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NATION'S LARGEST TRIAL COURT EXPANDS UNPRECEDENTED RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CAMPAIGN TO ADDRESS CHRONIC COURT REPORTER SHORTAGE

Significant Increase in Incentives, Targeted Recruitment Marketing Campaign Designed to Entice Court Reporters to Join the Superior Court of LA County

The Court is building on its comprehensive efforts to address a chronic shortage of court reporters with a significant increase in retention and recruitment incentives [first announced in February](#) and the expansion of targeted recruitment efforts to help fill vacant positions, Presiding Judge Samantha P. Jessner and Executive Officer/Clerk of Court David W. Slayton announced today.

The substantially increased incentives, including over \$70,000 in potential bonuses for new hires, are intended to address the ongoing detrimental impacts of a nationwide court reporter shortage crisis, which recently required a shift in court reporter coverage at the Court from family law, probate and matters assigned to the writs and receiver departments to criminal felony and juvenile proceedings to ensure court reporters can cover those statutorily mandated case types. The increased incentives were negotiated and agreed upon by the Joint Council, which comprises Service Employees International Union Local 721 and the Los Angeles County Court Reporters Association.

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INCREASED COURT REPORTER INCENTIVES

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“As a result of the chronic shortage of court reporters, thousands of litigants are denied meaningful access to justice every day in Los Angeles County, leaving their proceedings with no verbatim record of what transpired and putting them at a significant disadvantage,” said Presiding Judge Jessner. “This is a constitutional crisis. These increased incentives and high-profile recruitment efforts demonstrate the Court’s determination to address this crisis by attracting and recruiting qualified court reporters to work in our court system.”

The increased incentives and recruitment advertising, all paid for with funding provided by Governor Gavin Newsom and the Legislature, reflect the Court’s commitment to utilizing bold solutions to address the current court reporter shortage crisis. The crisis disproportionately impacts low income and self-represented litigants who cannot afford to hire private court reporting services, which can cost upwards of \$5,000 a day, and those who do not wish to continue their hearings until the Court can provide a court reporter from its limited pool of available court-employed court reporters.

“The Court is committed to spending the funding the Governor and Legislature allocated for the purpose of recruiting and retaining court reporters,” Executive Officer/Clerk of Court Slayton said. “We remain hopeful these increased incentives and our ongoing high-profile advertising efforts will help alleviate this significant access to justice issue by promoting the court reporter profession and showcasing the Court as a preferred employer for both court reporters just entering the profession or court reporters currently employed in the private market.”

INCREASED RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT INCENTIVES:

Effective immediately, the Court will offer the following incentives and benefits to recruit and retain court reporters:

Increased Signing Bonus for Newly Hired Official Court Reporters

- \$50,000 total, increased from \$20,000 total, over two years, retroactive to new court reporters with a start date on or after July 1, 2023.

Court Reporter School Student Loan and Equipment Allowance

- Up to \$15,000 total over two years. This incentive is retroactive to all new court reporters with a start date on or after July 1, 2023.

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INCREASED COURT REPORTER INCENTIVES

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Retention Bonus for Current Full-time Court Reporters

- \$5,000 if employed as a full-time court reporter as of January 31, 2023, and remain employed as of May 1, 2024.
- \$5,000 if employed as a full-time court reporter as of June 30, 2023, and remain employed as of May 1, 2024.
- \$10,000 if employed as a full-time court reporter as of January 31, 2023, and remain employed as of May 1, 2025.
- \$10,000 if hired as a full-time court reporter between February 1 and June 30, 2023, and remain employed as of May 1, 2025.

Retention Bonus for Court Reporters with 25 Years or More of Service

- Retroactive to July 1, 2023, up to \$10,000 for court reporters who submit the required Agreement Form within 45 days of being eligible and agree to remain working at the Court for at least 12 months.

Finder's Fee for Court Employees who Refer Official Court Reporters to the Court

- \$25,000 total, increased from \$15,000 total, incrementally ending on court reporter's one-year hiring anniversary.

Floater Bonus

- Court Reporters actively working and assigned to the Floater Pool (not assigned to a courtroom and designated as a Regional Assigned Floater) will receive a 5% per pay period bonus.

In addition, the starting annual salary for a court reporter currently stands at \$120,888.

HIGH-PROFILE ADVERTISING:

The Court placed recruitment advertisements in the Los Angeles Times, the San Diego Union-Tribune and USA TODAY in March. This summer, the Court also placed court reporter recruitment advertisements on Metro Buses across Los Angeles County and on billboards on the side of the 110 Freeway just outside of Downtown Los Angeles. Similar advertisements were

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INCREASED COURT REPORTER INCENTIVES

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placed in select LA Metro transit shelters, and the Court continues to aggressively recruit via job posting sites such as LinkedIn and NeoGov.

The inability to obtain a verbatim record limits the ability for litigants to seek counsel and advice after a decision is made and deprives litigants the ability to meaningfully preserve critical rights on appeal. It also creates challenges in memorializing the court's ruling in a proposed judgment and ensuring that the judgment is enforceable.

Due to the ongoing chronic shortage of court reporters coupled with statutory restrictions on electronic recording, more than 52,000 court proceedings took place in LA County in January and February of this year alone with no verbatim record at all. If the crisis persists, the Court estimates roughly 300,000 proceedings will take place in 2023 without any verbatim record.

Despite the robust set of incentives first announced in February and generous salary and benefits packages, vacancies for court reporters have remained relatively unchanged, with the number of court reporters leaving court service continuing to outpace the number of new court reporters entering court service.

Those interested in joining the court reporting profession in California can learn more about the process via the Court Reporter Board of California's Informational Flyer, [accessed here](#). Qualified court reporters interested in working for the Court can [apply here](#).

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