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# NEWS RELEASE

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## **PRESIDING JUDGE ERIC C. TAYLOR ANNOUNCES RECEIPT OF \$9.2 MILLION IN FUNDING FROM CHIEF JUSTICE'S EARLY DISPOSITION PROGRAM TO ADDRESS CRIMINAL CASE BACKLOGS AND REDUCE DELAYS**

The Superior Court of Los Angeles County will receive \$9.2 million in funding from the first phase of Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye's Early Disposition Program (EDP) under an allocation plan approved by the Judicial Council of California, Presiding Judge Eric C. Taylor announced today. The funding will be leveraged in conjunction with the Temporary Assigned Judges Program (TAJP) to provide additional judicial and staff resources to address COVID-related delays in Criminal cases as the Court reduces reliance on emergency orders and continuances. Most importantly, throughout the Court's measured approach to normalizing Criminal operations, it will keep a watchful eye on COVID's local transmission rates and other arising threats.

"I am grateful to Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye, our legislative partners, and the Governor for providing this critical funding through the EDP to assist the Court in reducing Criminal case delays and ensuring timely access to justice for all residents of Los Angeles County," Presiding Judge Taylor said. "While the Court maintains its commitment to ensuring the health and safety of court users, judicial officers, court staff and justice partners through effective tools like mandatory masking, prioritized court and justice partner vaccinations, batched jury systems to reduce courthouse foot traffic, and more, we also remain laser-focused on reducing delay. We are committed to working with our justice partners to continue to find creative and strategic

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solutions such as this to assist our judicial officers address case backlogs and delays caused by the ongoing pandemic.”

The funding received through the EDP will enable the Court to support its colleagues in each of the 12 Districts with additional temporary judicial officers provided by the TAJP, along with their own additional staff and security resources. “Our plan is to have these additional bench officers assist current judicial officers as we strategically and methodically address pandemic-related Criminal case delays in each judicial district,” Presiding Judge Taylor said.

Recently, the Court has accelerated its efforts towards returning Criminal operations to pre-pandemic levels. In mid-October, Presiding Judge Taylor decided to shift the Court’s reliance on emergency orders, while remaining grateful to the Chief Justice for granting emergency powers to address criminal statutory deadlines as the Court tests its capacity to tackle growing pandemic related backlogs. “While the Court will continue to closely monitor Criminal operations for systemic stresses, the Court is committed to leveraging available resources, such as funding provided by the EDP, to address Criminal backlogs without further delays,” said Criminal Division Supervising Judge Sam Ohta. “We are appreciative of Presiding Judge Taylor’s personal efforts to secure this funding, and of the Chief Justice for her vision and dedication to providing timely and fair access to justice through her support of our courts.”

The Chief Justice announced the EDP in December 2020 to accelerate the resolution of Criminal cases and leverage the TAJP to assist in those efforts. However, due to budget and staffing constraints along with other pandemic-related challenges associated with last year’s holiday surge in COVID cases, courts were unable to leverage the EDP to help reduce their significant backlogs.

In recognition of these challenges, the Chief Justice sought and received approval in the fiscal year 21/22 state budget for \$30 million in statewide funding for the EDP. Trial courts were required to submit applications for funding by Oct. 8. Eight California trial courts, Alameda, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Mateo, Ventura and Yolo, were awarded funding during the first of two funding phases planned for the EDP.

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