

NEWS RELEASE

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA

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SF SUPERIOR COURT LAUNCHES PILOT JUDICIAL SETTLEMENT PROGRAM TO SETTLE LARGER, HIGH-EXPOSURE CASES

SAN FRANCISCO -- The San Francisco Superior Court is offering litigants a new Judicial Settlement Conference (JSC) program aimed at cases with an estimated 20 or more trial days, Presiding Judge Teri L. Jackson announced today.

Presiding Judge Jackson has selected Judge Angela Bradstreet to work with the litigants to settle these cases, beginning next month. The program is designed to preserve judicial resources and reduce the trial calendar by resolving non-Asbestos cases two to three weeks before the trial date. Judge Jackson will select other Judges to participate in the JSC program as needed.

"In these times of scarce resources, it is imperative for the Court to seek efficiencies and savings in every possible way," Judge Jackson said. "This program gives litigants the opportunity to work with an experienced Judge who is

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able to synthesize the issues and position the case for settlement. It is a win-win for the Court and the parties.”

Judge Bradstreet said, “I have been fortunate to have successfully mediated many significant cases so I am excited to assist the litigants and our Court. This program is intended to complement the superb work of Commissioner Pro Tem Pang Ly who often works with the parties on the day of trial to settle their cases. The Court has a robust approach to settle cases with a variety of programs to conserve resources for the Court and the litigants.”

Cases may enter the JSC program in one of three ways:

- By order of the Presiding Judge.
- The parties may request a specially set Mandatory Settlement Conference pursuant to Local Rule 5.0(C). A party’s request for JSC will not be granted automatically. The request will be reviewed to determine whether the case is appropriate for JSC, including such factors as estimated length of trial and Judge Bradstreet’s availability prior to the case’s trial date.
- The Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Administrator will review the trial calendar two months prior to the trial date to select appropriate cases for settlement.

Judge Bradstreet will designate two Fridays per month (subject to her schedule). On those days, Judge Bradstreet will take one JSC case for a full-day

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session.

“If necessary, all parties and counsel should be willing to stay after business hours so that we can all give one hundred percent to achieve resolution,” Judge Bradstreet said.

Here is additional information about the JSC program:

- Cases ordered into JSC will remain with the JSC Judge for Mandatory Settlement Conference purposes only.
- A party seeking a continuance of the settlement conference must comply with Local Rule 5.0(G), which requires parties to file an ex parte application in Department 610 when requesting a continuance of a Mandatory Settlement Conference.
- If the Court is unable to accommodate the continuance request, the parties may be ordered to a Mandatory Settlement Conference with a volunteer attorney or removed from the JSC program.
- Parties requesting to vacate the JSC order shall follow the same process as a continuance.
- Parties, attorneys and insured principals must attend the settlement conference pursuant to Local Rule 5.0(D).

The San Francisco Superior Court offers a number of ADR programs aimed at encouraging faster and less expensive alternatives to trial. Parties may select from the processes of mediation, arbitration, settlement conference, and/or

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expedited jury trials as a means to settle their disputes.

The JSC program will not replace any of the existing ADR programs. Judicial Mediation, Judicial Arbitration and Mandatory Settlement Conferences are still available as settlement options to litigants. The Judicial Mediation Program offers parties voluntary mediation with one of a dozen sitting Civil Judges. The parties may jointly select any Judge on the mediation panel. The participating Judges collectively dedicate hundreds of hours each year to assisting parties to resolve their disputes. Judicial Arbitration is a statutory program operated pursuant to California Civil Code of Procedure §1141.10 et seq under which cases are ordered into arbitration when the amount is \$50,000 or less and neither party is seeking equitable relief. The Mandatory Settlement Conference program is comprised of experienced Civil attorneys who conduct settlement conferences in the courthouse pursuant to the provisions of the California Rules of Court Rule 3.1380 and San Francisco Local Rule 5.0. The Court's ADR program may be utilized at any time throughout the litigation process and are offered at no cost to the parties. For more information about any of these ADR programs, please refer to the ADR section of court website at

<http://www.sfsuperiorcourt.org/divisions/civil/dispute-resolution>.

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