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Shingle Springs Tribal Court  
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## NEWS RELEASE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Shingle Springs Tribal Court and Superior Court of El Dorado County will team up to hear juvenile and family law cases involving youth up to 24 years old

## *State-Tribal Joint-Jurisdictional Court Is First-of-its-kind in California*

PLACERVILLE—The Superior Court of El Dorado County and the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians met last week to establish goals for a first-of-its-kind, joint-jurisdictional project that will create a collaborative court for juvenile and family cases.

At its initial meeting on May 19-20, the groups agreed on a shared vision of improving outcomes for individuals, families and communities by administering justice in a safe and supportive environment that empowers youth and families to create positive change. The court will focus its efforts on juveniles, youth up to age 24, and their families. Details on how the court will operate will be decided over the next few months and formalized during meetings later this summer.

“We are committed to helping tribal and local governments reduce crime and improve justice outcomes in our tribal nations and surrounding communities,” said Denise E. O’Donnell, Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance. “By creating a joint jurisdictional court, The Shingle Springs Rancheria and El Dorado County of California strategic partnership sets an excellent example for intergovernmental partnership that will serve as a model for courts in California and around the country.”

### **How the Joint-jurisdictional Court Will Work**

Two judges, Hon. Christine Williams, Chief Judge of the [Shingle Springs Tribal Court](http://www.shinglespringsrancheria.com), and Hon. Suzanne N. Kingsbury, Presiding Judge of the [Superior Court El Dorado County](http://www.eldoradocourt.org), will oversee the tribal-state joint jurisdictional court.

“This court will allow us to offer one unified proceeding designed to better address the issues which brought the families into the court system,” said Judge Kingsbury. “We’ll also be in a better position to provide support and services to those families.”

“We believe this collaborative approach is the best way to address the many-layered issues that bring Native families into court,” said Judge Williams. “By working together, and with help from child welfare, probation, and schools, we can work to reduce out-of-home placement for youths, and lower incarceration and recidivism rates.”

The two judges applied through a competitive process to receive receiving training and technical assistance in developing the court from Project TEAM (Together Everyone Achieves More.) Project TEAM is funded through a [Bureau of Justice Assistance](#), US Department of Justice, grant and is intended to help tribes and local jurisdictions develop joint justice initiatives. The Project TEAM staff includes Judge John P. Smith and Judge Corey Wahwassuck who successfully created the first joint jurisdiction court in the nation in Cass County/Leech Lake Minnesota. For more about Project TEAM, please visit the TEAM website:  
<http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/research/centers-institutes/evidence-based-policy-center/stakeholder-engagement/project-team.cfm>

The Shingle Springs/El Dorado County collaborative court will also serve as a model for other tribal and state court judges in California and nationally. The two judges will work with the California Administrative Office of the Courts and Project TEAM so that their experience can be translated into materials that will help other jurisdictions in California develop their own joint court collaborations.

Judges Williams and Kingsbury are members of the [California Tribal Court-State Court Forum](#) of the Judicial Council. The forum, created in 2010, makes recommendations for improving the administration of justice in all proceedings in which the exercise of jurisdiction by the state judicial branch and the tribal justice systems overlap.

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