

United States Bankruptcy Court
Central District of California

Theodor C. Albert, Chief Judge
Kathleen J. Campbell, Executive Officer / Clerk of Court



CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA BANKRUPTCY COURT'S WORKSHOP FOR JUNIOR ATTORNEYS

The Court's mission statement is "to serve the most populous and diverse judicial district in the country by providing bankruptcy relief, fair and impartial justice, and a prompt and efficient resolution of disputes." One way the Court advances this mission is to sponsor, contribute to, and promote programs that are aimed at educating the bar and the public on matters of bankruptcy law and practice.

To this end, the Northern and San Fernando Valley Divisions sponsored an in-person workshop on June 17, to foster the courtroom presentation skills of junior attorneys. The workshop was held at the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California, San Fernando Valley Division. The workshop included simulated hearings, which allowed attorneys an opportunity to argue their side of a motion, after which they received feedback from the presiding judge. The experience, while anxiety-inducing for some, was a valuable learning experience for all, with opportunities for attorneys to learn from both the judges and their fellow participants.

There are two more upcoming in-person "BANKRUPTCY COURT'S WORKSHOP FOR JUNIOR ATTORNEYS" events.

On Monday, August 19, 2024, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., the Los Angeles Division of the Bankruptcy Court of the Central District of California will be presenting a workshop at the Edward R. Roybal Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse, 255 East Temple Street, Los Angeles, California. For registration information, click [here](#).

On Thursday, September 26, 2024, from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., the Santa Ana and Riverside Divisions of the Bankruptcy Court of the Central District of California will be presenting a workshop at the Ronald Reagan Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse, 411 West Fourth Street, Santa Ana, California. For registration information, click [here](#).



Judges Clifford, Barash, and Kaufman pose for a photo with participants of the Court's Workshop for Junior Attorneys on June 17.

Court News is published by the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California as an informational service for the practitioners and public of our Court.

Suggestions and comments are always welcome. Please email us at editor@cacb.uscourts.gov.

This issue and back issues of the Court News are available on the Court's website at <http://www.cacb.uscourts.gov/publications>

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS CONSIDER “70 YEARS LATER—THE LEGACY OF BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION” IN ANNUAL CIVICS CONTEST

The U.S. District Court and U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California recently hosted a civics contest for high school students in grades nine through twelve (Local Contest), which was held in conjunction with a civics contest sponsored by the Ninth Circuit for high school students in the Western United States (Ninth Circuit Civics Contest). This year's Ninth Circuit Civics Contest “70 Years Later—The Legacy of Brown v. Board of Education” challenged students to write an essay or produce a video to address the theme and discuss what impact they think the Brown decision has had on the law and our society and why.



The first-, second-, and third-place winners received cash prizes. Each year, the top essays and videos in the Central District's contest advance to the Ninth Circuit Civics Contest to compete with the essay and video winners from all the other districts in the Ninth Circuit. In addition to cash prizes, first place winners of the Local Contest and a parent/guardian are invited to attend the 2024 Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference. The Ninth Circuit Contest is sponsored by the Ninth Circuit's Public Information and Community Outreach (PICO) Committee, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, and the U.S. District and Bankruptcy Courts in the 15 judicial districts that comprise the Ninth Circuit. In all, the Ninth Circuit Contest received 737 essays and 88 videos this year. For more information, please visit <http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/civicscontest>.

THE CENTRAL GUIDE

The Central Guide is an online reference for the various rules and forms related to bankruptcy procedures and filings. This resource, formerly known as the Court Manual, provides instructions, contacts, fee schedules and other useful information necessary to successfully navigate bankruptcy cases, adversary proceedings, and appeals. It is organized into four sections, making it easy to use for everyone from bankruptcy attorneys and their staff to self-represented debtors, litigants, and other interested parties. Topics in each section provide a conceptual overview as well as links to related local and national rules and forms. A search bar at the top of The Central Guide helps users to quickly locate topics of interest.

Jeff Cozad and Mark Francisco have been hosting The Central Guide Information Sessions through Zoom since The Central Guide was introduced. These sessions help familiarize users with The Central Guide and are available to everyone and accessible through Zoom video or audio. Although primarily attended by bankruptcy attorneys and their staff, information sessions have been tailored in the past to specific parties, such as bankruptcy trustees, and the issues that concern them. Hundreds of people have attended the information sessions since they've been offered, with some people attending three or four times. Future information sessions will be offered to discuss new developments in bankruptcy, such as revisions to the Local Bankruptcy Rules.

During a TCG session, the most common question is about where to find specific information, such as the location of appendices that were in the Court Manual. Other frequently asked questions are whether The Central Guide can be printed, the procedure for preparing a summons, and where to locate a specific judge's procedures on the court's website. [Questions sent by email are promptly answered following the sessions](#). These questions often lead to an update in The Central Guide that benefits all participants, such as the inclusion of all TCG Supplements in one section. Most recently, The Central Guide was updated to include (A) A central location to find all TCG Supplements ([COMPLETE SETS: General Orders, LBR; LBR Forms; TCG Supplements | Central District of California | United States Bankruptcy Court \(uscourts.gov\)](#)); (B) Completely updated procedures and forms for the Loan Modification Management Program ([Special Tab: LOAN MODIFICATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM | Central District of California | United States Bankruptcy Court \(uscourts.gov\)](#)); (C) An expanded list of what constitutes "regular notice" of hearings ([Hearings: LBR 9013-1\(d\): REGULAR NOTICE \(7, 14, 21, 30 or 42 days of notice\) | Central District of California | United States Bankruptcy Court \(uscourts.gov\)](#)); and (D) A quick-link to the U.S. District Court's payment portal for the Annual Admission Renewal Fee ([Attorneys: Admission to Practice; Civility Guidelines; MANDATORY ANNUAL ADMISSION RENEWAL FEE | Central District of California | United States Bankruptcy Court \(uscourts.gov\)](#)). Attendees have commented about the usefulness of the information session and how it made them more comfortable with the format and content provided in The Central Guide. Others have noted that they would like to see similarly helpful documentation and information sessions offered in other districts.

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The Central Guide is the next evolution of the Court Manual, encompassing all the information provided in that reference as well as the latest rules and procedures. The Central Guide Information Sessions will continue to be offered to everyone on a regular basis, with particular focus on new developments in bankruptcy in the Central District.

COURTROOM TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE NOW ON THE COURT WEBPAGE

In June, the Court launched a new section on its website titled "Courtroom Technology". The new section is designed to provide comprehensive information about the technological resources available in courtrooms. The webpage offers detailed descriptions of equipment available in each courtroom, subject to the approval of the judge. The equipment described on the site includes electronic exhibit presentation, assistive listening, audio and video conferencing capabilities, interpretation equipment, and attorney wifi access. Additionally, the information is intended to aid attorneys, litigants, and the public with information about the technological amenities so they can prepare accordingly. This new section underscores the Court's commitment to leveraging technology to improve the efficiency and accessibility of judicial proceedings. To view the "Courtroom Technology" section, please click [here](#).

HOLIDAY CLOSURES

Thursday, July 4 - Independence Day

Monday, September 2 - Labor Day

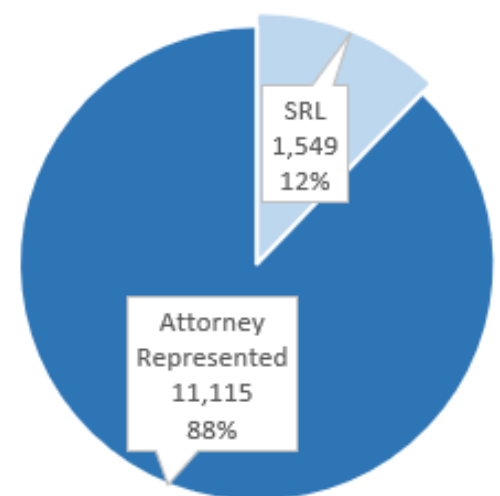
BANKRUPTCY STATISTICS

The data below represents filings year to date thru June 30, 2024. Statistics based on internal filings data.

| Divisional Filings YTD | Ch 7 | Ch 11 | Ch 13 | Total | % change from previous YTD |
|------------------------|--------|-------|-------|--------|----------------------------|
| Los Angeles | 4,322 | 99 | 859 | 5,280 | 26.29% |
| Northern | 634 | 12 | 106 | 752 | 39.78% |
| Riverside | 3,242 | 12 | 571 | 3,825 | 30.90% |
| San Fernando Valley | 870 | 28 | 203 | 1,101 | 16.51% |
| Santa Ana | 1,425 | 38 | 240 | 1,703 | 25.04% |
| Total | 10,493 | 189 | 1,979 | 12,661 | 27.27% |

| Business Filings | Ch 7 | Ch 11 | Ch 13 | Total |
|------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 2024 YTD | 623 | 166 | 31 | 820 |
| 2023 YTD | 472 | 142 | 32 | 646 |

Central District of CA - Filings YTD



The interactive Statistics Dashboard is a feature on the Court's website that provides up-to-date filing and closing data for chapter 7, 11, and 13 cases, as well as adversary proceedings. Users can view data sorted by division or from the entire Central District, or they can choose to view only pro se (SRL) or business cases. The Statistics Dashboard also displays year-by-year and month-by-month comparisons; another option compares each month of the current year to the corresponding month of the prior year. Access the "Interactive Statistics" through the link: <https://cacb-ecf.sso.dcn/ecfstatsdash/>

TOP 10 CASES OF INTEREST*

| Debtor | Case Number | Chapter | Filed | Assets | Liabilities |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|---------|----------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Better Nutritionals, LLC. | RS-22-14723-MH | 7 | 12/20/22 | \$50 - \$100 million | \$100 - \$500 million |
| Beverly Community Hospital Asso. | LA-23-12359-SK | 11 | 04/19/23 | \$1 - \$10 million | \$100 - \$500 million |
| Elite Investment Management Group | LA-23-15752-NB | 11 | 09/05/23 | \$10 - \$50 million | \$10 - \$50 million |
| Hammer International Foundation, Inc. | ND-24-10497-RC | 11 | 05/06/24 | \$50 - \$100 million | \$500,001-\$1 million |
| Heycart Inc. | SA-24-10483-TA | 11 | 02/28/24 | \$1 - \$10 million | \$10 - \$50 million |
| Ittella International LLC | LA-23-14154-SK | 11 | 07/02/23 | \$10 - \$50 million | \$10 - \$50 million |
| K3B Enterprises, LLC | SV-24-10406-VK | 11 | 03/14/24 | \$10 - \$50 million | \$1 - \$10 million |
| The Litigation Practice Group P.C. | SA-23-10571-SC | 11 | 03/20/23 | \$1 - \$10 million | \$10 - \$50 million |
| Synapse Financial Technologies, Inc. | SV-24-10646-MB | 11 | 04/22/24 | \$10 - \$50 million | \$10 - \$50 million |
| Windsor Terrace Healthcare, LLC | SV-23-11200-VK | 11 | 08/23/23 | \$1 - \$10 million | \$1 - \$10 million |

*Based on a combination of asset and liability levels, and/or name recognition.

BANKRUPTCY FRAUD PROSECUTIONS

The following information has been provided by the Office of the United States Trustee:

USA v. Christmas

Douglas Christmas, an internationally-known art dealer, was found guilty on three counts of embezzlement from a bankruptcy estate by a jury in the United States District Court in Los Angeles. Art and Architecture Books of the 21st Century filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on February 19, 2013, and a plan of reorganization was approved on March 18, 2016. On April 6, 2016, a Plan Agent was appointed. Within the first 30 days of the Plan Agent's appointment, it was discovered that the President of the debtor, Douglas Christmas, had diverted money to affiliates of Christmas, so the Plan Agent removed Christmas as President and CEO of the debtor. On March 16, 2021, an indictment was filed against Christmas alleging three counts of embezzlement against a bankruptcy estate (18 U.S.C. § 153). The funds embezzled totaled more than \$260,000. After a four-day trial, the jury found Christmas guilty on all counts. Christmas faces a maximum sentence of 15 years in federal prison. Sentencing is currently scheduled for November 4, 2024. [Press Release](#)

