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FACT SHEET

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California Judicial Branch Outreach to Students: Highlights

The judicial branch is committed to educating Californians of all ages about our court system. This value is embedded in the branch's current strategic and operational plans. The following examples highlight some of the kindergarten through postcollege education initiatives with which the branch is involved. Using a variety of approaches, these initiatives educate students about the role of an independent judiciary in our democracy and how our court system works. Many of these projects are led by the California Supreme Court, appellate courts, superior courts, or the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) in collaboration with nonprofit organizations, local bar associations, institutions of higher education, and county offices of education. This fact sheet offers just a sampling and does not include all local court projects targeted toward this audience or fully describe every aspect of the featured projects.

California Supreme Court Program

Hundreds of California high school, college, and law school students attend the student outreach sessions of the California Supreme Court. This court program includes instructional materials for teachers, online legal briefs, and a live statewide broadcast of the court's oral arguments on important legal issues.

www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courts/supreme/educational.htm
www.calchannel.com

K-12 Students

Appellate court program

The Appellate Court Experience (ACE) is designed to deepen high school students' understanding of the judicial system. The program includes a classroom curriculum, followed by a visit to a Court of Appeal to observe oral arguments in the case previously studied in the classroom. After oral argument, the students are introduced to the appellate court process firsthand, with an opportunity to interact with the justices and the attorneys. Founded in 2005, ACE is cosponsored by the Court of

Appeal, Second Appellate District; the Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF); the Los Angeles County Bar Association's Appellate Courts Committee (ACC); and the California Academy of Appellate Lawyers (CAAL).

www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courts/courtssofarpeal/2ndDistrict/ace.htm

www.crf-usa.org/law_government/ace/index.htm

Superior court programs

The following are various ways local courts are involved with civics education for students. A comprehensive program might combine several educational activities such as visits to the court, mock trials, and Law Day, and the court may tailor the experience to match students' grade levels. While all programs teach students about the judicial system, some have different primary goals such as preventing delinquency or drunk driving. A sample court program is described in many of the seven areas, with a corresponding Web site and/or contact information to give the reader a real example of an educational initiative in action. The examples are highlights, and are not a complete listing of all educational programs found at any one superior court, nor of all superior court youth outreach programs statewide.

Youth courts. California has an extensive network of youth courts also known as teen, peer, or student courts. Under the Judicial Council-approved model, an adult judge presides over this collaborative justice juvenile court proceeding where a youth offender's case is heard in front of a jury of youth peers. In addition to the youth defendant and the youth jury, the roles of the prosecution, defense, and bailiff are performed by young people. Youth representing various peer/youth court programs and adult staff and volunteers from across the state gather at an annual summit to strengthen their skills and share best practices. The National Association of Youth Courts is the clearinghouse for teen court resources.

www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/collab/peeryouth.htm

National Association of Youth Courts: www.youthcourt.net

Classes visiting superior courts. Most superior courts invite classes to come to the courthouse and participate in tours and learning activities. Most of these programs include an orientation to what happens in court and opportunities to observe a court in session. The Superior Court of San Diego County has a multifaceted educational program. Their court visitation program for 5th–12th graders features a trained volunteer who takes students to the felony arraignment department, with time for questions and answers with the judge, and a mock trial appropriate to students' grade level. Depending on students' ages, they may also see a cell where prisoners are held

or observe a trial in session. The court provides educational resources to teachers for their use in preparing students for their visit. Some of the Superior Court of San Diego's other court visit programs include Justice 101, restricted to high school seniors, who participate in a discussion with judicial officers about what happens when young adults make poor choices. In the Superior Court of Sacramento County, which has an engaging court visitation program with opportunities to interact with judges, the presiding judge has also developed a special program on the impartiality of the courts.

Superior Court of San Diego County Educational Programs:

www.sdcourt.ca.gov/portal/page?_pageid=55,1641400&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

Superior Court of Sacramento County Community Outreach:

www.saccourt.ca.gov/outreach/outreach.aspx

Superior court judges and attorneys visiting classrooms. Superior courts throughout California also send judges out to classrooms as part of a speakers' bureau, or through collaborative programs with local attorneys and nonprofit organizations. While at a school, judges and attorneys may present on a topic requested by the teacher, engage students in mock trials or moot courts, or discuss current court-related events. The Superior Court of Orange County Speakers' Bureau and online Student Resource Center and the Superior Court of Los Angeles County's "Courtroom to Classroom" are examples of such programs.

Superior Court of Los Angeles County, "Courtroom to Classroom":

www.lasuperiorcourt.org/outreach/#CourtroomToClassroom

Superior Court of Orange County, Speakers' Bureau:

www.occourts.org/directory/education/speakers-bureau/index.html

and online Student Resource Center:

<http://education.occourts.org/home.asp>

Mock trials and mock trial competitions. Courts support student mock trials as part of their court tour programs, on special days such as Law Day, and/or during countywide mock trial competitions. From elementary school students role-playing jurors, attorneys, clerks, bailiffs, or judges in a mock trial of the wolf from the story of the Three Little Pigs, to middle and high school pupils role-playing in criminal cases, students have fun while learning the fundamental functions and principles of our state judicial system. Both urban and rural courts offer mock trials, from the Superior Court of Butte County, which includes mock trials for elementary through high school students in their Law Week event, to the Superior Court of Alameda County, which hosts mock trials for elementary and middle school students throughout the

school year, as well as an annual countywide high school mock trial competition in January and February whose winners are honored at a Law Day celebration in May.

Superior Court of Alameda County Mock Trial:

Contact: Sarah Vance Guenther, 510-891-6208, sguenther@alameda.courts.ca.gov

www.alameda.courts.ca.gov/courts/superior/ComFocus/bbsb.pdf

Superior Court of Butte County Mock Trial:

Contact: Sharol Strickland, 530-532-7013, sstrickland@buttecourt.ca.gov

Law Day. Courts celebrate Law Day on May 1 or during the week surrounding that day. In collaboration with the local bar association, many courts do special outreach, hold essay contests, and offer tours, speakers, mock trials, and other educational activities related to law and the courts. For example, the Superior Court of Nevada County has hosted over 1,000 fifth grade students and parents for a courthouse tour, an old jailhouse tour, and mock trials.

Superior Court of Nevada County Law Day:

<http://court.co.nevada.ca.us/> (under "Courthouse News")

Mentorship, leadership, and career development programs. Superior courts have volunteer, internship, and externship programs that connect students to work opportunities in the court. Although the focus is on career development, these programs give students a great education about how the court functions. The Superior Court of Los Angeles County is a highlight as they offer a variety of opportunities, including volunteering, internships, and externships, while the Superior Court of San Joaquin County has developed a five-week summer program providing career mentoring as well as insight into the court system.

Superior Court of Los Angeles County volunteer/internship/externship program:

www.lasuperiorcourt.org/OUTREACH/#VIEO

Superior Court of San Joaquin County Youth Leadership

Academy:www.stocktoncourt.org/courts/comfocus6.htm

DUI trials in the schools. Courts conduct real DUI trials or sentencing in schools, where teachers combine the experience with classroom instruction to help students better understand the consequences of driving under the influence and how the justice system works. The AOC has developed a model curriculum to be used before the pretrial/sentencing, as well as after post-trial/sentencing to enhance student learning.

DUI trials in the schools:

Contact: Michael Roosevelt, 415-865-7820, Michael.Roosevelt@jud.ca.gov

Online resources and publications

Courts in the Classroom. This animated Web site was developed by the AOC for students in grades 8–12 to understand the foundations of the law and its relationship to a democratic society, as well as to spark curiosity and a desire to learn about our courts. Using stories, illustrations, and an interactive graphic-novel format, this site includes more than 400 Web pages and covers five landmark cases and several minor cases related to young people. It also offers modules on due process, checks and balances, the role of the court in civil and criminal law, what judges do, and an introduction to the concept of judicial independence. Judges, Courts, and the Law, a Web site jointly hosted by the Constitutional Rights Foundation and the Administrative Offices of the Courts features Courts in the Classroom and related educational resources on the judicial branch.

www.courtsed.org

What's Happening in Court? This is an interactive online book with fun activities and useful information to help children and their families who may be in court for any reason, whether they are visitors or witnesses or are involved in a case. Produced by the AOC's Center for Families, Children & the Courts (CFCC), the book has been widely distributed to schools and courts in California and is available both online and in print in English and Spanish. *What's Happening in Court?* has also been reproduced by other state court systems.

www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/children.htm

Stop Teen DUI. This dynamic, informative Web site, also designed by the Center for Families, Children & the Courts, is a resource for teens and their parents, to prevent youth DUIs.

www.stopteendui.com

K–12 Teachers

California on My Honor: Civics Institute for Teachers

In this professional development program, selected K–12 teachers from across California participate in a multiday civics institute focused on the judicial branch. Participants explore models of existing court- and law-related education curricula and programs, review current K–12 California civics standards, increase their knowledge of the role and operations of the state courts, and create unique lesson plans tailored for use in their own classrooms. This program is a collaboration between court staff and California State University, San Marcos, and is an expansion of an institute conducted in 2006 with the Superior Court of San Diego County. Participating teachers are recruited statewide through various channels, including court leadership, the California Council for the Social Studies (teachers), and county offices of education.

www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/cift.htm

Workshops: Teach the Teachers

Several local courts offer professional development workshops for teachers. The Superior Court of Riverside County is one court that has a series of one-day events that assists the education community in understanding how the courts and their justice partners work with the children they come in contact with every day.

Superior Court of Riverside County Teach-the-Teachers Program:

www.riverside.courts.ca.gov/newsmedia/08teachtheteachers_2.pdf

College and Postcollege Programs

JusticeCorps

The JusticeCorps program recruits and trains undergraduate students to work as assistants in court-based self-help centers. Since the program began in 2004, nearly 600 students have been recruited and placed in self-help centers in Los Angeles, the Bay Area, and San Diego. At the request of local courts, new programs are being added—three courts in the Sacramento region will join the program in fall 2010. Participating students are recruited from California State University and University of California system campuses and represent a diverse group. Many are first-generation college students and go on to law school, careers in court administration, or other opportunities in public service after they graduate from the JusticeCorps program.

The program requires students to complete 300 hours of service, about 30–40 hours of which are spent in formal group or one-on-one on-site trainings. A select group of members make a full-time commitment and complete 1,700 hours of service during

their year with the program. Members' formal training involves a two-day orientation to both AmeriCorps programs and the courts, including an overview of the judicial branch and self-help legal access services in the courts. The students meet with site supervisors and get a primer in their specific subject matter area, whether it's family, housing, or small claims law. Other training includes more specialized areas of law, ethics, professionalism, how to deal with troubled litigants, disabilities awareness, and a Life After JusticeCorps event that is similar to a career day. The program is primarily funded through an AmeriCorps grant, with matching fund contributions from the AOC and local courts.

www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/justicecorps

Judicial Administration Fellowship Program

This program is administered by the Center for California Studies at California State University, Sacramento (Sacramento State) and cosponsored by the California Judicial Council. It is open to all people with a college degree, including recent graduates and midcareer applicants. Applicants should have a demonstrated interest in the judicial system and issues concerning the administration of justice in California courts.

Each year, 10 fellows are accepted into the 10-month program, which begins in September. The fellowship program is both academic and professional. On acceptance into the program, fellows are enrolled as graduate students in public administration at Sacramento State and attend regularly scheduled academic seminars. Fellows serve as full-time professional staff in judicial branch offices.

Field assignments are statewide and include placement in superior courts, appellate courts, and various divisions of the AOC. Fellows are paid a monthly stipend and receive benefits.

www.csus.edu/calst/judicial_fellowship_program.html

University programs in judicial administration

California State University, Sacramento (Sacramento State) is a partner with the California judicial branch in offering two judicial administration graduate programs. The three-course concentration in judicial administration is aimed at Sacramento State graduate students enrolled in the Master's Program in Public Policy and Administration. The certificate in judicial administration includes a series of four courses and is designed for highly motivated individuals already working in the courts.

www.csus.edu/mppa/judicial/

Contact:

For more information about any listed programs or to provide information about a similar program in your court: Deborah Genzer, AOC Executive Office Programs Division, deborah.genzer@jud.ca.gov

Additional resources:

Annenberg Classroom. Civic education resources for teachers:

www.annenbergclassroom.org/

American Bar Association. Law Day resources and more from the ABA Division for Public Education: <http://www.abanet.org/publiced/>

California Department of Education. History-Social Science content standards, curriculum frameworks, and additional resources: www.cde.ca.gov/CI/hs/

Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. A national coalition of organizations committed to improving the quality and quantity of civic learning:

www.Civicmissionofschools.org

Center for Civic Education. Civic and citizenship education, law-related education, and international exchange programs resources: www.civiced.org/

Constitutional Rights Foundation. U.S. Constitution curriculum materials, free civic education lesson plans, and newsletters online: www.crf-usa.org/

Discovering Justice. Programs that prepare students to value the justice system, realize the power of their own voices, and embrace civic responsibility:

www.discoveringjustice.org/

Justice Learning. Text, audio, and multimedia resources for teachers, including lesson plans for legal and civil justice issues: www.justicelearning.org/

Justice Teaching. A civic outreach program that pairs a legal professional with elementary, middle and high schools throughout Florida: www.justiceteaching.org

Law for Kids. Educational resources about law designed especially for kids. Complex youth laws are explained in plain English: www.lawforkids.org/

Our Courts. Spearheaded by retired Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, a Web-based education project designed to reinvigorate civics learning inside and outside the classroom: www.ourcourts.org/

San Jose Community College. Community college classes on the judicial branch and court administration: <http://sjcc.edu>

State Bar of California. Free legal guides on *Kids and the Law*, http://calbar.ca.gov/state/calbar/calbar_generic.jsp?cid=10180&id=1398 and *When You Become 18*, http://calbar.ca.gov/state/calbar/calbar_generic.jsp?cid=10180&id=17523

Street Law. Resources to help educators teach law, democracy, and human rights: www.streetlaw.org/en/index.aspx

US Courts. Educational resources about the federal judicial system: www.uscourts.gov/understand03/