



**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF MERCED**

[www.merced.courts.ca.gov](http://www.merced.courts.ca.gov)

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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

**MERCED SUPERIOR COURT SELECTED AS ONE OF THREE COURTS  
FOR STATEWIDE (VRI) VIDEO REMOTE INTERPRETING PROJECT**

A VRI pilot project is scheduled to begin later this year in Merced. The other two California Superior Courts selected for the pilot project are Sacramento and Ventura. Numerous courts expressed interest in the pilot. Merced and the other two courts were selected based on the technology capacity, interpreter needs and resources. VRI or Video Remote Interpreting uses videoconferencing technology to provide court users with a qualified interpreter, when an on-site interpreter is not available. The two vendors (Paras and Associates and Connected Justice) responsible for supplying the equipment recently visited the Merced Court to review the various courtroom facilities. (<http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/VRI-factsheet.pdf>)

The VRI project will include feedback from the court users, judges, court interpreters and court stakeholders. Their feedback will help the judicial branch evaluate how and when VRI can be used for different types of cases (short matters). All stakeholders including the Interpreters assisted in the selection of the vendors. California Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye appointed California Supreme Court Justice Mariano Florentino Cuéllar as Chair to oversee the entire Language Access Implementation Task Force. The pilot project grew out of the work of the task force.

The VRI Pilot will be evaluated by San Diego State University Research Foundation, a third party, independent evaluator.

The Merced court is very excited to have been chosen for such an important project and looks forward to participating in this project with the interpreters in California. VRI is currently used in other states such as Arizona, Oregon, Florida and Indiana. California is a widely multilingual state. It has one of the largest populations of Spanish speakers in the U.S. but also has significant communities of Arabic, Eastern Armenian, Western Armenian, Cantonese, Farsi, Hmong, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Mandarin, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

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