



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF CONTRA COSTA
Public Information Office

mediainfo@contracosta.courts.ca.gov
925-957-5663

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Mimi Lyster, Public Information Officer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PUBLIC NOTICE OF FINALIZED DATES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE FISCAL YEAR 2012-2013 BUDGET REDUCTION PLAN

The Contra Costa Superior Court has been, and remains, committed to preserving the services it provides to the public and to litigants, while also living within its means. The challenges that the court faces as a result of the budget cuts beginning in this fiscal year however, (25 percent of the Court's overall budget), are so severe that the Court is left with few options. The Court can no longer maintain its current public service levels.

Following multiple meetings with court staff, justice system partners, other government officials, the legal community, and the public, and after seeking and reviewing extensive public comment, the Court has decided to close a branch court, to close additional courtrooms in the remaining facilities, to consolidate court calendars, and to reduce services to the public as follows:

1. **Effective November 1, 2012**, the existing Family Law courtroom at the Arnason Justice Center in Pittsburg will be shut down, and the cases will be reassigned from a Commissioner to the existing Family Law departments in Martinez. East County residents will have to travel to Martinez to have their Family Law matters considered. Among other things, it will take longer to get a divorce or a decision on child custody.
2. **Effective December 3, 2012**, the Child Support courtroom in Martinez will be closed on December 3rd, 4th, 5th and 7th and from December 17th through 31st (open December 6th and December 10th through 14th). **Effective January 2, 2013** the Child Support calendar will resume, however it will be closed on Mondays each week. This change will reduce this calendar to the level of service provided by the federal grant which funds this program. This will result in delays in obtaining child support orders.
3. **Effective December 3, 2012**, the Juvenile Law courtroom in Pittsburg will be shut down and the cases will be reassigned to a judge in Martinez. In addition, the Juvenile Law courtroom in Richmond will be shut down. East County and West County residents will have to travel to Martinez to have their Juvenile Law matters heard.
4. **Effective January 2, 2013**, one Civil Trial department will be closed and the Civil Discovery/Ex Parte courtroom in Martinez will be shut down. Cases now heard in the to-be-closed Civil Trial department, and matters now heard by the Civil

Discovery Commissioner will be heard by the remaining Martinez Civil Trial Departments. This will result in increased calendar congestion and will cause delays in hearings, trials, court decisions, and orders.

5. **Effective January 2, 2013**, the Concord Courthouse will close its doors to the public. Traffic cases will be transferred to the Walnut Creek Court. The remaining case types (Small Claims, Unlawful Detainer, Domestic Violence, and Civil Harassment) will be transferred to Martinez. Residents who use the Concord Courthouse will have to travel to new court locations as described above.
6. **Effective January 2, 2013**, the use of the Walnut Creek Courthouse will change significantly. Only traffic cases from Concord and Walnut Creek will be heard in Walnut Creek. All Criminal, Small Claims, Unlawful Detainer, Domestic Violence, and Civil Harassment cases from the Walnut Creek court will be transferred to Martinez. Residents who use the Walnut Creek Courthouse (except for Traffic hearings) will have to travel to Martinez to have their matters heard.
7. **Effective January 2, 2013**, two Commissioners will hear Traffic cases in Pittsburg, Richmond, and Walnut Creek.
8. **Effective January 2, 2013**, Court Reporting services will be eliminated in general in Civil, Family Law, and Probate courtrooms. Details will be provided in the Notice of Availability posted to the court's website at www.cc-courts.org.
9. **Effective January 2, 2013**, specialty courts such as Juvenile Night Court, Juvenile and Adult Drug Court, Domestic Violence Court, Homeless Court, Behavioral Mental Health Court, and Elder Court, may be consolidated or eliminated to allow the judges to focus on mandated calendars.
10. **Effective immediately**, Interpreters in Domestic Violence matters in Family Court will only be provided to the extent grant funding allows. Currently, the grant funds interpreter services through the fall of 2012. The Court is seeking additional grant funds from the state to fund these vital services. Details regarding the status of this request for additional funding will follow.
11. **Effective November 12, 2012**, Clerk's offices will only be open to the public from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm (reduced from 8:00 am – 3:00 pm.) Exceptions will be made for temporary restraining orders and other urgent matters that address the safety of individuals. The reduced hours will provide staff with critically needed time to process the increasing backlog of unprocessed court papers.
12. **Effective November 12, 2012**, Self-help services will be only be available from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm (reduced from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm) in the Spinetta Family Law Courthouse in Martinez, and the number of workshops for self-represented litigants will be reduced.

- 13. Effective January 2, 2013**, the number of Traffic night court calendars now held in four branch court locations will be reduced to a single calendar, one night per month, and only in Walnut Creek. The schedule for this calendar will be announced as information becomes available.
- 14. Effective January 2, 2013**, the number of Small Claims night court calendars now held in four branch court locations will be reduced to a single calendar, one night per month, and only in Martinez. The schedule for this calendar will be announced as information becomes available.

The public is invited to submit comments on these scheduled changes through October 31, 2012 by:

Email: ctweb@contracosta.courts.ca.gov

Mail: Public Information Officer
P.O. Box 911
Martinez, CA 94553

The Honorable Diana Becton, Presiding Judge, said, "The Court deeply regrets having to make these changes. However since the State has cut the court's budget and taken our reserves we no longer have sufficient funds to provide access to justice throughout the county or in a timely manner. We look forward to restoring these services as soon as the State allots sufficient money to the judicial branch that we may do so. The full and fair administration of justice requires no less."