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# NEWS RELEASE

Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles  
[www.lacourt.org](http://www.lacourt.org) | [@LASuperiorCourt](https://twitter.com/LASuperiorCourt)

Media Relations  
[publicinfo@lacourt.org](mailto:publicinfo@lacourt.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
December 7, 2021

## **PRESIDING JUDGE ERIC C. TAYLOR ANNOUNCES NORMALIZATION OF OPERATIONS WORK PLAN (N.O.W.) TO INCREASE TIMELY ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND REDUCE CRIMINAL PANDEMIC-RELATED BACKLOGS**

### **Collaboration with Justice Partners on N.O.W. Plan Aims to Safely Restore Criminal Operations to Pre-Pandemic Efficiency**

Presiding Judge Eric C. Taylor today announced the launch of the Normalization of Operations Work plan (N.O.W.) for the Court and its justice partners to systematically address pandemic-related Criminal case delays and safely restore Criminal operations to pre-pandemic levels of efficiency. N.O.W. builds on the Court's measured and deliberate approach to safely restore court operations by reducing Criminal case backlogs and increasing timely and equal access to justice for Criminal litigants.

"N.O.W. signifies a shift in the Court's pandemic recovery," Presiding Judge Taylor said. "After nearly two years, COVID case trends are moving in the right direction in Los Angeles County. In early October, the Court moved away from reliance on emergency orders and continuances to manage our Criminal caseload. As part of this new approach, the N.O.W. plan will enable the Court to identify and address stress points in pandemic-era Criminal case processing and shift to solutions that will expedite and expand our efforts to safely return to pre-pandemic norms."

While the Court implements this plan, Presiding Judge Taylor – who regularly communicates with

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LA County Department of Public Health (LA DPH) officials – emphasized that the N.O.W plan will continue to prioritize public health and safety, including continued monitoring of any change in COVID winter case trends. Presiding Judge Taylor, who earlier this year sought prioritized vaccinations for court staff, Criminal justice attorneys and staff, and judicial officers, emphasized that the Court’s COVID-19 protocols, including mandatory use of face masks in all courthouses, smaller batches of jury panels, plexiglass dividers, frequent cleaning of high-touch surfaces, and availability of hand sanitizer, will remain in place to reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus.

“The Court has followed CDC and LA DPH guidelines and orders for two years, including adoption of public health measures to keep everyone safe,” Presiding Judge Taylor said. “We have also provided remote courtroom appearance technology in each of our 600 courtrooms and convenient remote service options – all of which have helped to protect the public, justice partners, judicial officers and staff by reducing in-person courthouse foot traffic. We will continue to address the pandemic challenges together to make our justice system in LA County accessible, safe and adaptable to changing conditions.”

N.O.W. will focus on safely expanding the Court’s Criminal operations while carefully monitoring COVID case trends in Los Angeles County. It will allow Court leadership to look at all aspects of Criminal operations to address the pandemic’s impacts on the justice system, including the Emergency Bail Schedule.

“N.O.W. provides the Criminal Division a phased pathway to restored operations, sturdy enough to address some of our biggest challenges, yet flexible enough to retract certain aspects should the county enter another significant COVID surge,” Supervising Judge of Criminal Sam Ohta said. “I am grateful to our justice partners, including the District Attorney, local city attorneys, Public Defender, Alternate Public Defender, our law enforcement agencies and leaders, and the Indigent Criminal Defense Appointments Program for recognizing the need for the N.O.W. plan and their collective commitment to collaborating with Court leadership to return our Criminal justice infrastructure to full operation.”

As discussions continue with the Court’s justice partners, more N.O.W. details will be announced in future news releases. For updates, follow the Court on Twitter ([@LASuperiorCourt](#)) and visit the Court’s website ([LACourt.org](#)).

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