorps grant to provide assistance to self-represented litigants at 10 sites. In some cases they work at existing Self-Help Centers. The program will establish new models of self-help service delivery. JusticeCorps members are from Cal State Northridge, Cal State Dominguez Hills, UCLA, and Cal Poly Pomona. Each student gets 50 to 60 hours of legal-assistance training and a cash award for college expenses.

We are establishing **Family Law Pro Per Days** to provide individualized assistance on certain days. *Pro Per* is legal jargon for the Latin phrase *in propria persona*, or: "proceeding in person rather than through counsel."

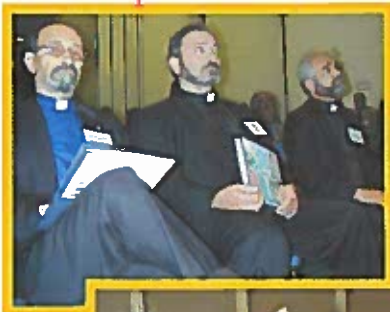
Several courthouses offer **free guardianship clinics** to help litigants file documents to obtain the legal care, custody, and control of a child. At our Stanley Mosk Courthouse in downtown Los Angeles, a full-time guardianship clinic handles the majority of guardianship matters as well as adult conservatorships.



GENERAL EDUCATION

The main purpose of community outreach is to provide public education about our court system, its role and responsibilities and also about why it is important to have an independent and strong third branch of government. **Meet Your Judges Night** is a traveling program that makes judges available for interactive discussions with the public. **The Judges' Speakers Bureau** provides speakers for community organizations, schools, churches, and other groups to speak about justice issues of interest to them.

We also host **Court-Clergy** and **Consular Corps** conferences to disseminate information about the court system.



YOUTH EDUCATION

We have put in place many successful youth education programs. One of our newer **Traffic Safety Programs** recently brought a DUI case from the courthouse to a high school auditorium for trial. The **Summer Youth Mentoring Program** combines court experience and job training to help disadvantaged youths.



Mock Trial competitions, which we put on in cooperation with the Constitutional Rights Foundation, and **court tours** aimed at high school students, provide a glimpse into the court system first hand. In 2004, mock trials were held at 12 different locations. **Teachers' Courthouse Seminars** bring high school government teachers to court for a day. They see the justice system at work and meet and talk with judicial officers and others. Teachers leave with a CD-ROM that includes lesson plans and other educational materials. Mock trials are also held involving elementary school children. Such events occur regularly and result from collaborations with groups like the Girl Scouts, the Mexican-American Bar Foundation and the East Los Angeles Rotary Club.

COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNITY

The **Community Justice Council** and **Community Court Advisory Panel** encourage dialogue among law enforcement, the court and the community. Several programs, such as the **Tierra Del Sol Partnership**, provide job training and opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities. Similarly, many court locations have internship-training programs for law students and paralegals.



Juror Appreciation Week has been a fixture of the Court since 1995. It lets us express our gratitude to jurors. To make jury service easier, docents provide prospective jurors with information about restaurants, parking and points of interest around the courthouse.

COURT-BAR COLLABORATION

We work frequently with local attorneys and bar groups. Bar leaders and lawyers meet regularly with judicial officers throughout our system. For example, we sponsor monthly meetings of bar leaders and our Supervising Judge for civil matters. Similar meetings occur throughout our 12 judicial districts. Judges serve on the board of the Los Angeles County Bar Association's Litigation Section, as well as the boards of other bar groups. Many issues of concern provide common ground.

These are a few individual examples of other successful initiatives that link the Court and the legal profession:

VAST: In 2003, nearly 300 volunteer attorneys spent weeks settling hundreds of civil disputes ranging from simple personal injury matters to complex employment cases that were awaiting trial at the Van Nuys courthouse.

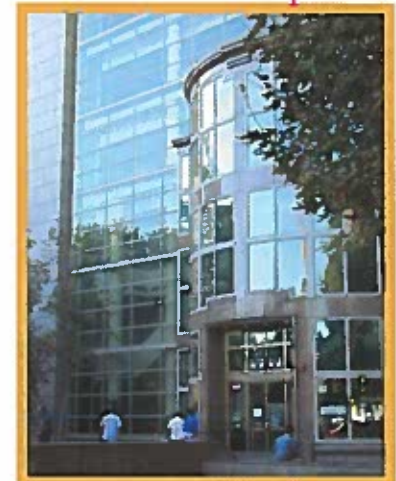
Originally the Court and the San Fernando Valley Bar Association created the program known as the **Valley Associated Settlement Team (VAST)**, to help expedite the flood of cases filed after the Northridge earthquake in 1994, and implementation of the state's three strikes law. VAST was reinstated in Van Nuys after massive budget cuts hit the courts in 2002. The bar feared that civil cases might be particularly vulnerable to budget-caused delays. In all, VAST addressed 800 targeted civil cases, and 360 of those were settled—an astonishing success rate of almost 50 percent.

In 2004, VAST moved to the Chatsworth courthouse with six judges and 70 attorneys participating; 131 cases were referred to the program and 48 of them settled in a one-week period.

Adoption Saturday: The first program of its kind in the nation when it began in 1998, our Adoption Saturday is now nationally recognized. Volunteer judges and attorneys assemble on several Saturdays every year to finalize hundreds of adoptions of children in foster care. In 2004, a major law firm, which helped pioneer Adoption Saturday, marked its 2,000th completed adoption during its participation in the program. More than 6,600 adoptions have been finalized through the proud history of Adoption Saturday. More than 300 lawyers volunteer for Adoption Saturday and other adoption-related Children's Court programs each year.

Attorney Panels: Several dozen lawyers participate in our **Probate Volunteer Panel**, which makes attorneys available—often on very short notice—to intercede in contested estate and conservatorship cases. Several hundred lawyers are also active in **Family Law, Children's Court** and **Mental Health Court**.

continues on next page





COURT-BAR COLLABORATION

These attorneys receive hourly fees—generally below market rate. Cases they handle are often difficult. We also partner with legal services organizations like the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles and Neighborhood Legal Services to facilitate providing services to customers in need.

Law School Internships: We provide dozens of summer internship opportunities for law students. They come from law schools across the country. Many of our courthouses, and the judges assigned to them, participate each year in events observing **Law Day**.

www.lasuperiorcourt.org



CUSTOMER SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS

Although we operate the biggest trial court in the country, we nevertheless believe individualized customer service is a top priority. Innovative programs are found throughout our system.

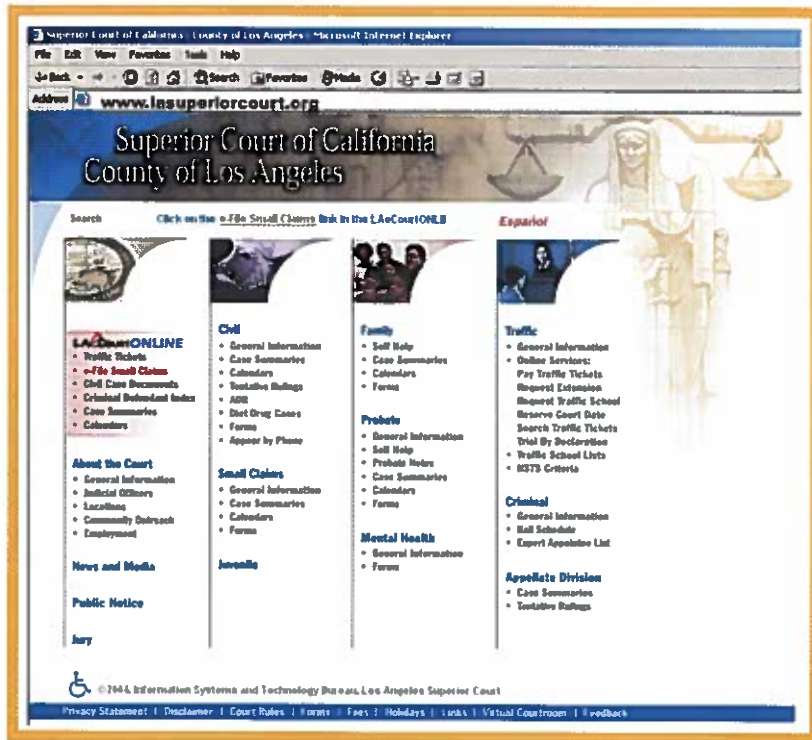
E-Commerce

A key to our approach to customer service is a developing initiative to provide many functions via our Web site, eliminating the need to visit a courthouse for many routine matters. Some transactions are fee-based to help recover the Court's development costs.

Court e-commerce currently accesses:

- **Traffic Court.** The functions include online payment of traffic tickets, scheduling court dates, scheduling traffic school, filing trial by declaration, requesting extensions and searching for citation records.
- **Small Claims.** The capability includes filling out, paying for and filing required documents.
- **Criminal Name Search.** The function identifies the criminal court record of anyone prosecuted in Los Angeles County.
- **Selected Civil Case Documents.** The function retrieves post - 1999 Stanley Mosk Courthouse general jurisdiction civil documents.
- **Civil Case Status.** The function provides a case summary and future court dates.
- **Civil Court Calendars.** The function allows access to daily court calendars.

Our e-commerce capability fosters customer relations and shifts workload from courthouses to the Internet, permitting efficient use of staff resources, which were reduced by recent budget cuts. All Court Web-based services are at www.lasuperiorcourt.org.



Public Information Booths

Several of our courthouses have public information booths that help make life easier for visitors. The public can get information about specific court proceedings, case and courtroom locations, calendars, civil case documents and other useful information. Touch-screen terminals are stationed near public information booths at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse in downtown Los Angeles and seven other courthouses, Norwalk, Chatsworth, Long Beach, Pomona, Santa Monica, Torrance and Van Nuys. Public Information Booths are staffed by court employees and are open during normal business hours.



Customer Service Training & Surveys

We have taken several steps to fulfill our goal of ensuring quality customer service. We require customer service training of all employees. Customer satisfaction surveys are available to assess how well—or not well—the court is doing in the way of promptness in service, courtesy, accuracy of information and helpfulness. From these surveys, we hope to identify service areas that are doing well and those in need of improvement.



5 OUR YEAR IN REVIEW



We put in place several dramatic initiatives in 2004, defying fears that ongoing budget problems for the State of California would interfere with innovation. In both our core work and in virtually all of the ways we connect with the community, we have established that we are one court, committed to excellence.

Very visible changes occurred in the North District—the rapidly growing Antelope Valley. More than a decade of planning and construction culminated in the October 2003 opening of the Michael D. Antonovich Antelope Valley Courthouse in Lancaster—a state-of-the-art facility that houses 14 courtrooms with room for future expansion.



Then, in July, the former Lancaster courthouse reopened after a complete remodeling as the Alfred D. McCartney Juvenile Justice Center.

In downtown Los Angeles, the Stanley Mosk Courthouse introduced touch-screen information kiosks. Additional services were added to the second floor Family Law Center, which grew to include a children's waiting room, family law filing window, family law information center and facilitator's office, domestic violence and legal aid services for high-conflict cases, and family law courtrooms.

In Santa Monica, a two-year construction project began—to be completed in 2005—to replace three aging, modular courtrooms. The Court also shut down two

small, underutilized courthouses—Monrovia and South Gate. A third, in Culver City, will close in the spring of 2005. Despite these facility adjustments, we continued to operate a total of 583 courtrooms.

Our e-commerce efforts also bore new fruit with the launching of 24/7 Internet access to filing of Small Claims cases, expanded traffic court services, selected online civil document access and other innovations. Still more interactive features are being developed.



We continue to expand the public's access to justice through community outreach and no-cost partnerships, such as the noteworthy Adoption Saturday. In 2004, the 6,600th foster child participated in our nationally recognized Adoption Saturday ceremonies. We sponsored dozens of successful events, ranging from mock trials for high school students to courthouse seminars for government officials, teachers and clerics.

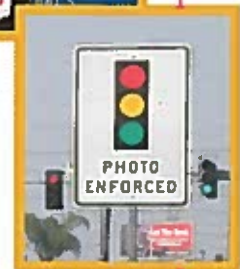
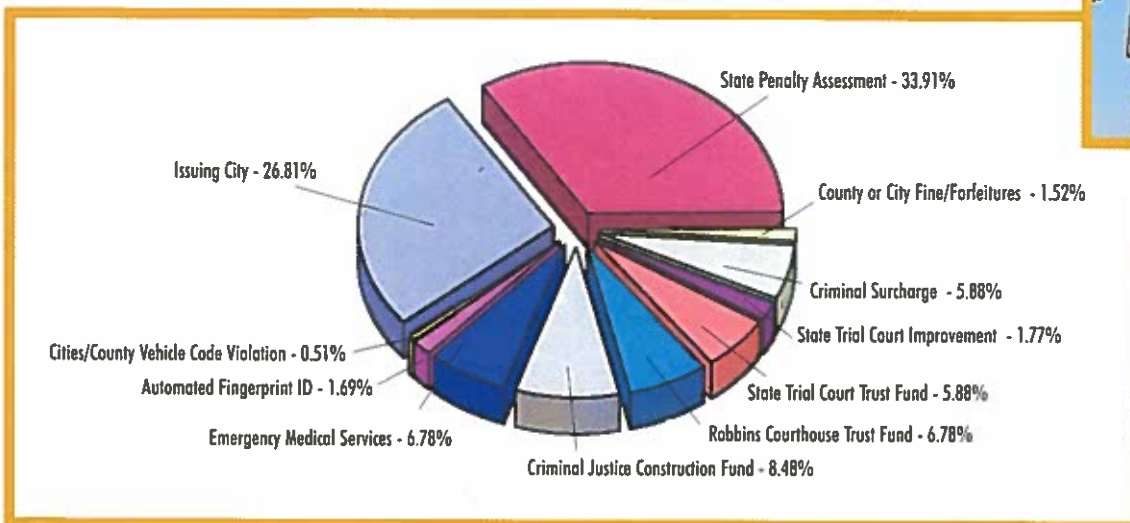


Another success was the launch of the nation's first JusticeCorps project, in which 100 college students assist self-represented litigants through JusticeCorps, a first-ever program funded through AmeriCorps.

Local jury assembly rooms developed distinctive touches, such as Internet ports, Juror Appreciation Week events and free seven-day transit passes. Jurors fully supported the new measures.

In all, it was a year of challenge and reward, determination and continued innovation.

HOW YOUR TRAFFIC FINE IS DISTRIBUTED





6 HOW WE USE OUR RESOURCES

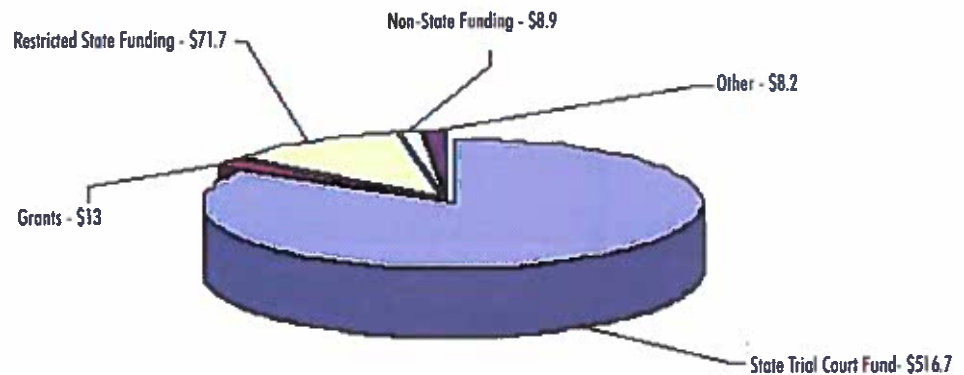
The 2003-2004 fiscal year proved a time of dramatic and rapid change for our Court. In addition to responding to California's ongoing budget crisis, we addressed several fundamental, structural reforms in the ways we do our business.

Like any large corporation or organization, we faced rapid increases in retirement, health care and other benefit costs. The net result of this is a Court that has turned a budget crisis into an opportunity to use its judges, employees and facilities in what corporations today call "smarter" ways.

Fiscal Year 2003-2004⁽¹⁾ Total Budget \$618.5

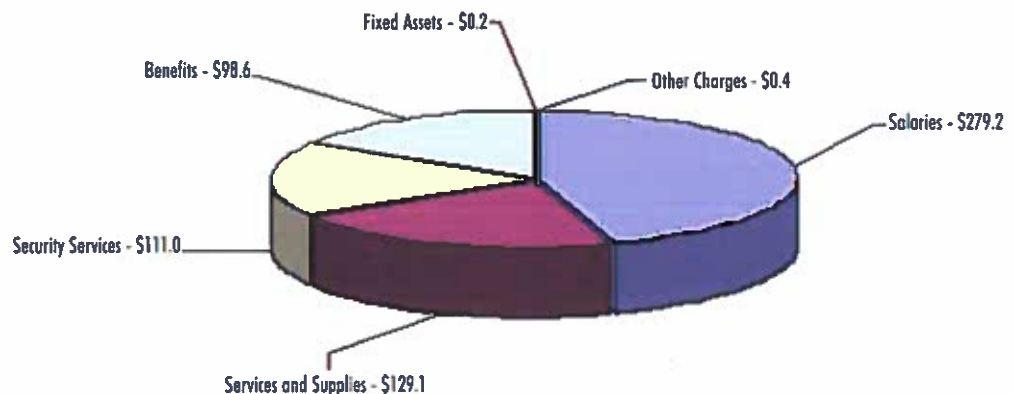
Revenues

(All figures are in millions of dollars)



Expenditures

(All figures are in millions of dollars)

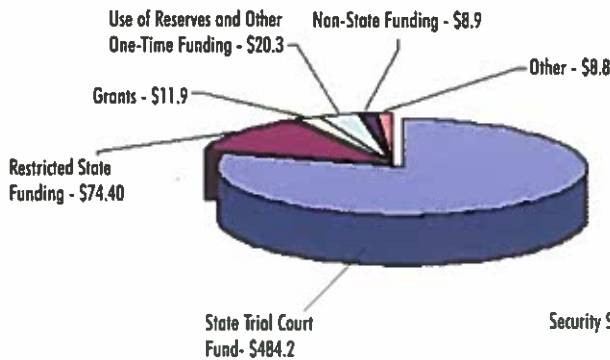




Fiscal Year 2002-2003 Total Budget \$608.5⁽²⁾

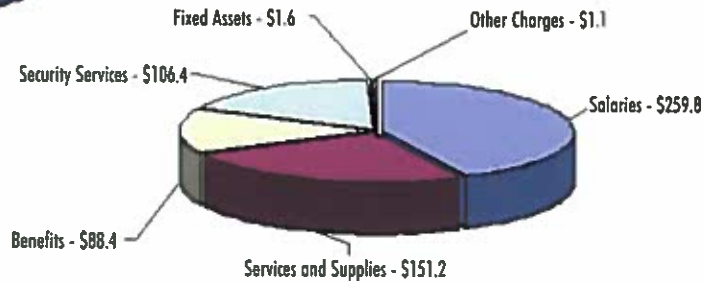
Revenues

(All figures are in millions of dollars)



Expenditures

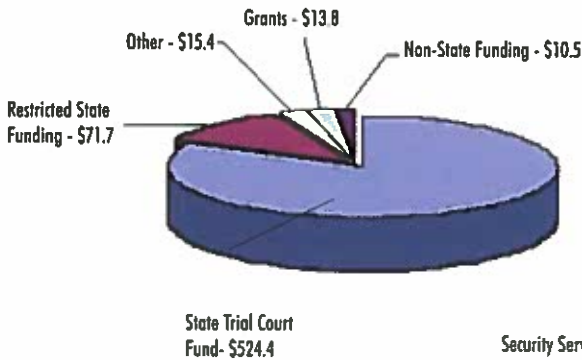
(All figures are in millions of dollars)



Fiscal Year 2004-2005 (Allocated) Total Budget \$635.8

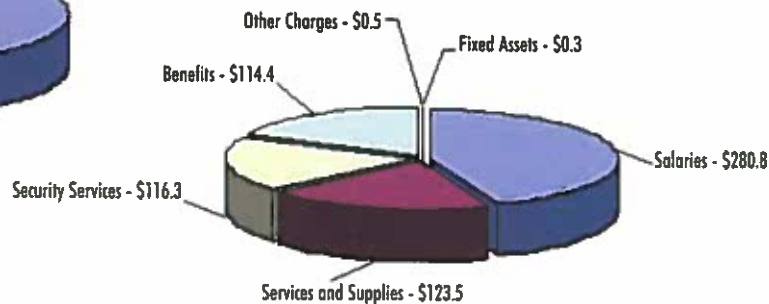
Revenues

(All figures are in millions of dollars)



Expenditures

(All figures are in millions of dollars)



Notes:

- (1) Fiscal year 03-04 salary increase attributable to transfer of Interpreters from contract to employee status.
 (2) Above budget allocations exclude any mid-year funding changes.

Revenue Definitions

- **State Trial Court Funding** — State funding provided through the Administrative Office of the Courts
- **Restricted State Funding** — Funding designated for specific programs such as Interpreters, Court-Appointed Counsel, and jury fees
- **Grants** — Revenue received from grant sources such as Child Support Commissioner Program, Family Law Facilitator, and Alternative Dispute Resolution
- **Other** — Miscellaneous revenue from programs such as Traffic School Monitoring and interest earned from cash on deposit
- **Non-State Funding** — City and County-provided funding for Court Reporters

Expenditure Definitions

- **Salaries** — Salaries of non-judicial court staff
- **Benefits** — Benefits of non-judicial court staff such as health, dental, life insurance, retirement
- **Services & Supplies** — Costs of office supply items, telecommunications and contractual services such as custodial, case management, and information technology services.
- **Security** — Weapons screening and bailiff security services provided by the Sheriff's Department
- **Other Charges** — Lease/purchase costs of equipment and equipment insurance
- **Fixed Assets** — Purchase of equipment costing more than \$5,000



7 LOS ANGELES JUDICIARY

JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

PRESIDING JUDGE

Elected by fellow judges and serves one two-year term. Administers the Court and annually assigns judges and commissioners to posts within the court system. The Presiding Judge selects supervising judges to head up operations at each district courthouse. The Presiding Judge also appoints the judge who presides over Juvenile Court and supervising judges for the Civil, Criminal, Family Law, Dependency, Mental Health and Probate departments.

ASSISTANT PRESIDING JUDGE

The Assistant Presiding Judge is responsible for aiding the Presiding Judge. The Assistant Presiding Judge also serves one two-year term, and generally is then elected to the Presiding Judge position.

JUDGE

An official of the judicial branch of government with authority to decide lawsuits brought before the courts. The term "judge" may also refer to all judicial officers, including Supreme Court justices. An applicant for appointment as a judge must have been admitted to practice law in California for at least 10 years.

COMMISSIONER

A person elected by the judges of the Court and given the power to hear and make decisions in certain kinds of legal matters. An applicant for appointment as a court commissioner must have been admitted to practice law in California for at least 10 years.

REFEREE

A person appointed by the Court to hear and make decisions on limited legal matters, such as juvenile or traffic offenses. An applicant for appointment as a court referee must have been admitted to practice law in California for at least five years.

JUDGE PRO TEMPORE

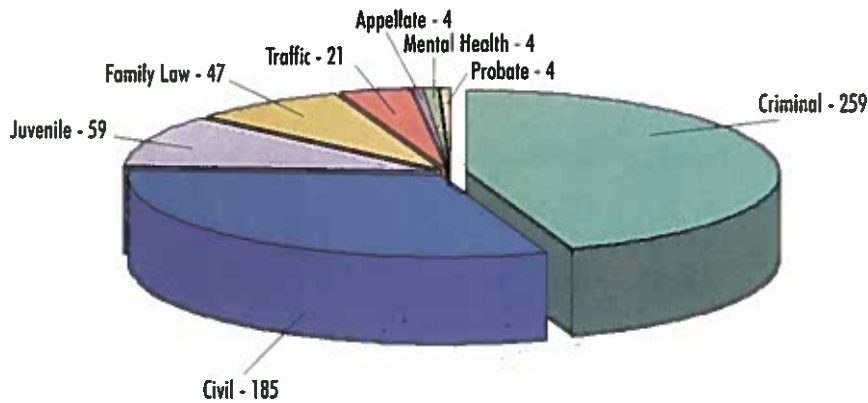
A person or judge appointed by the Presiding Judge of a particular county to sit temporarily on a given court usually in a full-time or permanent judge's absence.

TEMPORARY JUDGE

A member of the State Bar appointed by the Court and stipulated to by the parties to hear cases and make decisions in certain kinds of legal matters.



Judges by Litigation Type



JUDICIAL COMMITTEES

Every two years, the judges of the Los Angeles Superior Court elect a Presiding Judge. The judges also elect an Assistant Presiding Judge who assists the Presiding Judge. An Executive Committee consisting of elected representative judges determines Court policy. The Executive Committee receives input from a variety of judicial committees appointed by the Presiding Judge. Over 400 judges serve on the various judicial committees with some serving on several committees. Generally, these committees meet outside of normal business hours at least once a month.

- *Executive*
- *Personnel and Budget*
- *Criminal Court*
- *Juvenile*
- *Family Law*
- *Mental Health*
- *Probate*
- *Bench/Bar*
- *California Jury Instructions, Criminal (CALJIC)*
- *Compensation, Benefits and Retirement*
- *Grand Jurors*
- *Informal Complaints Re: Bench Officers*
- *Judicial Orientation and Continuing Education (Civil)*
- *Judicial Orientation and Continuing Education (Criminal)*
- *Legislation*
- *Planning and Research*
- *Rules*
- *Access & Fairness*
- *Alternative Dispute Resolution*
- *Automation*
- *Domestic Violence*
- *Drinking Drivers*
- *Drug Court Oversight*
- *Historical*
- *Judicial Orientation Book*
- *Media*
- *Research Attorney/Law Clerk*
- *Security*
- *Special Events*
- *Temporary Judge*
- *Traffic*
- *Trial Jurors*

Mission Statement of the Los Angeles Superior Court

Fairness

Administer individual justice in individual cases and treat all people with respect and dignity.

Accessibility

Equally serve all people and consistently work to identify and remove barriers to access.

Integrity

Protect individual rights and liberties and protect the confidentiality of court participants as required by law; develop employees who conduct themselves ethically and professionally.

Responsiveness and responsibility

Address the public's needs in an efficient, effective, courteous way, using innovative methods and maintaining accountability.

*Los Angeles Superior Court
Public Information Office
111 N. Hill Street, Room 107
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 974-5227
www.lasuperiorcourt.org*

