

Silicon Valley no-poaching deal appears headed for approval

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Aside from a few "nits," a federal judge appeared poised on Monday to sign off on a \$415 million settlement that would end a five-year legal battle over alleged illegal hiring practices in Silicon Valley.

U.S. District Judge Lucy Koh has set a July 9 hearing for final approval of the pact, which would resolve antitrust claims against Apple, Adobe, Google and Intel over allegations that they entered into secret agreements not to raid each others' workforces.

But unlike last year, when Koh nixed a \$324.5 million proposed settlement as inadequate, the judge this time around seems inclined to support most of the terms. Perhaps the only uncertainty is whether she might chip away at the millions of dollars in fees slated for lawyers who represented employees.

The estimated 64,000 tech workers covered by the claims are expected to be notified of the settlement later this spring. The overall settlement would provide payouts of about \$5,000 per employee if everyone eligible submits claims.

The [settlement](#), if approved, would avoid an embarrassing trial for the tech giants, whose top executives, including late Apple CEO Steve Jobs and Google CEO Eric Schmidt, were accused of agreeing not to poach from rivals.

The class-action lawsuit alleged that the refusal to recruit and hire each

others' workers stifled wages and mobility. And evidence included a trove of internal documents and emails, including alleged missives between Jobs and Schmidt discussing the agreements.

The companies have denied wrongdoing, saying they settled to avoid the risks of a trial. Lawyers for the workers earlier in the case estimated damages in the billions of dollars.

Intuit, Pixar and Lucasfilm previously settled their part of the case for \$20 million. All of the companies settled another antitrust case, based on the same allegations, with the U.S. Justice Department.

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