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PRESIDING JUDGE ERIC C. TAYLOR ANNOUNCES PILOT PROGRAM TO FACILITATE RESOLUTION OF EMPLOYMENT CASES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL BAR ASSOCIATIONS

Early Resolution Employment Case Mandatory Settlement Conference Pilot Program Launches February 14; Leverages Resolve Law LA for Case Resolution

Presiding Judge Eric C. Taylor today announced the upcoming launch of the Early Resolution Employment Case Mandatory Settlement Conference Pilot Program (Pilot Program) to encourage resolution of employment cases assigned to five Independent Calendar (IC) courtrooms in the Court's Central Civil Division at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse. Beginning February 14, judicial officers in these IC courtrooms will identify and assign appropriate cases to an early virtual Mandatory Settlement Conference (MSC) to be conducted through [Resolve Law LA \(RLLA\)](#). The Pilot Program is intended to assist less-complex cases in avoiding the expense and delay of protracted litigation through early dispute resolution. It also will reduce backlogs in the IC courts and improve speedy resolution of disputes between employees and employers.

"This Pilot Program is the latest example of the collaborative relationship the Court has fostered with our Civil bar partners, which continues to yield creative solutions to address pandemic-related backlogs and delays," Presiding Judge Taylor said. "I'd like to thank our Civil bar partners for their willingness to work with the Court to provide resources to encourage timely resolution

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EMPLOYMENT CASE PILOT PROGRAM

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of employment cases. I also would like to thank Supervising Judge of Civil David J. Cowan for his leadership on this effort and the judicial officers participating in the Pilot Program.”

RLLA is a joint effort of the Court, Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles, Association of Southern California Defense Counsel, Los Angeles Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates and the Beverly Hills Bar Foundation. Currently RLLA leverages the talents of volunteer settlement officers to conduct virtual MSCs to facilitate case resolution in the Court’s Personal Injury Hub. With the Pilot Program’s launch, RLLA will utilize the additional expertise of the Labor and Employment section of the Los Angeles County Bar Association and the California Employment Lawyers Association to facilitate virtual MSCs for employment cases. The Pilot Program is the result of a Civil Bench-Bar working group focused on identifying strategies to facilitate case resolution and address case backlogs.

The Pilot Program will operate from the courtrooms of Judge Monica Bachner (Dept. 71), Judge Kristin S. Escalante (Dept. 24), Judge Laura A. Seigle (Dept. 48), Judge David Sotelo (Dept. 40) and Judge Theresa M. Traber (Dept. 47) at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse. These judges will focus on cases most likely to benefit from early intervention, including single plaintiff employment actions alleging wrongful termination, harassment, and/or discrimination, single-plaintiff wage- and hour-claims and non-class Private Attorneys General Act actions involving small numbers of aggrieved employees. Virtual MSCs associated with the program are anticipated to begin in March. Though eligibility for the Pilot Program will be first limited to identified cases in these select IC courtrooms, the Court hopes to expand the Pilot Program to more courtrooms in the future.

The Court will give preference to cases involving small businesses, short-term employees, failure-to-hire situations, readily quantifiable damages or other cases likely to require less discovery or are otherwise suitable for early dispute resolution. The Pilot Program is not intended to take the place of private mediation, should parties elect that form of alternative dispute resolution, and is not intended to replace a final MSC, which will continue to be scheduled close to the trial date. The Pilot Program will supplement existing resolution processes by targeting cases where the court determines, after consulting with the parties, a successful MSC can be held within six to nine months of filing and before extensive discovery has taken place.

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EMPLOYMENT CASE PILOT PROGRAM

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The Pilot Program, through RLLA, will use the same successful model used by the Court's Civil Referee Assisted Settlement Hearings (CRASH) program for employment cases. Under this model, two experienced attorneys (one plaintiff and one defense) will conduct a free 3-hour settlement conference using remote/virtual technology. All attorney volunteers have at least 10 years of relevant litigation experience and bring their specialized knowledge of employment litigation to this highly focused settlement process.

Parties will be ordered to participate in the MSC in one of the five pilot courtrooms, but will register independently on the RLLA website, and the virtual MSC will be conducted exclusively through RLLA's website and video conference links. Judge Zaven V. Sinanian, who currently manages the Court's Judicial Mandatory Settlement Program, will also provide oversight for this new Pilot Program. Specific procedures associated with the program will be outlined in a forthcoming General Order.

Attorneys who believe their case is eligible to participate in this Pilot Program should confer with other counsel and be prepared to discuss whether the case is suitable for assignment to the Pilot Program at the initial Case Management Conference. Consideration will be given to the type of claims asserted, the size of the employer, length of employment, estimated damages, status of discovery and early voluntary exchange of key documents and witness information.

For more information, follow the Court on Twitter ([@LASuperiorCourt](https://twitter.com/LASuperiorCourt)) and visit the Court's website (LACourt.org).

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