



Superior Court of California ♦ County of Orange



Employee Handbook

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Orange County Superior Court – Employee Handbook

November 2016

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Superior Court of California County of Orange

From the Desk of David Yamasaki
Chief Executive Officer

Welcome Aboard! You are entering a world of new and exciting challenges and opportunities as a member of the Superior Court family. We are very glad you have decided to join our team of industrious, creative and dedicated judicial officers and employees.

Superior Court employees are expected to be fully committed to the Orange County Superior Court's mission, which is to serve the public by administering justice and resolving disputes under the law, thereby protecting the rights and liberties guaranteed by the constitutions of California and the United States. Court employees are expected to achieve this mission through competent performance and by conducting themselves, at all times, within an ethical framework that ensures the community of the Court's fairness, accessibility, impartiality, consistency, efficiency, effectiveness and freedom from bias.

You will find many challenges on the job that range from understanding and performing services that are very technical in nature, to working with individuals who are dealing with emotional and physical turmoil in their lives. However, providing services under these circumstances provides the opportunities and rewards of being able to help make a positive difference in people's lives by accurately explaining how a Court process works or by ensuring that the Court has the files or documents it needs to deal fairly with people who come to Court for a hearing or trial.

The responsibilities of Court employees are weighty and the Court holds employees to a high standard of conduct both on and off the job. However, the rewards of providing efficient service within an ethical framework are of correspondingly high quality. Working as part of the Court team is another special privilege of your new employment.

Understanding how the Superior Court operates and how it interfaces with other government agencies, the legal community and the public can be bewildering during your first few days or weeks on the job. The information contained in this Handbook is provided to increase your understanding of the Court's purpose, operations, policies and expectations of your performance.

The Court's Supervisors and Managers are committed to helping you achieve success as a Court employee. Please do not hesitate to contact them at any time for assistance or clarification.

Best wishes for success in your new job with the Superior Court.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David H. Yamasaki". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue grid background.

David Yamasaki
Chief Executive Officer
Clerk of the Court/Jury Commissioner

Orange County Superior Court Employee Handbook Acknowledgment

This Handbook is for your information and reference. Please read it thoroughly. Policies included in the Handbook are subject to change by the Orange County Superior Court. Please indicate that you have read the Handbook by signing and returning this page to the CJC-Human Resources/Records department. A copy of this signed form will be placed in your personnel file.

Acknowledgment:

I have reviewed the [Orange County Superior Court Employee Handbook](#) on the Court website and understand that it is my responsibility to read its contents and conform to its requirements. I understand that portions of the Handbook contain brief summaries of various provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the Personnel Policies and Regulations (PP&R); however, the Handbook does not supersede, alter, or in any way affect the federal and state employment laws, the local Superior Court Rules, the PP&R, or the MOU. I further understand that the MOU and PP&R are available to me through the court Intranet or at <http://hub.occourts.org/hr/relations/Pages/Policies.aspx>.

Employee Name (print)

Employee Signature

Date



Section I.

California State Government



CALIFORNIA STATE GOVERNMENT

CALIFORNIA STATE GOVERNMENT – THREE BRANCHES

The California Constitution provides for three branches of state government: legislative, executive, and judicial. Each branch performs a specific function in the administration of state government: the Legislature creates the law; the Executive Branch enforces the law; and the Judicial Branch interprets the law.

The Orange County Superior Court (OCSC) is part of the Judicial Branch of the California state government which includes the trial courts, the appellate courts, the Supreme Court, and several bodies that manage and oversee various administrative and regulatory functions associated with the Courts.

JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the [Chief Justice](#) and in accordance with the California Constitution, the Council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. Judicial Council staff implements the Council's policies.

MISSION STATEMENT FOR CALIFORNIA'S JUDICIAL BRANCH

MISSION OF THE JUDICIARY

The judiciary will, in a fair, accessible, effective, and efficient manner, resolve disputes arising under the law and will interpret and apply the law consistently, impartially, and independently to protect the rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitutions of California and the United States.

MISSION OF THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the Judicial Council sets the direction and provides the leadership for improving the quality and advancing the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice.

The Mission of the Superior Court of California, County of Orange:



To serve the public by administering justice and resolving disputes fairly, efficiently, and expeditiously

Section I.

Orange County Superior Court



THE ORANGE COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

HISTORY *(Last updated 2016)*

Established in 1889, the Court System has been part of Orange County history for more than 115 years. At that time there was only one judge, who heard the first case in his law office because a courthouse had yet to be built. Finally, in 1901 the Santa Ana Courthouse was built and matters were heard in its one courtroom. Today, there are about 1500 people who support the Orange County Superior Court which has over 130 judicial officers and operates at nine facilities.

On August 10, 1998, pursuant to the vote of the Judges (and enabled by a constitutional amendment) the Orange County Superior Court and the five (5) Orange County Municipal Courts unified and became known as **The Superior Court of California, County of Orange**. This Court is the fifth largest state trial court in the country. Courthouses are now referred to as justice centers where limited jurisdiction (traffic, misdemeanor, felony preliminary hearing and civil limited and small claims) and general jurisdiction (felony trials, probate, appellate, juvenile, family law and civil unlimited) cases are heard. The justice centers operate under the direction of the Presiding Judge and the Court Executive Officer, and are managed by Deputy Executive Officers (aka “Chiefs”) and Superior Court Directors.

JUDICIAL ORGANIZATION

The Orange County Superior Court Judges, by a majority vote, elect one judge to lead the Court as the **Presiding Judge**. The initial term of Presiding Judge is for two years; however, a judge may be elected to additional one year terms. The Presiding Judge assigns other Judicial Officers to their respective departments and apportions work among them. The Presiding Judge also manages the administrative business activities of the Court with assistance from the Chief Executive Officer.

An **Assistant Presiding Judge** is elected for a two-year term by a majority vote of the judges of the Court, commencing the calendar year following his or her election. The Assistant Presiding Judge has responsibility for the duties delegated by the Presiding Judge. The Assistant Presiding Judge, during the absence or inability to act of the Presiding Judge, serves as the Acting Presiding Judge of The Superior Court, and exercises the powers and carries out the duties of the Presiding Judge.

Trial court judgeships are created by legislation that must be enacted by the state legislature and signed by the Governor. Judgeships are allocated to courts based on a priority ranking by the Judicial Council, which makes recommendations to the legislature about judgeship needs. For more information about the Judicial Council, go to <http://www.courts.ca.gov/policyadmin-jc.htm>.

The **Supervising Judges** are appointed by the Presiding Judge. Supervising Judges provide leadership for operations of the Orange County judicial system including juvenile, criminal, civil and family courts and each of the branch locations.

NON-JUDICIAL ORGANIZATION

The **Court Executive Officer** is appointed by the judges of the Court and is responsible for directing all of the non-judicial activities of the Superior Court. These activities include managing the jury program and being custodian of all documents, files and exhibits for matters pending before the court. Therefore, the Court Executive Officer also serves as the Jury Commissioner and the Clerk of the Court.

Under the direction of the Court Executive Officer, the non-judicial activities of the Court are organized into operational functions referred to as departments. Those departments include: Court Technology Services, Financial Services, Human Resources, and Court Operations.

Each Department is headed by a Deputy Executive Officer and organized into divisions or programs. The functions of those divisions and programs are overseen by Managers and Supervisors.

Orange County Superior Court Locations

Central Justice Center
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Community Court
909 North Main Street
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Civil Complex Center (CXC)
751 West Santa Ana Blvd.
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Department CJ1 Orange County Men's Jail
550 N. Flower St.
Santa Ana, CA 92703

Harbor Justice Center – Newport Beach
4601 Jamboree Rd.
Newport Beach, CA 92660

Lamoreaux Justice Center
341 The City Drive
Orange, CA 92868

North Justice Center
1275 N. Berkeley Avenue
Fullerton, CA 92832

Superior Court Service Center
27573 Puerta Real
Mission Viejo, CA 92691

Tamura Justice Center
(Formerly West Justice Center)
8141 13th Street
Westminster, CA 92683

Section II.

Ethical Conduct



Ethical Conduct

As part of the Judicial Branch of California Government, the Orange County Superior Court is committed to the California Judicial Branch strategic goals as adopted by the Judicial Council. Among those goals are commitments to access, fairness and diversity and delivering the highest quality of justice and service to the public. For these and other goals to be achieved, it is essential that, at all times, Court employees conduct business with the highest degree of integrity and ethics. As a Court employee, you are expected to consistently perform your duties and conduct yourself, on and off the job, within the ethical framework or the Code of Ethics for Court Employees and related policies. It is important for you to have a heightened sensitivity to actions that may appear improper and give the impression of favoritism or special treatment. Favoritism in providing Court services can seriously erode the Court's credibility in the community it serves. If an employee has any doubt about the appropriateness of an action, he/she is expected to seek guidance from management before acting.

The fair and equitable treatment of others including co-workers and the public is both an ethical and legal priority. Court management is committed to non-discrimination, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and maintaining a harassment-free work and service environment. Court management takes these policies very seriously and encourages employees who experience what they believe to be violations, to immediately report such matters to their manager or the Chief Human Resources Officer.

The following provides specific policy information on various subjects associated with integrity and ethical conduct as well as nondiscrimination, EEO and harassment. You are expected to comply with these policies as they pertain to both your co-workers and the public that we serve. The Court will act promptly to investigate violations of these policies and take appropriate remedial action including serious disciplinary action, up to and including discharge from court employment, for employees found to have breached these policies.

CODE OF ETHICS

The Orange County Superior Court has adopted the Code of Ethics that requires employees to treat each other and the public respectfully and equitably at all times. The Code of Ethics also requires employees to safeguard confidential information and refrain from breaking the law or engaging in other improper activities that could bring discredit to the court. The Code of Ethics cannot address every conceivable ethical issue that an employee may face. However, the intent relative to employee conduct is clear, and Court management and supervisors are available to provide employees with guidance on specific issues that may arise.

See [The Code of Ethics](#)

OATH OF OFFICE/DEPUTIZED POSITIONS

Unlike most private sector employees, every Court employee is required to sign an Oath of Office in which he/she solemnly swears or affirms to support and defend the constitutions of the United States and the State of California and to discharge his/her duties faithfully. This oath or affirmation reflects the importance of your job and sets a high standard for Court employees in terms of ethical expectations. You are, in effect, a trustee of the public good and are, therefore, sworn to comply with all Federal and State laws. The Courts are a major component of democracy in the United States and the place where citizens come to seek justice. Your role in the administration of this vital function is critical and it is imperative that you remain cognizant of your oath and its legal and ethical responsibilities at all times.

In addition to the Oath of Office, some Court positions, such as Deputy Clerk, require employees to be deputized. Being deputized means that an employee is officially acting on behalf of the Clerk of the Court when performing his/her duties which may include maintaining Court records, taking official minutes of Court proceedings, issuing and filing legal documents, collecting fees and fines and setting hearing dates. Deputized employees should always be aware that this official role requires, at all times, that duties be performed with integrity, accuracy and in compliance with the law and Court policy.

NONDISCRIMINATION

State and Federal law and Court Policies and Regulations protect both employees and the public from discrimination in employment practices and the level of service received from the Court. This means that no employment decisions or decisions regarding the application of Court rules or the level of Court services received can be based on illegal discriminatory reasons. You are expected to treat your co-workers and the public with respect and make decisions regarding work matters and level of service to which the public is eligible and receives without regard to any protected characteristic. In the employment context, protected characteristics include race, color, religious creed, sex (which includes pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding and medical conditions related to pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding), gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), sexual orientation, genetic information (including family medical history), citizenship, military or veteran service, or any other basis prohibited by law (hereinafter referred to as "Protected Characteristics").

[See Policy on Harassment, Discrimination & Retaliation in Employment](#)

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY (EEO)

In accordance with state and federal law, Orange County Superior Court supports a policy of nondiscrimination and equal employment opportunity (EEO). The Court will not discriminate in any employment policy, practice or procedure on the basis of any Protected Characteristic as defined above. Each employee of this organization is charged with the responsibility of complying with the Code of Ethics for Court Employees and demonstrating adherence to the organization's commitment to Equal Employment Opportunity.

[See Policy on Harassment, Discrimination & Retaliation in Employment](#)

HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

In keeping with our commitment to have a workplace free of discrimination in accordance with Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Equal Employment Guidelines, the California Fair Employment and Housing Act, other non-discrimination laws and sound management principles, the Court strictly prohibits unlawful harassment. All Superior Court employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner at all times in compliance with the Code of Ethics for Court Employees.

Unlawful harassment based on a person's legally protected status is strictly prohibited. Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical or visual, that is based upon a person's Protected Characteristic. Harassment in the form of retaliation is also strictly prohibited. All employees will refrain from harassing conduct that: 1) affects tangible job or benefits to employees; 2) interferes unreasonably with an individual's work performance or a member of the public's access to services; 3) creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or service environment or 4) impacts the quality or level of service rendered to a member of the public. Occasional, isolated, sporadic or trivial acts that are simply annoying in nature may not constitute illegal harassment. Nonetheless, the Court will attempt to address these situations to prevent reoccurrence and/or escalation.

Harassment based on a person's sex is strictly prohibited. Accordingly, all employees will refrain from making unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature; making submission to or rejection of such conduct or sexual favors a basis for employment or service decisions affecting the employee or a member of the public; creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or service environment by such conduct, which interferes with an employee's work or a member of the public's access to service.

The Court prohibits adverse action (retaliation) against an employee who in good faith reports, opposes, or participates in an investigation of alleged discrimination or harassment.

- Consensual Relationships
Because of the potential for a conflict of interest, an employee with supervisory responsibilities who is in, or enters into, a consensual relationship with an employee he or she supervises, oversees, or evaluates shall notify his/her manager as soon as possible so effective steps can be taken to eliminate any conflict of interest.

[See Article I, Section 1 of the Personnel Policies and Regulations](#)

[See Policy on Harassment, Discrimination & Retaliation in Employment](#)

[See EEOC Complaint Form](#)

GUIDANCE FOR RESOLUTION OF DISCRIMINATION / HARRASSMENT COMPLAINTS

Individuals reporting discrimination or harassment will be informed about options for resolving potential violations of the Court's Harassment Prevention and Nondiscrimination in Employment Policy, including options for Early Resolution and steps for Formal Investigation.

- Early Resolution
The goal of early resolution is to resolve concerns at the earliest stage possible and may include an inquiry into the facts, but typically does not include a formal investigation. Early resolution includes such options as discussions with the parties, mediating an agreement between the parties, separating the parties, referring the parties to counseling programs, conducting educational and training programs, or conducting follow-up review after a period of time to assure the resolution has been implemented effectively. While the Court encourages early resolution of a complaint, the Court does not require that parties participate in early resolution. Some reports of discrimination may not be appropriate for early resolution, but may require a formal investigation at the discretion of the Chief Human Resources Officer or designee.
- Formal Investigation
In cases where early resolution is not desired or appropriate, or where it is unsuccessful, a prompt and, to the extent practicable, confidential investigation will be conducted.

GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYEE ACCOMMODATIONS

The following guidance is intended to be interpreted consistent with relevant state and federal law. Employees who require accommodation on one or more of the following bases must inform their supervisor as soon as the need arises:

- Physical or Mental Disability

The Court provides reasonable accommodations to applicants and otherwise qualified employees who are disabled or become disabled and need assistance in the hiring process and/or to perform the essential functions of their positions. Employment applicants requiring accommodation during the application process should contact the recruiter for the position for assistance. Employees requiring reasonable accommodation should contact Human Resources, Benefits and Disability Programs Unit at (657) 622-7735 or submit a completed Request for Job Modification or Accommodation form to Human Resources.

The interactive process shall be used to determine what, if any, reasonable accommodation will be made. The interactive process is an ongoing dialogue between the employee and appropriate representatives of the Court about possible options for accommodating the employee's disability.

The employee is responsible for providing medical documentation to assist in understanding the nature of the employee's functional limitations. When necessary, the Court may require that the employee be examined by a Court-appointed healthcare provider at the Court's expense. The employee must respond to requests for information in a timely manner and must engage in the interactive process.

The Court need not provide a requested accommodation if to do so would pose an undue hardship as defined in state and federal law. This determination is made on a case-by-case basis.

- Pregnancy

The Court will reasonably accommodate a pregnant employee's medical needs (such as temporarily modifying work duties or allowing more frequent breaks). Whether an accommodation is reasonable is a factual determination to be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration such factors, including but not limited to, the employee's medical needs, the duration of the needed accommodation, the Court's legally permissible past and current practices, and other such factors, under the totality of the circumstances. The employee and the Court shall engage in a good faith interactive process to identify and implement the employee's request for reasonable accommodation.

Employees who are disabled by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical condition are entitled to pregnancy disability leave of up to four months. A "four month leave" means time off for the number of days or hours the employee would normally work within four calendar months (one-third of a year or 17 $\frac{1}{3}$ weeks). For employees who work less than 40 hours a per week, or who work on variable work schedules, the number of working days that constitutes "four months" is calculated on a pro rata or proportional basis.

- Breastfeeding/Lactation

The Court will provide breastfeeding employees a reasonable amount of break time to express breast milk, unless to do so would seriously disrupt the operations of the Court. The Court will provide the use of a private room or other location, other than a bathroom, in as close proximity as possible to the employee's work area, for the purpose of expressing breast milk.

- Religion

The Court will reasonably accommodate an employee whose duties or employment requirements conflict with the employee's religious belief or observance unless such accommodation would result in undue hardship for the Court, as defined in applicable law. This means the Court will explore any available reasonable alternative means of accommodating the religious belief or observance, including the possibilities of excusing the person from those duties that conflict with his or her religious belief or observance or permitting those duties to be performed at another time or by another person.

An accommodation of an individual's religious dress practice or religious grooming practice is not reasonable if the accommodation requires segregation of the individual from other employees or the public.

An accommodation is not required if it would result in a violation of any law prohibiting discrimination or protecting civil rights.

For additional information, please contact Human Resources at (657) 622-7735 or hrhelp@occourts.org. Information on contacting an HR representative from either the Benefits & Disability Programs Unit or Employee & Labor Relations Unit for assistance with an accommodation request is also available on the intranet at <http://hub.occourts.org/hr/Pages/Home.aspx>

FRAUD HOTLINE/WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTIONS

The Orange County Superior Court is committed to providing an ethical workplace which instills public trust and confidence in the agency's ability to effectively administer justice and where employees are encouraged to report fraud, waste, abuse of authority, violation of law, or threat to public health without fear of retribution in compliance with the California Whistleblower Protection Act (Gov. Code Sec. 8547 et seq.).

Employees with work-related concerns are encouraged to promptly discuss them with their supervisor or manager in an effort to seek resolution. If a concern is regarding an improper governmental activity such as fraud, waste, abuse of authority, misuse or abuse of resources, violation of law, or threat to public health or safety by a Court employee, such concerns may be confidentially reported by email to ECL@occourts.org ("Employee Communication Line" confidential email), by phone to the Judicial Branch Whistleblower Hotline at 1-866-865-6400, or the Whistleblower Hotline at (800) 952-5665. Under the California Whistleblower Protection Act, the State Auditor is also authorized to receive reports of suspected improper governmental activities.

Employees who, in good faith, report improper governmental activities or who participate in an investigation of such reports are protected from retaliation. Employees who believe they have been retaliated against for good faith reporting of improper governmental activities should report the matter through the Court's EEO Complaint Form process (<http://hub.occourts.org/hr/relations/Pages/Forms.aspx>) and may also file a copy of the written complaint with the State Personnel Board.

(For more information, visit the State Auditor's website here: <http://www.auditor.ca.gov/>)

In accordance with the Affordable Care Act, Court employees are protected from retaliation for reporting alleged violations of Title I of the Affordable Care Act, 29 USC 218C. Complaints must be filed within 180 days of the alleged violation and may be filed internally with the court's Chief Human Resources Officer or externally with the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

[See: Whistleblower Protection Policy](#)

ACCESS TO COURT SERVICES

It is the policy of the Court to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal and full access to the judicial system. "Accommodations" means actions that result in court services, programs, or activities being readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities. Accommodations may include making reasonable modifications in policies, practices, and procedures; furnishing, at no charge, to persons with disabilities, auxiliary aids and services, equipment, devices, materials in alternative formats, readers, or certified interpreters for persons with hearing impairments; relocating services or programs to accessible facilities; or providing services at alternative sites. Although not required where other actions are effective in providing access to court services, programs, or activities, alteration of existing facilities by the responsible entity may be an accommodation.

The facilities at all Justice Centers are equipped with the following:

- Parking for persons with disabilities
- Restrooms to accommodate wheelchair access and support bars
- Telephones: wheelchair accessible and TDD capabilities

Accommodations are available upon request in advance for:

- American Sign Language interpreters
- Assisted listening devices for people with loss of hearing

In performing your duties as a Court employee, be aware of the accommodations that are available to court users and assist those who inquire about them. It is also important to be sensitive to the needs of the public and be aware that there are things you can do to improve access for persons with disabilities.

[See Rule 1.100 of the California Rules of Court](#)

[See Court ADA page](#)

[See Policy on Wheelchair Accommodations in Courtrooms](#)

LACTATION ROOM POLICY FOR JURORS, ATTORNEYS, AND COURT USERS

Whenever feasible, the Court will provide a lactation room for jurors, attorneys, and court users who request such access. Requests should be made to the local Facilities Services Officer as far in advance as possible.

[See Lactation Room Policy for Jurors, Attorneys, and Court Users](#)

CONFLICT OF INTEREST/OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

In addition to the Code of Ethics, the Courts has a Conflict of Interest policy that prohibits employees from engaging in any activities which could constitute a conflict of interest with their employment by the Court. In general, such activities include those that involve using Court resources or the prestige of the Court for personal private gain or advantage, or the private gain or advantage of another party. This policy also restricts employees' outside employment. Specifically, Court employees are expected to devote all of their time and efforts during their work hours to the performance of their assigned duties. Employees who wish to engage in any employment in addition to their Court employment may do so with prior approval and as long as the activity is not prohibited, does not interfere with the efficient performance of Court duties and does not create an appearance of impropriety. Certain additional restrictions apply to Court Mediators and Attorneys.

[See Article I, Section 1 of the Personnel Policies and Regulations](#)

[See Policy on Outside Employment for Superior Court Attorneys](#)

PERSONAL COURT CASE DISCLOSURE (PCCD)

A conflict of interest arises when an employee's personal or financial interest conflicts, or appears to conflict, with his/her official responsibility. A high standard of conduct, judgment and ethics is required of all Orange County Superior Court employees.

In accordance with the Code of Ethics and the Conflict of Interest policy, Court employees must avoid all impropriety and appearance of impropriety. Orange County Superior Court employees shall not process, handle, or in any manner be involved with any case filed in the Court in which the employee is a party or witness. Employees shall not process,

handle, or in any manner be involved with any case filed in the Court in which a relative or friend of the employee is a party, alleged victim, or witness. For purposes of this section the term “relative” includes any close family relationship including, but not limited to: the employee’s spouse or domestic partner, former spouse or domestic partner, children, parents, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, first cousins, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, and daughter-in-law.

If an employee, or relative or friend of the employee, is a party to a case filed in the Court, the employee shall not use his or her work time to address any matter relating to that case. If time off is needed to attend to the case, e.g. to make an appearance or pay a fine, the employee must request time off using the Court’s usual time-off procedures.

If an employee is a party to or witness in a case filed in the Court or has a relative or friend whose case is filed in the Court, the employee must promptly report this to his or her supervisor so that a determination can be made whether a conflict of interest may exist. When deemed necessary, the Court will determine what, if any, special handling of the court case may be appropriate to avoid the appearance or risk of a conflict of interest.

When a case is filed involving a Court employee, a relative of the employee or friend of the employee as a party, alleged victim, or witness, the employee must notify his or her Supervisor or Manager and provide a copy of the citation or other appropriate documentation, if available through the online PCCD form. The person receiving the disclosure will complete the Superior Court manager section of the online PCCD form.

An employee is not permitted to file or process documents or electronic records in their own file, or that of a relative or friend or in any other case that may create an appearance of impropriety and may view the file only in the same manner and location as a member of the public views the record and while in the presence of a supervisor or manager.

[See Personal Court Case Disclosure Policy](#)

GIFT BAN (Acceptance of Gifts)

Court employees are prohibited from soliciting or accepting any gift from anyone, at any time, including off duty hours, if the person providing the gift does business with the Court or is reasonably likely to do business with the Court in the future. Gifts among co-workers that are appropriate to a given occasion are not prohibited. Gifts that are **not** appropriate for court employees to accept from those involved with the Court include, but are not limited to holiday gifts of candy, food baskets, or gift certificates, as well as hosted events by attorneys or law firms. Court employees must be sensitive to the fact that accepting a gift of any type can create the appearance of a conflict of interest.

[See Gift Acceptance Policy](#)

SOLICITATION AT COURT FACILITIES

The Court allows employees to voluntarily participate in certain fund-raising activities that are related to Court goals and objectives under appropriate, pre-approved circumstances. The Court also allows non-active solicitation and sales by non-supervisory/management staff on personal time in non-public areas. Solicitations of signatures for local and statewide initiatives are prohibited within the courthouse.

[See Policy on Solicitations for Charities and Fund Raisers](#)

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

Employees of the Superior Court have access to highly personal and sensitive information that often is not available to the public. This information may be very interesting or even sensational. It is the duty of Court employees to protect the privacy of persons involved in Court business.

Information obtained through Court employment that is not available to the public is not to be shared or discussed with others except for the completion of Court-related work.

Discussing court cases and court related issues with co-workers in public areas should be avoided. California law makes it a crime to disclose information obtained in the course of a criminal investigation. In addition, disclosure of confidential information may be a violation of a court order which could result in other penalties. Finally, the Court views confidentiality breaches by Court employees very seriously and could impose serious disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

(Refer to Section 6200 of the Government Code regarding custodial officers; and theft, destruction, alteration, and falsification of records.)

Section II.

Workplace Safety and Security



Workplace Safety and Security

Safe and secure Court facilities are essential to free and open access to justice, fair and impartial conduct of court business, and the safety of the public and Court employees. The Orange County Superior Court is committed to making every reasonable effort to provide a safe environment for employees and the public. Resources are dedicated to keeping Court facilities secure, well maintained and hazard-free. In addition, precautionary measures such as weapons screening and the presence of law enforcement personnel at key locations within the Court are provided to reduce the possibility of security breaches. As a Court employee you are expected to perform your duties in a safe manner and comply with security and weapons screening processes. You are also expected to fully cooperate with the law enforcement personnel who are responsible for building security. Finally, under no circumstances are you to directly or indirectly threaten another employee or a member of the public or bring a weapon to the workplace. Such actions are considered extremely serious and can result in serious disciplinary action, up to and including discharge and the possibility of criminal sanctions.

SAFETY

Every reasonable effort will be made to provide and maintain a safe place of employment. All employees should perform their work in a safe manner. Employees shall be alert to unsafe practices, equipment, and conditions and report any such concerns to their immediate supervisor.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY

The Court is committed to the principle that a work environment free of threats, violence, threatening behavior and acts of violence is essential to providing effective and efficient service. Civility, understanding, and mutual respect toward fellow employees and members of the public are intrinsic to services we provide.

Verbal threats of violence, threatening behavior, or acts of violence by anyone, including employees, contractors or the public, while engaged in Court business or while performing official duties, will not be tolerated.

All Court employees are responsible for notifying their immediate supervisor or another member of the management team of any threats of violence, threatening behavior or acts of violence they have received or witnessed or otherwise have knowledge. Management will report credible suspicions of criminal misconduct to law enforcement authorities.

The possession or use of weapons by Court employees is prohibited while the employee is acting within the course and scope of employment. Employees with a valid permit or who are otherwise legally in possession of a firearm, but who are not authorized to carry a firearm in the course and scope of their employment, shall not bring the weapon on Court premises or any other assigned location or business while on duty. A dangerous weapon is a firearm or any other instrument capable of producing bodily harm when used

in a manner or with the intent to harm or intimidate another person, or would cause a reasonable person to have concern for his/her health, safety or the safety of another.

While employees may bring pepper spray on Court property, they may not have it on their person or in view of the public or other Court employees while executing job duties during Court business hours. An employee's use of pepper spray while on Court property may be deemed outside the course and scope of Court employment. The Court therefore may not indemnify employees for any legal action or claim arising out of such usage.

[See the Court Safety Handbook](#)

SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

As soon as you commence work at the Court or change work locations, make certain that you contact your supervisor for information on the emergency evacuation plan for your facility. You need to be aware of who your team leader is, where your designated evacuation assembly area is located and how to safely exit your building in an emergency. You will receive a Safety Handbook during New Employee Orientation (NEO). Updates to this handbook can be found on the Emergency Response and Security Services (ERSS) Safety Page (<http://hub.occourts.org/finance/erss/Pages/Safety.aspx>). This handbook contains various safety plans for the Court and discusses your obligations relative to prevention and reporting. If you have any safety concerns, please first speak with your supervisor.

For tips and other resources related to safety and emergency preparedness, please visit the ERSS SharePoint Site (<http://hub.occourts.org/finance/erss/Pages/Home.aspx>).

DRUGS & ALCOHOL

Orange County Superior Court intends to maintain a safe, healthful, lawful and productive workplace. The Court's Leadership is committed to discouraging alcohol and drug abuse and to achieving a work force free from the influence of drugs and alcohol.

The use, possession, or sale of illegal drugs is unlawful, dangerous and prohibited. The use of alcohol in the workplace, or prior to coming to the workplace, so that the employee's performance is impaired, is dangerous to the employee, or to other employees and/or the general public is also prohibited. Violation of this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including discharge from Court service.

The Court participates in the County's voluntary Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to assist all Court employees who wish to seek help for alcohol and drug problems. The Court also makes available, to eligible employees, a variety of insurance plans that provide treatment for drug and alcohol abuse. Employees may contact their supervisors, insurance provider, or the Employee Assistance Program for additional information.

Employees who experience drug or alcohol problems are encouraged to seek referral for rehabilitation through the EAP or their insurance provider. It is the responsibility of each employee to seek assistance before alcohol or drug problems lead to performance problems. Once a violation of this policy occurs, subsequent use of the Employee Assistance Program or other programs, on a voluntary basis, will not necessarily lessen disciplinary action.

[See Article I, Section 1\(J\) of the Personnel Policies and Regulations](#)

COURT IDENTIFICATION BADGES

In order to enhance the safety of the Court, all employees are provided with an identification badge. Employees must wear their identification badges prominently displayed at all times while in the secured areas of a Court facility or in all areas during non-business hours. These name badges are used as easy recognition of Court employees. Also, all Justice Centers are equipped with a Card Entry Access System, which allows employees into the non-public areas of the Court. It is your name badge that is used as your access card. You must never “loan” your card to another person or allow entry to someone who is not authorized. Should your badge be stolen or misplaced, immediately notify your supervisor.

WEAPONS SCREENING

Court employees are required to successfully pass through weapons screening stations before entering a Justice Center during normal court business hours. Employees are expected to cooperate and follow the directions of law enforcement personnel staffing the weapons screening stations.

[See Weapons Screening Policy and Guidelines](#)

Section II.

Court Business Practices



Court Business Practices

The Court has established a variety of business practices that ensure consistent and effective service is provided to the public. There are some practices that apply to all employees and others that are linked to specific assignments and will be provided to you by your supervisor/manager.

The following discusses several basic business practices that apply to all Court employees.

LEGAL ADVICE vs. LEGAL INFORMATION

Tenet seven of the Code of Ethics reads: *Serve the public by providing accurate information about Court processes that is as helpful as possible without taking one side over the other, or agreeing to favor one side of a case.*

Superior Court employees must understand the distinction between providing legal information, which is an expected part of Court employment, and providing legal advice, which is prohibited. As a Superior Court staff member, you must always be scrupulous in refraining from comment that would even hint as to how a case should be presented or will be judged. If you are not certain whether the information may constitute legal advice, exercise caution and consult with your supervisor or manager before providing the information. You must be polite yet firm in your stance.

The following information provides guidance for Court staff on how to provide effective service to the public. It is not meant to be the definitive treatment of the issue of giving legal advice.

- Explain court processes and procedures to interested customers
We have a unique understanding of the way in which our Court functions. It is to the advantage of the Court, the lawyers and the litigants for Court staff to share that knowledge. Court proceedings are more effective and speedy when everyone is operating with the same expectation concerning the procedural ground rules to be applied.
- Respectfully inform customers to bring their problems before the court for resolution. It is entirely appropriate to apply specialized expertise and go beyond providing generalized information (how do I file a lawsuit?); giving detailed procedural guidance (how do I request a hearing or what does the Court require on a motion for default, a child support order, an application for fee waivers?). Any advice given, which is limited to this purpose and function, is appropriate, including: the provision of references to applicable rules, statutes or Court precedent; supplying forms or examples of pleadings commonly used; or the articulation of the reasons for the Court preferring a

particular process. The Court has an interest in providing due process and assisting in the resolution of disputes.

- Do not advise our customers whether or not to bring their problems before the Court or what remedies to seek. Staff cannot advise Court users whether to avail themselves of a particular procedural alternative. This is uniquely the role of legal counsel. Staff should never give their opinion on the law, or worse, give their opinion as the law. However, staff should patiently explain how to file forms, clarify legal language, and relate Court's policies regarding procedural processing. Giving procedural information does not cross the impartiality line because it is equally available to all parties. The Court owes an equal duty to all parties and should explain **how to do** rather than **what to do**.

COURTROOM PROTOCOL

Occasionally, employees will be directed to deliver or retrieve case files or documents to or from courtrooms. Proper courtroom protocol includes:

- Address judges as "Your Honor" when on the bench and by their name, "Judge Smith" when they are off the bench.
- Entering a courtroom when it is in session is permitted unless a sign is posted to the contrary.
- When court is in session, contact the bailiff or clerk if there is a need to communicate about a particular case or other Court business.
- Do not walk through the space between counsel table and the bench (the well).

When you are looking for a judge, do not go to his/her chambers. Go to their courtroom and ask their clerk. If you are sent to the judge's chambers, always knock before entering.

CONTACT WITH THE MEDIA

All media inquiries should be directed to the Court's Public Information Office at (657) 622-7097 or via email at PIO@occourts.org. If possible, document who called, media affiliation, phone number and what information was sought.

REFERENCES AND VERIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT

Employees may not give personal references or prepare letters of recommendation regarding a current or former Court employee. Providing character information, especially

information that is negative or unfavorable may subject the respondent and/or the Superior Court to financial liability. All personal reference requests shall be referred to Human Resources who will reply to the request accordingly.

Requests for verification of employment and reference checks shall be forwarded to and completed by Human Resources to ensure information disclosed is in compliance with legal and departmental restrictions on release of information and confidentiality.

[See Policy on Verification of Employment and Reference Checks](#)

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

Court employees serve a probationary period. Probation is an extension of the hiring and selection process. The probationary period is a time when supervisors and managers determine if you are qualified to perform the job that you were hired for, how well you perform your duties and your general suitability for Court employment. The probationary period is also an opportunity for new employees to decide if Court employment is consistent with their interests, skills and priorities.

During the probationary period, your supervisor provides you with performance expectations, observes your performance, and provides you with feedback. During the probationary period, you are expected to learn the duties of your position and be able to perform those duties independently and proficiently.

While you may receive a performance evaluation at any time, generally, you will receive a formal review at approximately the midpoint in your probationary period and again towards the end of the period.

Refer to the [MOU](#) governing your terms and conditions of employment for details on probation.

ATTENDANCE

The work that you perform is important. It is, therefore, expected that you arrive for work as scheduled and prepared to perform your duties. Dependability and reliability are demonstrated through good attendance, which is an essential function of Court employment.

Sick leave is intended for you to use for your personal illness and, in certain circumstances, for you to care for a family member, or for other reasons designated by law or policy (refer to your MOU or the Personnel Policies and Regulations for details). Using sick leave for other than its intended purpose is considered sick leave abuse and is grounds for disciplinary action.

Note that employees are also able to use up to 24 hours of sick leave during each fiscal year for personal business much like vacation or compensatory time off. This type of leave should be requested of your supervisor and approved in advance.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Employees of the Superior Court represent the judges and judicial system and serve the public in the vital function of delivering justice. The public deserves, and the Court expects its employees to reflect an image of professionalism. Professionalism and public confidence in the Court system are created by employee conduct, demeanor and appearance.

Employees are responsible for presenting a neat, well-groomed appearance that reflects their professional position within the Court.

Inappropriate attire includes, but is not limited to:

- Tank tops
- Shorts, leggings, casual Capri style pants
- Clothing that is overly revealing
- Jeans
- T shirts
- Sweatshirts and sweatpants
- Flip flop shoes or other footwear that is not appropriate to the work environment and functions performed
- Any clothing or accessories (such as pins, buttons, jewelry, or hats/caps) that contains wording, including but not limited to that which is offensive, is an advertisement or constitutes a political statement/message. This example is not intended to include attire or accessories that contain the logo or official name of the Orange County Superior Court
- Clothing that is torn, stained or dirty

The Court's "Dress Standards and Guidelines," as well as its "Dress Policy – Casual Friday" can be found at <http://hub.occourts.org/Pages/Policies.aspx>

PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use of personal cell phones and other mobile devices is to be limited to breaks and lunch periods. This includes the receipt and response to calls and text messages. The use of iPods or other devices to listen to music while working will be determined by an employee's assignment and approved by his/her supervisor in advance. Under no circumstances should the use of a device interfere with the employee's ability to respond to business calls, serve the public or work with other staff.

The use of hand held cell phones while driving in the course of Court business is strictly prohibited and may result in a traffic citation or other fines/sanctions, in addition to employment consequences.

PERSONNEL FILES

The Human Resources Department is the official custodian of all personnel files. These files are confidential, but employees can review their own personnel file.

WORK AREA

Desks and other work areas (especially those in the public view) must be kept clean and organized. Eating and drinking while providing service to the public is prohibited.

Employees of the Court are responsible for the good care of Court property, whether fixed or movable, assigned to their use. Employees shall examine and clean their equipment and keep it in good, serviceable condition. Employees will promptly report to their supervisor the loss of, damage to, or unserviceable condition of equipment. Supervisors shall be responsible for ensuring that equipment is clean and well-maintained by the employees to whom it is assigned. Further, no employee shall use any equipment, facilities, tools, or supplies of the Court for other than Court purposes.

TIMEKEEPING

All employees are responsible for recording and submitting complete and accurate records of all hours worked. Employees are required to request and secure prior approval to work overtime from their supervisor or manager. "Off-the-clock" work is strictly prohibited for all employees who are non-exempt under federal and state law; such employees working "off-the-clock" could be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge. Supervisors or managers who permit non-exempt employees to work "off-the-clock" could also be subject to severe disciplinary action.

To avoid working "off-the-clock" non-exempt employees may not commence work prior to their start time or continue working past the end of their shift without prior authorization from a supervisor or manager for overtime. In addition, non-exempt employees may not work during unpaid meal breaks. Employees may report timekeeping violations to their managers or directly to Human Resources.

Timekeeping is done via the Virtual Timecard Interface (VTI), a web based system accessed through the Court's intranet. You will be provided with access and instructions by your supervisor. Falsifying time records is considered serious misconduct and can result in serious disciplinary action, including discharge from employment.

SMOKING

No Court employee shall smoke any type of tobacco product or electronic cigarette inside a Court facility. Smoking of a tobacco product or an electronic cigarette shall not occur in an outdoor area within 20 feet of a main exit, entrance, or operable window of a Court building, or in a Court vehicle.

[See Policy on Smoking and Electronic Cigarettes](#)

SOCIAL MEDIA

Court employees shall not use or access social media on paid work time unless such usage is work-related, authorized by supervision or management, and in compliance with all Court policies. Employees shall also not access social media on Court technology, unless such access is consistent with all Court policies, including the IT policy.

Unless work-related and authorized, employees shall not use a Court email address to register on social networks, blogs, or other online sites intended for personal use.

Court employees must not use social media to harass, discriminate against, bully, make threats of violence, or engage in any unlawful conduct against any third party.

Section II.

Use of Court Resources



Use of Court Resources

As a Court employee you will be using Court resources to perform your work. These resources include equipment and supplies as well as confidential data, technology and systems. You are expected to use Court resources for Court business. You are also expected to take appropriate care of Court resources by ensuring that they are used for their intended purposes and maintained as required. Finally, you are expected to properly secure facilities, technology and/or equipment that are assigned to you.

In some cases, you will be granted access to databases that contain information on Court matters. You may also be granted access to databases that are the property of Federal or other State Agencies and contain comprehensive, highly confidential information on individuals relative to criminal, motor vehicle and other matters. You are expected to utilize any databases to which you are granted access for the sole purpose of completing the work you are assigned. Under no circumstances are you to grant access to these databases to others or to use information contained in them for purposes outside the scope of your employment. Under no circumstances are you to utilize these databases for your own benefit or that of another party. Misuse of such information may subject you to severe disciplinary action and/or criminal sanctions.

[See The Code of Ethics](#)

The following describes how you are expected to use Court supplies, equipment, systems and databases which you may be using in the course of your work.

COMPUTER RESOURCES

The Court's Information Technology (IT) Systems provide essential tools for the conduct of Court business. As with all other facilities and equipment, the Court's IT Systems are public property and must be managed in a manner that maintains the integrity and security of Court records, the confidentiality of sensitive information and data, and the public's trust and confidence. All employees are expected to clearly understand the Court's Technology policies and preauthorization requirements before using computer equipment and/or systems.

When given access to any database containing confidential information e.g. California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS), court case management systems, or Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), employees are expected to at all times, perform their duties with the understanding that:

- All information within these databases is highly confidential and access and use of the information contained in these databases is for business purposes only.

- Providing information from these databases to friends, family or others or manipulating or falsifying information in these databases, may lead to serious consequences, including the termination of your employment and criminal prosecution.
- The employee must inform his/her supervisor immediately if he/she:
 - Is approached by anyone to provide, manipulate or falsify information contained in a confidential database.
 - If he/she is aware of someone else accessing or disclosing information from a confidential database outside of Court policy parameters.
 - Is aware of someone else manipulating or falsifying information contained in a confidential database.

In addition to the above, employees must ALWAYS LOG OFF when they leave their terminals. REMEMBER each employee is responsible for all activity that occurs under his/her user ID when signed onto any Court database or system.

By accepting access to the Court's computers, Court employees agree to abide by all applicable policies and procedures. All messages and documents sent or stored on the Court's computers and communication systems are the property of the Court. Employees should have no expectation of privacy associated with information stored or sent through these systems.

The Court's computer hardware and software are to be protected from damage, theft, vandalism or accidents. Maintenance and relocation of equipment is the responsibility of Court Technology Services. No employee is permitted to move, repair or install any software or hardware without the knowledge and assistance of Court Technology Services staff. Employees are responsible for the appropriate use and safeguarding of passwords, user IDs and computing equipment assigned to them.

Court personnel shall use micro computing software only in accordance with the Manufacturer's License Agreement. Any duplication of licensed software, except for back up purposes, is prohibited. Unlicensed software is not allowed on Court computing equipment. Non-Court purchased software may not be installed on Court computers without prior authorization. Periodic inspections to verify software licensing agreements may be conducted at any time without prior notice.

[See Court Employee Information Technology Systems Policy](#)

CALIFORNIA LAW ENFORCEMENT TELECOMMUNICATION SYSTEM (CLETS)

This computer program allows access to the Department of Justice's Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS), which is composed of eleven information systems including: Wanted Persons, Domestic Violence Restraining Orders, Missing/Unidentified Persons,

Stolen Vehicles, Criminal History, and Sex/Arson Registration. Only employees of Orange County Superior Court who have the proper security clearance and training are authorized to use the CLETS terminals. Penal Code 11142 states that any person authorized by law to receive a record or information obtained from a record who knowingly furnishes the record or information to a person who is not authorized by law to receive the record or information is guilty of a misdemeanor.

CLETS terminals are located at all locations of the Orange County Superior Court. Your supervisor will inform you of the location in your justice center if it is necessary for your job function. Any requests for authorization to use the CLETS terminals must be coordinated with the Agency Terminal Coordinator (ATC).

COURT CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (CCMS)

The Court's Case Management Systems have the capability of automating processes involved in filing, managing, and adjudicating infractions, misdemeanor, felony violations and civil matters for case filings in Superior Court. The system has a security feature to protect from access by unauthorized users. The access you have to the screens and reports of each system is based upon your job. If your job changes within the court, your security profile will also be changed.

DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES (D.M.V.)

The Department of Motor Vehicles is required by law to maintain records relating to the registration and title of motor vehicles and the licensing of drivers, and to make these records available to interested parties and government agencies under specific circumstances. The Court has such access which is given to employees based upon their assignments.

E-MAIL

The Court's e-mail system is provided to keep you apprised of important information and to assist you in performing your work. Incidental personal e-mail, internet access and use of games installed in Windows are permissible as long as such use is during an employee's own time i.e. not done during working hours and does not:

- interfere with Court business
- require additional resources
- require the downloading of programs
- follow links or searches that would reflect unfavorably on the Court if publicly disclosed

- involve programs or comments with offensive or harassing statements, including but not limited to those based on race, gender, age, disability, religion, or other protected characteristics, and/or political beliefs
- misrepresent the user or the Court

[See Court Employee Information Technology Systems Policy](#)

MAIL

The Court provided mail service is for official Superior Court business only. Employees are prohibited from sending or receiving personal correspondence through this service. Court employees shall not use the Court's stationery for letters that are not related to official Court business. Also, employees shall not use the Court's address or P.O. Box for purposes of receiving personal mail or package deliveries. Court envelopes are not for personal use.

- **U.S. Mail:**
Each Justice Center has a mail room which is responsible for receiving and distributing United States mail. The mail meters located in these rooms are for Court business only. Employees may not use it for personal mail. Your supervisor will show you the mail room, as well as inform you of what time outgoing mail must be placed in the mail room to be postmarked the same day.
- **Interoffice Mail:**
County of Orange interoffice Pony envelopes are furnished as a service by the County of Orange. This interoffice mail service should be used for interoffice mail going to other agencies of Orange County such as: Social Services, County Clerk Recorder, etc. The pick-up and delivery of county pony mail varies at the different courthouses. Your supervisor will inform you of the location and time for pick-up and delivery.
- **Superior Court Pony Mail:**
This service is used to transport court-related correspondence between Justice Centers. A courier picks up and delivers mail to all the justice centers. This type of interoffice mail service provides the fastest mail service among justice centers. Again, pickup and delivery times vary by location. Your supervisor will inform you of the locations and time for pickup and delivery.

SUPPLIES

Supplies such as paper, notebooks, desk items etc. are to be used strictly for Court business.

Section III.

Employee Resources and Programs



Employee Resources and Programs

The Court is committed to attracting and retaining a highly-qualified and motivated workforce. In order to meet this goal Court management has entered into agreements with Court employees' labor organizations regarding terms and conditions of employment and developed policies, procedures and programs that position the Court to be competitive for talent. The following describes sources of information on your terms and conditions of employment, some programs that the Court has established to support you, and other resources that will enhance your employment with the Court.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

The MOU is a labor agreement negotiated between the Court and an employee organization that represents certain Court employees. As of 2016, labor organizations representing Court employees include the Orange County Employees Association (OCEA) and the California Federation of Interpreters (CFI).

Each MOU specifies the terms and conditions of employment for Court employees represented by a particular bargaining unit. The current Court bargaining units are — General, Supervisory, Court Clerk, and Court Interpreter. The MOUs contain detailed information on terms and conditions of employment including matters such as: work hours, safety, vacation etc. The MOUs are available on-line at the Court's intranet website at <http://hub.occourts.org/hr/relations/Pages/Home.aspx>.

(The MOUs are also available online via the Court's public website at <http://www.occourts.org/employment/policies-regulations/mou.html>).

PERSONNEL POLICIES & REGULATIONS (PP&R)

The PP&R is a set of court-specific personnel policies and regulations which confirm the authority of the Superior Court and the Chief Executive Officer and his/her designees over matters affecting Court employees and specify policies that apply to all Court employees. The PP&R is administered in concert with applicable legislation and collective bargaining agreements. The PP&R also contains the terms and conditions of employment for unrepresented Court employees. The complete PP&R can be found on the Court's intranet website at (<http://www.occourts.org/employment/policies-regulations/ppr.html>).

HEALTH PROGRAMS

The Court offers health insurance plans to all eligible employees and their dependents. For detailed information, consult your MOU or PP&R and/or online benefits information, which can be accessed at <https://countyoforange.ielect.com>.

Per the Court's MOUs with the Orange County Employees' Association (OCEA) and the California Federation of Interpreters (CFI), the Court funds and/or administers important benefits for eligible Court employees. These may include Dental and Vision plans, Life Insurance, and Salary Continuance. OCEA represented employees may be able to purchase additional coverage through OCEA. If you are in the General, Court Clerk or Supervisor bargaining unit, you may visit OCEA's website at www.oceamember.org for more information.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

The Orange County Superior Court provides a comprehensive Workers' Compensation Insurance program at no cost to employees. This program covers any injury or illness sustained in the course of employment and/or arising out of employment that requires medical, surgical, or hospital treatment. Subject to applicable legal requirements, workers' compensation insurance provides benefits after a short waiting period or, if you are hospitalized, immediately.

If you sustain work-related injuries or illnesses you must inform your supervisor immediately. No matter how minor an on-the-job injury may appear, it is imperative that it be reported immediately. This will enable you to qualify for coverage as quickly as possible.

The Court is not liable for payment of Workers' Compensation benefits for injuries that occur during an employee's voluntary participation in an off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity sponsored by the Court.

(For additional information, please visit the Human Resources' intranet page at <http://hub.occourts.org/hr/bdp/Pages/workers-comp.aspx>.)

LEAVES OF ABSENCE

The Orange County Superior Court (OCSC) complies with all federal and state laws and the provisions of the Court's PP&R and MOU's pertaining to family, medical, pregnancy, and military related leaves of absence. The Court also provides other leaves such as jury duty and to arrange for or attend the funeral of an immediate family member. The following provides a brief description of a few leaves of absences that are available to eligible employees.

Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)/California Family Rights Act (CFRA)

Eligible employees may use FMLA/CFRA for a serious personal health condition or to care for a child, spouse or parent with a serious health condition. This type of leave may also be used for absences directly related to the childbirth, adoption, or placement of a foster child. For the purposes of FMLA/CFRA the Court uses a

rolling twelve month period measured backward from the date the leave is used and runs FMLA/CFRA concurrent with sick leave.

The Family and Medical Leave Act was amended by the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2008 (2008 NDAA) and the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2010 (2010 NDAA) to provide two important leave entitlements that benefit military families.

Qualifying Exigency Leave

Eligible employees who are the spouse, son, daughter, or parent of a military member may take up to 12 weeks of FMLA leave during any 12-month period to address the most common issues that arise when a military member is deployed to a foreign country, such as attending military sponsored functions, making appropriate financial and legal arrangements, and arranging for alternative childcare. This provision applies to the families of members of both the active duty and reserve components of the Armed Forces.

Military Caregiver Leave

Eligible employees who are the spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin of a covered service member may take up to 26 weeks of FMLA leave during a single 12-month period to care for the service member who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness incurred or aggravated in the line of duty on active duty. This provision applies to the families of members of both the active duty and reserve components of the Armed Forces.

Pregnancy Disability Leave (PDL)

The Court provides pregnancy related disability leave to eligible employees. The leave may be taken in one block of time, intermittently, or on a reduced work schedule when medically advisable as determined by the employee's health care provider.

Catastrophic Leave

The Court administers a catastrophic leave program designed to permit limited individual donations of vacation and/or compensatory time to an employee who is required to be on an extended unpaid leave due to a catastrophic medical condition for themselves or an immediate family member.

Military Leave

Employees who are ordered to report for active duty in the United States Armed Forces, National Guard, or Naval Militia may be eligible for military leave depending on their appointment status and length of military commitment. There are three types of military leaves for which employees may be eligible: short-term for a period of six months or less; long-term for a period of more than six months, not to exceed five years; and emergency military leave.

If you wish to request a leave of absence, please contact your supervisor or HR's Benefits and Disability Programs Unit for information on eligibility and the process for submitting a

request. You may also consult the PP&R and/or applicable MOU, or visit the Human Resources' intranet page at <http://hub.occourts.org/hr/bdp/Pages/leave-disability.aspx> for additional information on the above and other leaves of absence.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

The Employee Assistance Program is designed to assist you, and those close to you, to resolve problems affecting your physical and emotional well-being and job performance. It is a completely confidential employee benefit. Take advantage of EAP's counseling and referral services. For more information call 1 (800) 221-0945, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You may also find more information at <http://ocgov.com/gov/hr/eb/eap>.

EMPLOYEE EDUCATION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM (FORMERLY TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM)

The Orange County Superior Court strives to provide all court employees with educational opportunities. The Employee Education Reimbursement Program is designed to encourage employees to continue their professional development. The following courses may be eligible for reimbursement under Program, depending on available funding: courses related to obtaining a degree (Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's or Doctorate) and taken at an accredited college or university; courses related to a certificate program, for a previously unattained professional certification related to the work of the Court; stand-alone courses that are related to the work of the Court; and, courses that are prerequisite courses for eligible courses. Reimbursement may be made for tuition, textbooks, laboratory fees, registration and other required fees at time of registration. Expenses for parking, travel, and meals are not reimbursable. For specific information regarding this Program, see Article III of the PP&R.

[*See Article III of the Personnel Policies and Regulations*](#)

[*See Educational and Professional Tuition Reimbursement Program*](#)

VALUING EMPLOYEES PROGRAM

The Orange County Superior Court encourages a culture of recognizing and rewarding employees for exemplary service, innovative efforts and longevity of service. Elements of this program vary from time to time and may include:

Employee of the Month

The Court's Employee of the Month Program recognizes and rewards employees' extraordinary performances that contribute positively to how the Court conducts business and serves the public. Among the rewards is a day off with pay. Supervisors have complete program information, including selection criteria.

Employee Recognition

The Employee Recognition Program allows managers and supervisors to informally or formally recognize their staff. Informal recognition may include verbal and/or written recognition while formal recognition is a structured and planned program of recognition for desired performance.

Employee Suggestions

The Superior Court is interested in providing more efficient service and utilizing cost-cutting methods. Employees who have a suggestion that would benefit the department or provide better service are encouraged to submit suggestions online at <http://hub.occourts.org/esp/Pages/Home.aspx> or by pony to CJC-Employee Suggestion Program. If a suggestion is implemented, the employee will be recognized for making the suggestion and will receive an appropriate award.

COMMUTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

As a Court employee you are eligible to participate in the Rideshare Program which provides services and incentives to those employees who are interested in carpooling or other methods of reducing traffic and pollution. Visit the website at <http://ocgov.com/gov/hr/hrresources/rideshare> for information on how to participate.

CREDIT UNION

As an employee of the Superior Court, you are eligible for membership in Orange County's Credit Union. The Credit Union provides a number of services including automatic paycheck deposit, automatic teller machines and low interest loans.

Additional information regarding these services may be obtained by calling or visiting one of the branches or visit them on-line at www.orangecountyscu.org. The information line is (714) 755-5900.

COURT INTRANET

The Court's Intranet website contains valuable information on a variety of policies and procedures as well as definitions of numerous legal terms that you may encounter in the course of your work. The Court Intranet also has links to internal and external resources that will assist you. It is suggested that you visit the Intranet site at <http://hub.occourts.org/Pages/Home.aspx> and become familiar with its content.

PAYROLL INFORMATION

Your current and historic payroll information is available to you online through the Employee Portal which is located on the Court Intranet site at <https://empinfo.ocgov.com/ocemployeeportal/public/logon.aspx>. On payday, through the Portal, you may also receive announcements and other information of general interest. Your supervisor will assist you in gaining access to the Portal.

OC COURTS E-STORE

If you are interested in acquiring clothing with the OC Court's logo, you may order such clothing at the OC Courts E-Store at: <https://business.landsend.com/store/ocsuperiorcourt/>

EMPLOYEE BULLETIN BOARD

The Court provides employees with an online site to post items for sale, items wanted and upcoming events of interest to other employees. The site is intended to publicize incidental items belonging to employees or appropriate events of interest to other employees. It is not intended to advertise personal or other businesses or to promote controversial events. It should be noted that telephone or email contact information should be to the employee's private telephone or email, not the Court's. Also, any contacts generated by the Employee Bulletin Board must take place on non-work time.

CONCLUSION

The Orange County Superior Court Employee Handbook has been assembled with the intent of providing you with important basic information that will be helpful as you begin your employment with the Court. You will probably have many questions as you learn the duties of your assignment and become familiar with Court operations. Do not hesitate to bring your questions to your supervisor or manager. He/she is more than willing to help you understand the requirements of your position. You may also contact Human Resources for information on employee programs and related policies.

Court management wishes you every success in your employment with the Court. It is hoped that, regardless of your assignment, you recognize the importance of your work to the effective functioning of the justice system and the upholding of the constitutions of the

State of California and the United States. It is also hoped that as you gain a deeper understanding of the functions and operations of the Court, you will constructively contribute your ideas to making the Court more efficient and responsive to the needs of the diverse community it serves.