

California Judicial Branch Supporting Pathways to Increasing Judicial Diversity

1. Judicial Branch Strategic Goal: Access, Fairness, and Diversity

The Judicial Council of California's long-range strategic plan for the judicial branch includes the goal of Access, Fairness, and Diversity. Among the issues addressed in the goal statement, the council affirms that in order to understand and be responsive to the needs of court users from diverse cultural backgrounds, the makeup of California's judicial branch will reflect the diversity of the state's residents.

2. Judicial Diversity Toolkit

In 2019, the Judicial Council created and launched a new online toolkit to help increase the diversity of applicants for judicial appointment in California. The toolkit for judicial officers and courts includes models of mentorship programs, seminars, and other educational programs to be used as a foundation for ongoing regional and local outreach by courts and bar associations to engage, guide, and mentor potential judicial applicants. The toolkit is available on the California Courts public website at: www.courts.ca.gov/partners/judicial-diversity-toolkit.htm.

3. Judicial Diversity Summit Sponsorship

In 2006, 2011, and again in 2016, the Judicial Council cosponsored statewide summits on diversity in the judiciary, in partnership with the California State Bar and the California Judges Association. The council will cosponsor the next judicial diversity summit in 2021.

Outcomes from prior summits have included:

- Increased focus on education and outreach to attorneys, law schools, and communities, including development of the Judicial Diversity Toolkit; and
- Judicial Council expansion of judicial demographic data collection to include options for judges to self-report on gender identity and sexual orientation.

4. Tracking and Public Reporting of Judicial Demographics and Vacancies

The Judicial Council collects and annually releases self-reported demographics from the state's judiciary. In accordance with Government Code section 12011.5(n), the council aggregates data relative to the gender identity, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and veteran and disability status of state court justices and judges, by specific jurisdiction. All reports are posted on the California Courts public website at: www.courts.ca.gov/13418.htm. Additionally, the council posts a monthly report on the number of authorized, filled, and vacant judicial positions, enabling attorneys applying for a judgeship to track vacancies. (www.courts.ca.gov/15893.htm.)