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SUPERIOR COURT OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY TO REDUCE STAFF POSITIONS IN RESPONSE TO SIGNIFICANT STATE BUDGET CUTS WHICH WILL RESULT IN A REDUCTION IN SERVICES

A Voluntary Separation Incentive Program Launching Today Offers Payment Incentives for Eligible Employees to Vacate Current Positions to Reduce Ongoing Operating Expenses

The Court is launching a Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (VSIP) for eligible court employees to voluntarily elect to leave court service to enable the Court to reduce staff positions in response to significant state budget cuts that will result in an approximate \$30.3 million reduction to the Court's operating budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25, Presiding Judge Samantha P. Jessner and Executive Officer/Clerk of Court David W. Slayton announced today.

"Make no mistake—the cuts to California's trial courts in the FY 2024-25 state budget are concerning and consequential," Presiding Judge Samantha P. Jessner said. "While the Court is leveraging every tool at its disposal to minimize impacts on core services, actions such as the VSIP will result in staffing reductions that will no doubt impact the Court's ability to provide timely and efficient access to justice for Los Angeles County residents."

The FY 2024-25 state budget, which became effective today, closed a \$46.8 billion budget deficit by broadly reducing ongoing funding for state government operations, including the trial courts, by 7.95 percent. This reduction translated to a \$97 million reduction to trial courts statewide. As the largest trial court in the state and the country, the Court's portion of that cut is approximately \$30.3 million. In addition, the Court will sustain reductions of \$3.9 million in state-funded programs such as the statewide Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Act and pre-trial release programs. Further complicating the Court's financial planning for future budget years is the Legislature's rejection of Governor Newsom's proposal to increase the trial court budget reserve cap from 3 percent to 5 percent. The practical effect of this rejection by the Legislature is far less money available to weather future budget cuts without more consequential impacts on staff and services.

Due to the Court's historically prudent financial planning, the Court will narrowly avoid layoffs and furloughs in FY 2024-25. However, the Court must implement cost saving measures in the current fiscal year to stabilize its budget heading into FY 2025-26, during which further cuts are likely. In addition to the elimination of existing vacant positions, broad restrictions on non-critical expenses such as travel and certain training for judicial officers and court employees, and the delay or elimination of certain special projects, the VSIP will enable the Court to further reduce ongoing operating expenses with salary savings.

“While the Court acknowledges the need for belt-tightening in light of California’s fiscal circumstances, the significance of a \$30.3 million ongoing cut to the Court’s operating budget cannot be overstated,” Executive Officer/Clerk of Court David W. Slayton said. “The Court does not have the option of simply refusing to provide access to justice—it is our constitutional obligation. Significant reductions in funding like this one impact our ability to effectively fulfill our mission. We are never happy to say goodbye to our dedicated and talented staff. However, given the difficult financial circumstances the Court finds itself in due to the cuts, we are hopeful that a sufficient number of court employees will take the incentive to voluntarily separate from court service, which will provide significant savings heading into the next fiscal year.”

Launching today, the VSIP will offer current full-time, regular-status court employees with five or more years of continuous service a \$35,000 one-time payment to resign from court service. Eligible employees must apply for the voluntary program. Those approved for the program will voluntarily resign on or before October 1 and will be ineligible for reemployment with the Court for one year. Positions vacated as part of the VSIP will be eliminated.

While the Court and its judicial officers and staff will strive to deliver the best services possible, court users should expect reduced or delayed service because of staffing reductions and other operational cuts. Longer lines at clerk’s office windows as well as delays in call center response time and legal document processing are anticipated.

For more information on the Court and its current services, follow the Court on ‘X’ ([@LASuperiorCourt](#)), Instagram and Threads ([@LASuperiorCourt](#)) and visit the Court’s website ([LACourt.org](#)).