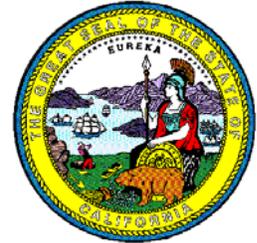




Superior Court of California County of Fresno



For Immediate Release:
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For More Information Contact: Sherry Spears
Media Coordinator
(559) 457-1605
sspears@fresno.courts.ca.gov

Court Seeks Public Comments on Juvenile Dependency Court Relocation

The Fresno Superior Court is requesting public input on closing the leased Dependency Courthouse in February 2011 and moving this division into the main courthouse located two blocks away at 1100 Van Ness Avenue, Fresno. A 21-day public comment period will be held from April 30 through May 20, 2010. Comments may be sent via electronic or U.S. mail to:

Ms. Tamara Beard
Court Executive Officer
1100 Van Ness Ave.
Fresno, CA 93724-0002

Infodesk@fresno.courts.ca.gov or

The Fresno Superior Court has been examining ways to increase efficiency and reduce expenditures. The Court evaluated the benefits and costs of keeping the Juvenile Dependency Courthouse in a separate, leased location on the Fulton Mall in downtown Fresno. The County of Fresno and the Court rented this four-courtroom building in 1999 to centralize personnel from various agencies working with families in the dependency court system. These included the Court, Department of Children and Family Services, the District Attorney's and Public Defender's Offices.

In October 2009, budget shortages prompted the County of Fresno to consolidate the county satellite offices into other locations. This left the second floor of the building mostly vacant and negated any efficiency the Fresno Superior Court gained by renting space there. Beyond that, the Probate and the Civil Law and Motion courtrooms are currently located in the Dependency Courthouse; however, they will move to the B. F. Sisk Courthouse when that facility opens in late 2010. This will leave only the two dependency courtrooms operating in the building on Fulton Mall, and without the county justice partners.

In addition to efficiency and cost, security was another consideration in the proposed move. If and when the property owner leases the vacant space, security protocols and visitor screening will pose logistical challenges for both the new building tenants and the Fresno Superior Court. The Court would be forced to absorb the expense of remodeling the building to accommodate dual-purpose occupancy and ensure proper court security.

The main courthouse can accommodate the Dependency Division when the lease ends in 2011. This move within the downtown Fresno area would address efficiency, cost, and security concerns while maintaining the current level of service and accessibility for families.

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