

Superior Court of California County of Santa Clara

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 30, 2020

State Budget Effect on the Santa Clara County Superior Court

On June 29, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom signed the California State Budget, which cuts \$176.9 million from trial court funding. This cut results in an excess of \$16M budget deficit for the Santa Clara County Superior Court. Given the continued uncertainty of state General Fund revenues as the extended tax season comes to a close, there may be additional reductions required by the Governor and Legislature later this summer and fall. The Court will also be monitoring the possibility of restored funding to the judicial branch budget should California receive an additional \$14 billion of flexible federal funding by October 15, 2020.

Employee payroll accounts for 80% of the Court's total expense, and, to bridge the \$16 M gap, the Court has negotiated side letter agreements with its employees represented by County Employees Management Association fully affiliated with Operating Engineers Local 3 (CEMA/OE3) and Service Employees International United (SEIU). The side letter agreements provide the following cost-saving measures: 26 furlough days and other voluntary programs, including additional furloughs, separation incentives, and leaves of absence. CEMA/OE3 represents the Court's managers and supervisors, Information Technology staff, Legal Research staff attorneys, Self-Help Center staff attorneys, and Family Court Services mediators, among others, and accounts for about 30% of the total Court staff. SEIU represents the Court's court reporters and accounts for about 10% of the total Court staff.

The Court also imposed 26 furlough days on executive and unrepresented staff, who comprise just over 3% of the Court's total staff.

The Court made a proposal to the employees represented by Superior Court Professional Employees Association (SCPEA) and Communications Workers of America – California Federation of Interpreters (CWA-CFI) for 26 furlough days and voluntary separation incentives. However, neither SCPEA nor CFI have agreed to negotiate the proposal. SCPEA represents the Court's legal process clerks, courtroom clerks, court specialists, criminal information specialists, probate examiners, court investigators, and janitors, among others, and accounts for more than 52% of the total Court staff. CWA-CFI represents Court's interpreters and accounts for about 4% of the Court's total staff.

While the Court is attempting to achieve savings through furloughs and voluntary programs, involuntary actions such as layoffs will likely be necessary to maintain Court operations under the circumstances of significantly reduced funding.



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