



NEWS RELEASE

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LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT ANNOUNCES A NEW MODEL FOR PROBLEM-SOLVING COURTS

The Los Angeles Superior Court, in partnership with other justice agencies, is initiating a new problem-solving approach called the Community Collaborative Courts (CCC). The CCC are designed to provide courts that can better address the needs of several at-risk and vulnerable populations. The CCC will address cases with issues including: veterans' issues, mental illness, homelessness, substance abuse and transition-aged at-risk youth (TAY). The individuals in these populations who enter the criminal justice system are often met with and present complex issues that require collaborative solutions to promote public safety in both the near and long term.

One of the challenges of traditional problem-solving courts is that they tend to be focused on one type of problem such as homelessness, mental illness, or substance abuse. The CCC is designed to address multiple issues, recognizing that many defendants face such "co-occurring" disorders.

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey said of the new program "I commend the Los Angeles County Superior Court for its dedication to achieving justice through the creation of collaborative courts that address the special needs of nonviolent offenders with untreated mental illness and those suffering from substance abuse and homelessness." Ronald L. Brown, L.A. County Public Defender, said "My lawyers and other staff are always supportive of appropriate efforts to rehabilitate our clients, many of whose behaviors stem from underlying problems of mental illness, substance abuse, homelessness and trauma."

LASC Presiding Judge Carolyn Kuhl is proud of the Court's leadership role in this project. Said Kuhl: "Often our best work as a Court is done in collaboration with our justice partners rather than in a purely adversarial context. I am proud that this innovative program, centered on pursuing public safety and just outcomes in a realistic framework, has earned the support of our justice partners and of the public agencies charged with assisting the vulnerable populations who are the targets of this project."

L.A. County Sheriff Jim McDonnell said “I fully support Presiding Judge Carolyn Kuhl’s implementation of this ground-breaking approach to the current criminal justice system. The CCC will continue to appropriately address the crimes committed by these individuals, but with post-conviction consequences focused more on treatment and rehabilitation, rather than only on incarceration.”

This new approach has been made possible through the cooperation, efforts and resources of many of the Court’s justice partners including the Los Angeles County District Attorney, Public Defender, Alternate Public Defender, Sheriff, and Probation Department; the County’s Department of Mental Health, Department of Health Services, Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Board of Supervisors; the Los Angeles City Attorney and the Los Angeles Police Department, as well as other participating police agencies; and community service providers and other service groups.

The issues presented in the cases that will be adjudicated in the CCC represent some of the most challenging cases in the justice system. These courts will work to find long term interventions for the underlying issues while promoting ongoing and long term public safety.

Janice Fukai, the County’s Alternate Public Defender, stated that “Community Collaborative Courts, such as drug courts, have a long history of success in finding solutions that are focused and individualized, and can lead to satisfactory outcomes for our clients and a reduction in crime, which benefits the community at large.”

L.A.P.D. Chief Charlie Beck added: “This creative initiative will enable thoughtful solutions to some of the most complex and vexing challenges in our criminal justice system. This integrated approach recognizes that the combination of addiction, homelessness or mental illness must be addressed comprehensively so that rehabilitation, instead of reincarceration, is a real option.”

“By addressing root causes of crime and intervening to reduce recidivism, Community Collaborative Courts offer important alternatives to traditional criminal justice approaches,” said Los Angeles City Attorney Mike Feuer. “My office has launched a broad array of innovative restorative justice, diversion, anti-truancy and related programs, and we value our ongoing partnership with Superior Court.”

The CCC will be located in the following courthouses: the Governor George Deukmejian Courthouse in Long Beach, presided over by Judge Marcelita V. Haynes; the Compton Courthouse, presided over by Judge Karen Ackerson Gauff; the Van Nuys West Courthouse, presided over by Judge Gregory A. Dohi; and the Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center (CJC), presided over by Judge Michael A. Tynan. The CCC model will not be limited to these four districts. The project is designed to provide intra-district service. If a qualifying case is

identified in a district that does not have CCC, the case can be transferred to one of the CCC locations according to a predetermined matrix.

The CCC will concentrate resources on case management, appropriate disposition, and post-conviction monitoring. The CCC model will permit the judicial officers to tailor their individual calendars to the needs of their respective districts and communities. The goal is to create a structure that is flexible and responsive to better meet the needs of the litigants and better ensure public safety.

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