

## **Charge of The Automated Telephone Systems (ATS)**

**Strategy:**

Determine if Automated Telephone Systems (ATS) serve the needs of the Judicial Branch and its stakeholders, in terms of service, efficiency and cost, compared to traditional non-automated systems.

**Activity:**

Collect existing research on effectiveness and cost of ATS in general and in state and federal courts.

Analyze performance, as to cost and effectiveness, of Court Operations Systems through analysis and test groups.

Provide recommendations as to use and content of ATS and/or non-automated answering systems, including a Branchwide call center with extended hours.

Automated Telephone Systems (ATS) appear to be a fact of life in all areas: government, courts, retail, doctors' offices, even art museums and personal answering machines. What is not clear is if ATS meets the needs of callers and if they are efficient and cost-effective *in all situations*. Anecdotal evidence, as well as some readily available studies, indicate that a high percentage of the end uses of these systems are not enthusiastic supporters, but accept ATS as inevitable. The effect on Judicial Branch stakeholders, both internal and external, has not been determined nor analyzed as to impact and cost. Input from the public has not been collected in a systematic way, nor reviewed.

Most, but not all, courthouses currently have automated answering systems in place, as well as, within Court Operations, Support Enforcement offices and the Jury Service Line. The scripts and menu choices vary by court and by office. Administrative and staff offices vary also, with many having direct lines answered by the assigned individual with voice mail backup, rather than a main line answered by staff. Other offices have a main telephone number, with an ATS providing options, including direct dialing of extensions. Offices and courts do not have after hours coverage through ATS or staff, and there is no statewide call center. Jury Administration does provide Jury Service Lines after hours with instructions on reporting and directions.

This committee will determine if ATS systems meet the needs of the Branch and of the people who call the Branch. The committee will recommend whether and where to use ATS systems, as well as determining if there are areas which should not employ ATS. The committee will also recommend statewide standards for scripts and menu choices (including ADA and Language availability) which all employed systems must adhere to. The committee will also examine the efficacy and cost of a statewide call center, establishing need and analyzing benefits and costs.

In order to accomplish this, the committee will require adequate information; this information will be acquired through research on the national, state and local level. Cost/benefit analyses may be acquired from federal and state courts and governments, as well as vendors and academic research. Within the Branch, a starting point will be the

existing data collected by the Courthouse Observation and Simulation Team, with additional surveys or other information gathering instruments to be designed and implemented as appropriate.

The committee should be drawn from both within and outside the Branch, taking advantage of existing expertise and various perspectives from internal and external communities. Therefore it is recommended that the committee be comprised of:

- Designee of the Chief Court Administrator
- An administrative judge from a large judicial district
- An administrative judge from a medium or small judicial district
- A chief clerk or deputy chief clerk from a large judicial district
- A chief clerk or deputy chief clerk from a medium or small judicial district
- Representatives from various units within the Judicial Branch
- A representative from the Courthouse Observation and Simulation Team
- A representative from Materials Management Services
- Member of the public

The committee will develop outcome indicators to measure the success of each intermediate activity included in this project. The committee will also develop outcome indicators that show the combined contribution of the individual activities included in this project toward attaining the specific strategy addressed and its accompanying performance measure, as defined by the Strategic Plan.

The committee will submit its recommendations to the Chief Court Administrator by June 2011.