

# Superior Court of California, County of San Bernardino

Population: 2.18 million (2019) • Authorized Judges and Commissioners: 94 • Staff: 1073 FTE

Civil Filings: 48,143 • Criminal Filings: 274,756 • Family/Juvenile Filings: 35,390 • Other Filings: 4,301

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## High Desert Reorganization Information Sheet Victorville and Barstow Courthouses March 2021

### Details of Agreement with County

- The Court and Judicial Council amended the Joint Occupancy Agreement (JOA) through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the County, to provide a temporary space exchange that includes, occupancy of the Public Defender (PD), District Attorney (DA) and Sheriff areas of the Barstow Courthouse, and the County occupying the Barstow Juvenile Court space located in building adjacent to the Barstow Courthouse. The Court intends to remodel the PD, DA, and Sheriff areas in the Barstow courthouse to establish a full service Family Law courthouse.
- The Court will vacate space in the adjacent county building (approx. 712 sqft.) and the PD will occupy that area.
- The Sheriff's Department will be relocated from court building to the adjacent County building.
- The Court will continue to use department V15 in the Victorville courthouse, as approved by the County Board of Supervisors in 2008.
- The amended MOU/JOA was approved by the Board of Supervisors at their February 11, 2020 meeting.

### Benefits of Securing the Current PD, DA, and Sheriff Space in Barstow

- 3.5 family law courtrooms, is a growth of .7 from Victorville, reducing family law caseloads by courtroom.
- Family Law Attorney filing window.
- Full service Self-Help Resource Center for self-represented litigants, including space for workshops.
- Children's Waiting Room, providing families a place to leave their children to attend court hearings.
- Family Court Services office to provide mediation services.
- Improved family law services through more expeditious court hearings, improved parking, improved public seating space, and expanded family law clerk's office space
- The Court is exploring remote court appearance options for Family Law and Child Support matters
- With 20,300 family law hearings in FY18/19, it is anticipated that Barstow will see approximately 155-200 litigants a day. Expansion of public transportation services is underway.

### Benefits of Reorganization of the Family Law Caseload from Victorville to Barstow

- Moving family law services to the Barstow Courthouse will provide opportunity to open additional criminal courtroom(s) at the Victorville Courthouse, allowing for more adequately balanced criminal caseloads and better response to anticipated growing criminal caseloads.
- The current family law clerk's office space will be reprogrammed for a jury room expansion.
- Parking challenges, public hallway overcrowding, and seating in Victorville will be mitigated.

### Family Law Non-Courtroom Services that will maintain a presence in Victorville

- A drop-off box will be available for family law filings (no same-day filings).
- A Self-Help Resource Center for self-represented litigants will maintain a dual presence.
- Family Court Mediation Services will maintain a dual presence.

### Rationale

- The United States Census reported a 5.6% population growth from 2010 to 2017 in the Victorville Valley. Further, according to ESRI<sup>1</sup>, between 2017 and 2022, the Victorville Valley is estimated to experience a population growth of another 5.5%. As our Court looks to respond to the growth in population, coupled with the growing caseloads, a reorganization of the Victorville and Barstow Courthouses becomes vital to access to justice.

### Victorville Courthouse Challenges

- Growing caseloads in the High Desert criminal calendars are concerning. The Court has no additional growth space in the Victorville courthouse, where 17,100 new criminal and 6,772 family law filings were presented in fiscal year 2018-19. These filings translated into approximately 101,300 criminal hearings and 20,300 family law hearings

- The number of courtrooms allocated to hear family law cases are inadequate. The increase of self-presented litigants in family law cases takes more time for cases to resolve.
- In fiscal year 2018-2019, 12,500 jurors appeared at the Victorville Courthouse. This volume far exceeds the jury room and facility capacity, creating population control challenges, and often negatively impacting timely service to the courtrooms.
- The Self-Help Resource Center served over 11,000 litigants and recorded turning away over 2,000 litigants in in fiscal year 2018-2019. The space in the Victorville Courthouse is extremely undersized and does not permit appropriate service to litigants. It limits our ability to host workshops, conduct document review and provide for appropriate seating while litigants await service.
- The Domestic Violence Advocates and Family Assistance Program is limited to one day each week presence, based on space availability.
- The juvenile courtroom could significantly benefit from having a meeting room for families to meet attorneys and other juvenile service providers.
- The Victorville Courthouse continues to see a high volume of court users entering the courthouse which causes overcrowding in hallways, seating and parking challenges. In 2018 491,373 court users entered the courthouse, and in August 2019, 312,326 court users entered the courthouse.
- A flurry of legislative changes tied to criminal over the past few years, and more on the horizon have made criminal cases increasingly complex and time-consuming.

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<sup>1</sup> ERSI is a private company who uses mapping and spatial analytics software. The City of Victorville utilizes forecasting provided by ERSI.