

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Responding to Fiscal Emergency, Los Angeles Superior Court to Close One Day Per Month Action Takes Effect Wednesday, July 15, 2009 Some Limited Services To Be Maintained

Responding to the deepening statewide financial crisis, the Los Angeles Superior Court announced today that it will shut down nearly all of its operations and furlough employees one Wednesday per month, beginning July 15, 2009.

Implementation of the furlough plan, however, may not be enough to avert employee layoffs and, eventually, closure of entire courthouses if the budget climate does not improve markedly by the beginning of the 2011-2012 fiscal year. The one-day per month Court closure is expected to save \$18 million per year.

The Court faces an estimated budget shortfall of nearly \$90 million for the coming fiscal year—nearly double the amount in the most recent budget crisis that erupted in 2002, which ultimately resulted in closure of 29 courtrooms and layoffs of more than 150 employees.

Details of the Los Angeles Superior Court closure/furlough program include these:

--The court system will close on the third Wednesday of each month, affecting about 600 courtrooms and bench officers and more than 5,000 employees who work in 50 separate courthouse facilities.

--While most courthouses will be closed, some courthouses will necessarily continue to be open, with full security protection to serve the needs of county agencies like the District Attorney, Public Defender, Alternate Public Defender, Probation Department, City Attorney and Child Support Services Department, whose operations are located inside courthouses and are unaffected by the furlough. A few courthouses also house offices of the Los Angeles County Registrar/Recorder, which will also be unaffected. These non-court operations see thousands of customers per day and employ hundreds of people.

--Clerk's offices, juror services and nearly all courtrooms will be shut down. Drop boxes will be in place to serve customers wishing to file court papers.

--Judges will work, beginning today, on adjusting their calendars to postpone or move all scheduled court dates on affected Wednesdays for the entire fiscal year.

--A few designated courtrooms will also be available to handle emergency matters.

--The limited number of employees required to work on closure days will be furloughed on other days.

--Supplementing these steps, the Court has imposed a so-called system-wide "hard"—or mandatory—hiring freeze.

--The Court will make \$16 million in other ongoing expenditure reductions, largely by cutting services and supplies, restricting travel and other means.