



ABOUT THE SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF ORANGE

The Superior Court is a unified state trial court serving the County of Orange. The court has eight locations and hears all matters in criminal, traffic, civil, probate, juvenile, family law, and mental health cases. The court also operates drug courts, DUI courts, a veteran's court, a mental health court, a homeless court, and a Laura's Law court. There are no limited jurisdiction courts in the county. Parking tickets are handled by the issuing agency (city, county, school, or special district, etc.).

The population of the county is more than three million residents, larger than 21 states. As such, the court is one of the largest state trial courts in the country. There are currently 144 judicial positions authorized – 124 judges and 20 commissioners. The judges serve six-year terms and are either appointed by the Governor to a vacancy or elected. Commissioners are appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of, the court.

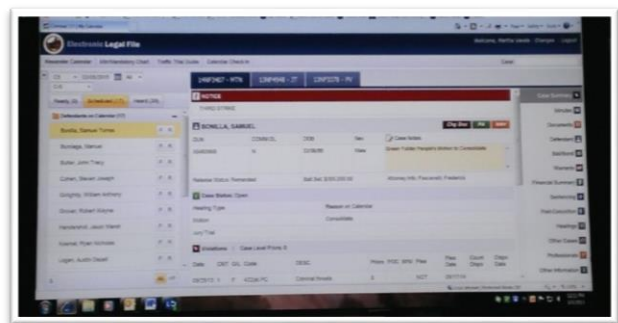
The court as an organization is largely self-contained. The court operates its own personnel system, information technology systems (case management, document management, and jury management, as well as all the associated hardware and software), accounting and trust functions, procurement, fine collection and distribution, and facilities maintenance, as well as supporting all aspects of the trial courts. Trial court support includes: clerk of court, records and exhibit management, jury, court reporters, interpreters, pretrial services, child custody mediators, probate investigators, problem-solving courts, self-help centers, and the Grand Jury.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The court is proactively managed and technologically one of the most advanced courts in the country. All of the court's records are electronic; there are no paper files used in active cases. Judges use electronic calendars and all pending case files are available electronically. E-filing is mandatory in civil, probate, and mental health cases. New child support cases are filed electronically and more than 75% of traffic infraction citations are filed electronically. Paper documents filed are immediately scanned and added to the electronic record.



Then: Paper Files for One Day in One Courtroom



Now: Electronic Case Files and Calendars

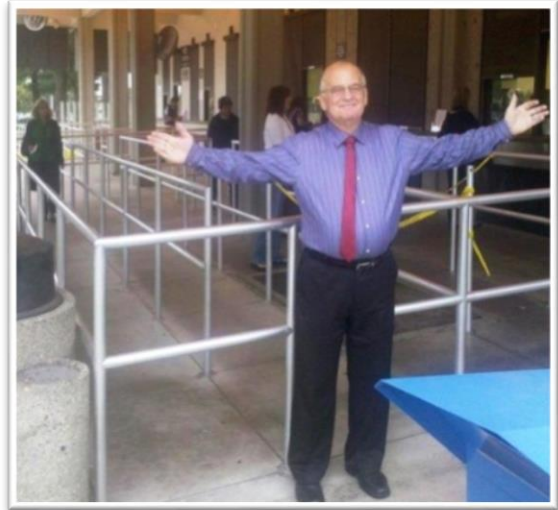
The court's award-winning website was completely redesigned in December 2013. In addition, many transactions can now be accomplished using a computer or mobile device, avoiding the need to visit or call the court, including:

- Location, parking, and way finding;
- Hours of operation;
- Pay a fine in criminal or traffic cases;
- Sign up for traffic school;
- Case/name search;

- Cases on calendar;
- Case information;
- Tentative rulings;
- Scheduling motions/court events;
- Alerts of filings or events in cases;
- Juror postponement and registration;
- Information about alternative dispute resolution options;
- Self-help – classes and forms; and
- Employment opportunities.



Then: Standing in Line



Now: Online, Not in Line

The ability to electronically transact business with the court, including filing papers, has dramatically reduced the number of people who come to the courthouse to transact business. From 2009 to 2015, the number of people coming to the courthouses in the county dropped by more than 34%. Not only did this save time and travel costs for people, it also reduced traffic congestion and vehicle pollution. Because so much can now be accomplished online, people are able to transact business with the court any time, day or night, at their convenience.



Then: File Room



Now: File Server

In response to the recession that began in 2008, the court engaged in a court-wide business process re-engineering effort that substantially reduced the amount of work and the number of employees needed to get the work done. The process also identified opportunities for automation, many of which were implemented. The effort helped establish a culture of continuous improvement in the operations of the court.

The court also expanded its self-help services to better serve unrepresented litigants, as well as streamlining their court appearances. An innovative small claims triage portal was developed in conjunction with several other courts, and a new portal to assist self-represented litigants has been operating since spring of 2016.

Recently the court established analytical units to provide cutting edge business analytics enabling the court to make more informed decisions using the data now available in our all-electronic environment.

At the beginning of the 2008 recession, the court had about 1900 employees in nine locations. The court now has about 1500 employees in eight locations and provides more and better quality services than before. The reduction of the number of staff needed was accomplished through business process re-engineering and automation. All but a few of the staff reductions occurred through normal attrition; there were very few layoffs. There were 435,920 new cases filed in the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

The court engages in extensive employee development programs, ranging from first-line supervisors to a Leadership Development Institute to train future managers. It recently conducted a second employee satisfaction survey and is addressing issues raised in the responses.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Nationally Recognized Collaborative Court Programs

- DUI Court – National Academy Court
- Veterans Court – National Mentor Court
- Community Court – National Mentor Court
- Drug Court – more than 2000 graduates
- Homeless Court – multiple locations

Award-Winning Programs and Services

- Legal Aid Society of Orange County – Access to Justice – 2015
- American Red Cross – Excellence in Disaster Preparedness – 2015
- Court Information Technology Officers Consortium – Innovation Award – Electronic Criminal Environment – 2014
- Court Information Technology Officers Consortium – Top Court Web Site – 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2014
- O.C. Department of Child Support Services – Court-provided Child Support Facilitator Program – 2014
- Digital Government Achievement Award – Mandatory Civil E-filing in Civil Cases – 2013
- National Association for Court Management – Justice Achievement Award – Packaging of Cases – 2009
- National Association for Court Management – Justice Achievement Award – I-CAN – 2004

Judicial Council of California – Ralph N. Kleps Awards

- Electronic Legal File – 2011
- Orange County Combat Veterans Court – 2011
- Complex Civil E-filing Pilot Project – 2005
- Interactive Community Assistance Network (I-CAN) – 2003
- Self-Help Forms Printing Kiosk – 2002
- Domestic Violence Training and Awareness Program – 2000
- Domestic Violence Services Project – 1999
- Task Force for ADA Compliance – 1999
- Domestic Violence Registry – 1998
- Domestic Violence Temporary Restraining Orders – 1997
- Volunteers CARE (Court Assistants Reaching out With Empathy) – 1996