SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

NEWS RELEASE

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

www.lacourt.org | publicinfo@lacourt.org | @LASuperiorCourt

Media Relations
publicinfo@lacourt.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Nov. 21, 2024

SUPERIOR COURT OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL AND INCREASED INCENTIVES TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN COURT REPORTER WORKFORCE

More Generous Incentives and Paid Internship Program Reflect Court's Continued Commitment to Relieving Chronic Court Reporter Shortage Through Innovative Solutions

The Superior Court of Los Angeles County, the nation's largest trial court, is expanding its efforts to recruit new court-employed court reporters and retain its active court-reporter workforce with innovative, holistic solutions for a profession in the midst of a chronic and well-documented shortage, Presiding Judge Samantha P. Jessner and Executive Officer/Clerk of Court David W. Slayton announced today.

The competitive new incentives are part of a multi-year, multimillion-dollar campaign by the Court to address the ongoing detrimental impacts of a nationwide court reporter shortage crisis. The Court's holistic approach includes encouraging – and, at times, creating – new pathways to court employment for up-and-coming court reporters struggling with tuition and equipment costs and licensing and exam requirements in California. The new package is the Court's second expansion of court reporter incentives since February 2023.

In addition to an internal court reporter training program announced in April 2024, to which hundreds of court staff applied and in which dozens are actively engaged, the new incentives include a well-paid, six-month internship program where students and licensees who are new to the profession will shadow an experienced, court-employed court reporter and learn the ins and outs of the profession directly from the source.

The increased and continuing incentives were negotiated with and agreed upon by the Joint Council, which comprises Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 721 and the Los Angeles County Court Reporters Association (LACCRA).

"This significant boost to an already very generous recruitment and retention package is yet another example of the Court's commitment to recruit and retain court-employed court reporters," said Presiding Judge Jessner. "We are proud to stand side-by-side with the SEIU and LACCRA in our effort to make progress on a court reporter shortage that is leaving too many litigants without access to verbatim records, which, in turn, means they have no access to a meaningful appeal. We are optimistic that additional initiatives like the internal court reporter training program and the new paid

internship program announced today will provide new on-ramps and deepen the pipeline for the next generation of court reporters. This will augment the financial incentives that have been offered."

The lack of access to a verbatim record resulting from the ongoing court reporter shortage, coupled with statutory restrictions on electronic recording, disproportionately impacts low-income and self-represented litigants who cannot afford to hire private court reporting services, which can cost upwards of $5,000 a day. The ongoing chronic shortage of court-employed court reporters and statutory restrictions on electronic recording have resulted in more than 500,000 hearings that took place without any verbatim record in Los Angeles County alone from January 2023 – June 2024.

"This increased incentive package and paid internship program are exactly what the chronic court reporter shortage requires – bold strategies that are the result of mutual respect and cooperation with the Court's labor partners," Executive Officer/Clerk of Court David Slayton said. "The Superior Court of Los Angeles County is excited to reap the benefits of such a sweeping, yearslong recruit-and-retain campaign for years to come."

As part of the Court's innovative efforts to resolve the constitutional crisis caused by a severe court reporter shortage and restrictions on electronic recording, Presiding Judge Jessner also announced the issuance of General Order 2024-GEN-011-00 in September, which authorizes judicial officers to find that electronic recording is necessary when issues of liberty are at stake and a court reporter is not available – even for litigation types where electronic recording is currently statutorily prohibited.

The bolstered incentives outlined below are another example in the Court's committed effort to provide a verbatim record of proceedings to all who wish to exercise their full appellate rights and, most importantly, of the Court's dedication to fulfilling its mission to provide fair and timely access to justice for the county's 10 million residents.

NEW RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT INCENTIVES:

Effective immediately, the Court will offer the following new incentives and benefits to recruit and retain court reporters, retroactive to new court reporters who started on or after July 1, 2024:

Paid Internship

- The Court will establish a paid internship program for new licensees, students and applicants without the required experience to join the Court.
- The program will accept up to six interns for to shadow volunteer court reporters who already work for the Court for six months.
- Interns with court reporter licenses will be paid $40 per hour; students will earn $25 per hour.

Increased Retention Bonus for Full-time Current Court Reporters

- Up to $12,000 – increased from $10,000 – for court reporters who were employed as of June 30, 2024, and remain employed as of May 1, 2026.

Earlier Signing Bonus for Newly Hired Official Court Reporters

- Up to $50,000 total within a newly hired court reporter's first 18 months – six months earlier than the previous incentive package.

New Relocation Reimbursement Benefit

- Up to $5,000 reimbursement of eligible moving expenses for new court reporters who relocate from 100 or more air miles from the Stanley Mosk Courthouse.
- Eligible reimbursable expenses include rent deposits, storage, transportation and more.
- Relocation reimbursement applies to full-time new hires and requires a one-year employment commitment.

CONTINUING RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT INCENTIVES:

The Court will continue to offer the following incentives and benefits to recruit and retain court reporters:

Court Reporter School Student Loan and Equipment Allowance

- Up to $15,000 total over two years. This incentive is retroactive to all new court reporters with a start date on or after July 1, 2024.
- The court reporter is required to continue Court service for at least one year after receiving the last payment.

Retention Bonus for Court Reporters with 25 Years or More of Service

- $10,000 annually for court reporters with 25 or more years of full-time Court service as of June 1, 2025.

Finder's Fee for Court Employees who Refer Official Court Reporters to the Court

- $15,000 total for court employees who refer an official court reporter to the Court, paid incrementally ending on the court reporter's one-year hiring anniversary.

Floater Bonus

- Court Reporters actively working and assigned to the Floater Pool (not assigned to a courtroom and designated as a Regional Assigned Floater) will receive a 5% per pay period bonus.

Generous Starting Salary

- In addition, the starting annual salary for a court reporter remains $125,757, step seven on the court-employed court reporter pay schedule, in addition to generous benefits and additional transcript fees.

For more information on the Court's current programs and services, follow the Court on X (@LASuperiorCourt), Instagram (@LASuperiorCourt), Threads (@LASuperiorCourt), or visit the Court's website, www.lacourt.org.