



# **State of Connecticut Judicial Branch**

## **IMPLEMENTATION of THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

**Public Service and Trust Commission**

*Hon. Alexandra D. DiPentima, Chair*

*Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers*

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## INTRODUCTION

In May of 2007, Chief Justice Rogers created the Public Service and Trust Commission and charged it with developing a plan to enhance the public's trust and confidence in the Judicial Branch by improving the services offered to the thousands of people who interact with the Branch each day. Over the course of the past thirteen months, members of the commission obtained input from those who interact with the Branch and from Branch members through more than 90 focus groups, two public hearings and two surveys. The information obtained consisted of the trends that will affect the branch over the next three to five years, the impacts those trends will have on the Branch and possible strategies to address those impacts. All of the information was then analyzed by the Commission and grouped into five major areas: access to the courts, changing demographics, delivery of branch services, collaboration of the Branch with those who interact with it or have an interest in its activities, and accountability on the part of the Branch to the people it serves. Members of the commission were then assigned to one of five committees tasked with developing goals and strategies for each of these areas based upon the trends, impacts and strategies that were identified.

The commission and its committees met, separately and together, fifty times to develop a strategic plan that addresses all five areas and provides a framework to guide the Branch over the next three to five years. In June of 2008, the plan was submitted to the Chief Justice, who adopted the recommendations of the Public Service and Trust Commission and directed the Chief Court Administrator to develop a plan to implement the recommendations of the Commission.

In accordance with the directive from the Chief Justice, Chief Court Administrator Barbara Quinn developed this initial implementation plan that contains thirty-six separate initiatives addressing primarily the areas of access to the courts, delivery of Branch services and accountability. Additional initiatives will be developed over the coming months addressing the areas of changing demographics and collaboration.

Recognizing that dedicating sufficient resources to undertake thirty-six initiatives concurrently would not be possible, a decision was made to undertake the initiatives in phases, with new initiatives commencing as the original initiatives are completed. Chief Justice Rogers, Chief Court Administrator Barbara Quinn, Deputy Chief Court Administrator Patrick Carroll, and chair of the Public Service and Trust Commission, Alexandra DiPentima met to prioritize the initiatives based upon a number of factors, including the recurring themes mentioned in focus groups and surveys, the breadth and impact of an initiative, and the allocation of finite Branch resources.

As a result of the prioritization, the first phase of the implementation process includes seven initiatives that provide for the creation of the following committees:

- Alternatives to Court Appearances
- Court Security
- Expectations of the Public
- Judicial Performance Evaluation Program.
- Jury
- Self-Represented Parties, and
- Uniformity of Court Procedures

Also in this first phase, existing committees, commissions and programs will address issues in the following areas: Americans with Disabilities (ADA), Information/Privacy,

Limited English Proficiency (LEP), Speakers' Bureau, Case Management (Civil), Complex Litigation, Diversity in the Branch Workforce, Criminal Practice, Family Support Magistrate Rules, Small Claims, Technology Planning, Chief Court Administrator/Internal and External Communications, Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS), Civility/Decorum in the courts, Media Campaign for Public Education, Public Service Excellence (PSE), Seniors and the Law, and Website Enhancement. All initiatives mandate the development of performance measures to gauge their effectiveness. Full descriptions of each of the initiatives are contained in the plan.

Finally, the success of the plan will require the involvement of Branch members and those who interact with the Branch. Therefore, the committees and commissions will include broad representation from the bench, bar groups, executive and legislative branches, advocacy groups, Branch members and the public.

The adoption of the strategic plan by the Chief Justice was just the beginning of the strategic planning process. Its implementation will require the sustained commitment of the Judicial Branch. Through the use of performance measures, timelines and consistent oversight, the Judicial Branch will regularly assess its progress in implementing the plan and will change the plan as necessary to meet future needs. This implementation plan is a living document, as it must be, in order to achieve the ambitious goals adopted in the strategic plan.

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### PHASE ONE INITIATIVES

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## AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES (ADA)

**Goal I**                    **Access: The Judicial Branch will provide equal access to all of its facilities, processes and information through the identification and elimination of barriers.**

Strategy:    I.1            Improve physical access to Judicial Branch facilities.

Activity:     I.1.3          To increase information provided online and at facilities about accommodations for people with disabilities.

This activity will be accomplished by the designation by the chief court administrator of an individual who is charged with addressing the needs of people with physical disabilities and of the elderly. Those individuals with physical disabilities, including disabilities that impact mobility, hearing, sight, or speech might experience difficulties in accessing Judicial Branch facilities, processes and information without accommodations. Although accommodations may be available in accordance with the ADA, information about these accommodations can be difficult to locate. Professionalism in serving all members of the public effectively, respect for the dignity of each person and fairness in providing equal treatment are values underlying this activity. The individual designated by the chief court administrator would be responsible for evaluating the resources currently available in each facility to accommodate those with special needs, assessing information currently available online and at facilities, and exploring more effective methods for disseminating information both to staff and to the public about available accommodations both online and at facilities. In conjunction with members of each division, this individual will identify contact people in each Judicial Branch facility and courthouse, collect contact information and ensure the ready availability of that information. This individual will be charged with developing, updating and coordinating the training of ADA personnel to work with Judicial Branch staff statewide.

In addition, the individual will arrange and conduct focus groups with organizations, including but not limited to the Office of Protection and Advocacy for persons with disabilities to solicit the input of people with disabilities and the elderly in the selection of technology and in the development and delivery of training on ADA issues. A work

## **AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)**

group would be established to study the potential uses of technology in addressing the needs of the elderly and of people with disabilities, whether physical, intellectual or psychiatric. The results from the focus groups would be referred to this work group. This work group would also coordinate with the work group studying accessibility issues faced by people with intellectual and psychiatric disabilities.

On an annual basis, this person will submit a written report to the chief court administrator outlining the activities in connection with ADA issues.

The individual designated should have some knowledge of ADA requirements and a background in training development and delivery. The work group should include representation from Information Technology and line staff from court operations.

The individual will develop outcome indicators to measure the success of each intermediate activity included in this project. The individual 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 measures as defined by the strategic plan.

This individual will complete a report on the current availability of resources and information, the identification of contact people in each facility and courthouse, and methods of disseminating information on accommodations and contact information by January 1, 2009. The development of a training program will be completed by February 15, 2009. A work group report on recommendations concerning technology use will be completed by April 1, 2009.

Other contributing divisions and agencies:

- Office of Protection and Advocacy
- External Affairs

## FACILITIES (ADMINISTRATION)

**Goal I Access: The Judicial Branch will provide equal access to all of its facilities, processes and information through the identification and elimination of barriers.**

Strategy: I.1 Improve physical access to Judicial Branch facilities.

I.4 Improve the utilization of Judicial Branch facilities.

Activity: I.4.2 Consideration of court users in the design and renovation of court facilities.

These activities will be accomplished through the formation of a committee that will make recommendations to ensure that the equipment, health and environmental needs of all users of Judicial Branch facilities are met. Courts and other Judicial Branch facilities must be properly designed, equipped and maintained in order to meet the needs of the people who use and work in these facilities. Poorly designed, poorly equipped, and poorly maintained space is, in itself, a barrier to access, productivity and delivery of service for both public and staff. Providing well-designed, safe, healthy and appropriate facilities demonstrates the Branch's respect for the people who use those facilities, the staff who work in those facilities, and for the community as a whole. Appropriate equipment enhances the professionalism of the staff by enhancing the provision of information and services. Therefore, a committee will be established to identify and address facilities-related problems and potential improvements including their budgetary impact.

The committee should survey existing facilities, both newer and the older courts and other spaces, to assess those which are working well and those which have need for immediate improvements. The assessment should include a consideration of the following areas: the acquisition, appropriateness and disposal (recycling) of equipment (i.e., fax machines, telephone systems, copiers, and scanners); compliance with ADA regulations; the evaluation of the cleaning, repair and preventive maintenance of facilities including the extent to which environmentally friendly practices and methods are being followed; the exploration of new technologies to assist people with disabilities

## **FACILITIES (ADMINISTRATION)**

(i.e., expanded video conferencing, wireless technology or wiring for FM systems); expand recycling efforts to include cans, glass, and other materials; evaluate the feasibility of providing more public access computers at Court Service Centers and public information desks; and evaluate the security and amount of parking for staff and public.

It is also recommended that a subcommittee should be established to address long term issues and strategies in connection with the programming, construction and renovation of facilities. The subcommittee would be responsible for long term planning based, in part, on the results of the assessment, including the possible development of a long-term maintenance plan for facilities; the evaluation of the design of attorney/client interview rooms in existing facilities; the consideration of ways to streamline the acquisition of leased space and the construction of new buildings; the consideration of alternatives to courthouses (e.g., regional justice centers), the consideration of effective ways to consult with a wide range of stakeholders when planning programs which have an effect on design, including collaborating with other branches of government, the Bar, and the public; and the feasibility of assembling a diverse group to discuss the development of long-term plans to respond to the State's needs.

The outcome of this assessment should be immediate amelioration plans, identification of issues which need major efforts to resolve, as well as the longer term plans as developed by the subcommittee.

The Committee should be comprised of the following members:

An administrative judge (chair)

A judge from a GA/JD, Juvenile Court

A chief clerk

A deputy chief clerk, GA

A deputy chief clerk, Juvenile

A court staff member

A staff member from Jury Administration

A representative of Administrative Services, Facilities

## **FACILITIES (ADMINISTRATION)**

A representative of Administrative Services, Budget and Planning

A representative of Administrative Services, Materials Management

A representative from the Information Technology Division

A representative from the Court Support Services Division

A representative from Support Enforcement Services

A representative from Judicial Marshal Services

An employee representative from each of the Collective Bargaining Units

Contributing Agencies and Divisions:

The following people and resources should be consulted, particularly during the long term planning stages: the Bar; Department of Public Works; Office of Policy and Management; the Legislature; ADA and OSHA specialists; construction specialists and architects; Fire and Health Code officials.

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 April 1, 2009.

## INTELLECTUAL/PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES

**Goal I**                    **Access: The Judicial Branch will provide equal access to all of its facilities, processes and information through the identification and elimination of barriers.**

Strategy:    I.3            Improve access to court processes and information for people with intellectual and psychiatric disabilities.

Activity:    I.3.1            To develop and provide training to judges, family support magistrates and court personnel to help them recognize people with intellectual and psychiatric disabilities.

                  I.3.2            To expand the use of technology to improve access and participation.

                  I.3.3            To identify laws and work with the legislature to revise laws or practices that hamper participation.

This activity will be accomplished through the formation of a work group tasked with defining the issues and examining what steps are being taken nationally to address the issues associated with providing access to court processes and information to people with intellectual and psychiatric disabilities. People with intellectual and psychiatric disabilities face many challenges in participating in court processes and in obtaining and comprehending information about these processes. The branch core values of respect, professionalism and fairness mandate that the needs of people with intellectual and psychiatric disabilities be addressed.

The work group will develop recommendations based upon the issues that are identified and guided by the information obtained in the review of the steps taken by other states and the federal government. Several general areas should be considered by the work group. The development of an up-to-date training program for judges and staff is one area to be considered. The training should include how to recognize, respond to, assist, and accommodate people with intellectual and psychiatric disabilities and should encourage a culture of acceptance and accommodation in the branch. A review of the statutes,

## **INTELLECTUAL/PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES**

practices and rules that impact participation of people with intellectual and psychiatric disabilities might also be considered.

The Committee should be comprised of the following members:

A judge with civil and criminal experience and an interest in access issues for people with intellectual/psychiatric disabilities (chair)

A family support magistrate

A representative from the Office of Protection and Advocacy

A representative from Information Technology Division

A representative from Legal Services

Line staff from JD and GA courts

A representative from Judge Support Services

Other contributing divisions and agencies:

- Office of Protection and Advocacy
- Probate Court
- Department of Social Services

The work group will submit its recommendations to the Chief Court Administrator by January 15, 2009.

## LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)

**Goal I**                    **Access: The Judicial Branch will provide equal access to all of its facilities, processes and information through the identification and elimination of barriers.**

Strategy:    I.2            Improve access to Judicial Branch facilities, processes and information by individuals who have limited English proficiency.

Activity:     I.2.1            To provide multilingual signs, publications, public service announcements, forms and website pages.

                  I.2.2            To develop and implement a system for tracking and scheduling cases in which an interpreter will be needed.

                  I.2.3            To hire and retain an adequate pool of certified court interpreters.

These activities will be accomplished through the establishment of a cross-division committee to continue and expand upon the work commenced by a working committee established to address LEP requirements contained in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other federal laws. Those laws require the Judicial Branch as a recipient of federal funds to provide individuals with limited English proficiency meaningful access to programs and services. This cross-division committee will be charged with eliminating language barriers to facilities, processes and information that are faced by individuals with limited English proficiency. The inability of those with limited English proficiency to understand or be understood impacts all aspects of their interaction with the court system, potentially causing delays, frustration, and unequal access. The committee will stress the need for staff to assist these individuals in a professional manner, acknowledging the dignity of each person and recognizing that people coming into court have varied concerns which must be handled with fairness, efficiency and compassion. Since the Branch is currently developing a Language Assistance Plan, the committee will be involved in its refinement, implementation and monitoring.

It is suggested that the committee establish two subcommittees: one that will address issues faced by individuals with limited English proficiency in accessing facilities and information and the second, to address issues associated with obtaining adequate interpretive services.

## **LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)**

The first subcommittee will assess the current availability within the Branch of signs, publications, and web pages in languages other than English. A local review of signs is being conducted by the committee charged with enhancing physical access to facilities and courthouses. That committee will submit recommendations on specific languages for signs in local facilities to this LEP subcommittee for comment prior to submitting its recommendations to the chief court administrator. With respect to publications and web pages, the subcommittee should consider the expansion of available multi-lingual material to include court/calendar information, forms, and handouts. The subcommittee, in consultation with the main committee, should also make recommendations as to the languages that are most needed statewide based upon demographic and anecdotal information and consider prioritizing the translation of materials based upon the most frequently used or requested materials. In analyzing the feasibility of providing forms in multiple languages, the subcommittee should look at the experiences of other states and the federal government in providing and using multilingual forms. The subcommittee should also consider providing public service announcements on language-specific stations (i.e., Spanish language stations).

The second subcommittee will address issues connected to the interpreters, including an analysis of the demand for specific types of interpreters (i.e., languages spoken and ASL interpreters), an assessment of the numbers and location of interpreters, an evaluation of the current policies and procedures for assigning interpreters and for obtaining interpretive services in all areas- civil, family, housing, criminal, family relations, support enforcement, the development and implementation of a system for the efficient tracking and scheduling of interpreters statewide, and an analysis of the current and future hiring needs of the branch for interpreters. The subcommittee should also examine the current procedures for accessing interpretive services, consider standardization of those procedures statewide and consider ways of providing this information to staff and members of the public. The current use and possible expansion of the language line should be evaluated by the committee.

The Committee should be comprised of the following members:

## **LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)**

A judge from a GA/JD court (co-chair)

A representative from court operations administration (co-chair)

A representative from Administrative Services

A representative from CSSD

A representative from External Affairs

A representative from Legal Services

A representative from Support Enforcement Services

A representative from Judicial Marshal Services

Line staff from the JD and GA courts

A representative from the Interpreters (chair of subcommittee)

A member of the committee addressing physical access issues

A member of the committee addressing issues of self-represented parties

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 measures as defined by the strategic plan.

The subcommittees are to submit their recommendations to the Chief Court Administrator by March 15, 2009.

## PHYSICAL ACCESS (SIGNS)

**Goal I**                    **Access: The Judicial Branch will provide equal access to all of its facilities, processes and information through the identification and elimination of barriers.**

Strategy:    I.1            Improve physical access to Judicial Branch facilities.

Activity:    I.1.1            To increase appropriate signs.

                 I.1.2            To provide location maps for facilities.

These activities will be accomplished through the creation of a committee that will make recommendations to address and eliminate barriers that impede entry to and movement around Judicial Branch facilities. Courthouses and other Branch facilities can be confusing and intimidating for some people, resulting in their inability to have full and effective access to and participation in the court process. To ensure equal access, the Branch must remove or reduce any obstacles that make it more difficult to enter facilities, locate offices, and obtain services. Fairness to all and respect for the dignity of each person are key core values that underlie this strategy. The committee, therefore, must analyze the process of locating, entering and moving around facilities as it currently exists and identify areas for improvement.

The committee should assess the accuracy and effectiveness of existing signs both within and outside of facilities and the accuracy and expediency of directions to facilities as provided by the Branch. The committee should also consider the utility of location maps and building directories in each Judicial Branch facility and online. A major component of the assessment will be undertaken by onsite staff under the direction of the committee. A group from each Judicial District should be enlisted to assess the signs, directions and currently existing maps and directories for facilities within that district. This group should include the chief clerk and line staff from the offices within each facility. Federal, state and local codes may require that signage, including directories, comply with standards regarding the use of certain symbols, graphics, contrast, and placement, for example. A joint subcommittee should be formed with members of the ADA committee to review these codes and determine applicable standards for the signs, maps,

## **PHYSICAL ACCESS (SIGNS)**

and directories. The subcommittee will submit a report to this committee. Following the local assessments and subcommittee's report, the committee will determine corrections and improvements to be made and develop recommendations as to the content and display of signs, directions, and directories in and for all facilities. In determining appropriate languages for use in signs and for disseminating or displaying information, the Committee should examine the language needs of the area population based on statistical and anecdotal information. The results of this examination should be referred to the LEP committee for comment. The committee will submit its recommendations to the chief court administrator, who would then invite the input of the administrative judges of each judicial district.

The Committee should be comprised of the following members:

An administrative judge (chair)

A judge from a GA/JD court

A representative from Legal Services

A representative from administrative services

A representative from Support Enforcement Services

A representative from CSSD

A representative from Judicial Marshal Services

A line staff from the JD and GA courts

A representative from the Interpreters

A representative from Information Technology Division

A representative from the LEP Committee

A representative from the ADA Committee

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 measures as defined by the strategic plan.

## **PHYSICAL ACCESS (SIGNS)**

The Committee is to submit its recommendations to the Chief Court Administrator by January 15, 2009.

## INFORMATION/PRIVACY

**Goal I Access: The Judicial Branch will provide equal access to all of its facilities, processes and information through the identification and elimination of barriers.**

Strategy: I.5 Increase public access to court processes and information while protecting personal privacy and other legitimate confidentiality concerns.

Activity: I.5.1 To review current disclosability rules to improve consistency of access

I.5.2 To expand Internet access to include streaming videos of court proceedings

I.5.3 To expand Internet access to court documents

The first activity will be accomplished through the Identity Theft Committee, which was formed in connection with the implementation of recommendations of the Public Access Task Force. The charge and name of the Identity Theft Committee should be expanded to encompass a broader spectrum of privacy and confidentiality issues in addition to the issues associated with protection of person identifying information. Increased public access to court processes and information enhances public trust and confidence, but such an increase must also include safeguards to ensure that the information of those who become involved in the court process is not misused, their safety is not compromised, and their privacy is respected. These safeguards will allow Branch staff to serve the interest of justice and the public professionally, fairly and with respect. This committee should review the court procedures, forms and rules to be certain that personal identifying information is not required unnecessarily, and is handled appropriately in accordance with guidelines when it is necessary. The committee should also assess current guidelines on disclosability, on access to information by staff and the public (i.e., password protection, procedures on disposal of personal identifying information (i.e., shredding), structures to permit or restrict access to information, and training on disclosability rules for judges and staff and other agencies. The committee would then make recommendations to the chief court administrator concerning amendments to existing procedures and guidelines. The committee should also consider the development

## **INFORMATION/PRIVACY**

of handouts, online training programs, and notices to parties to provide the public, members of the bar and self-represented parties with information concerning the disclosability of information submitted to the courts.

A subcommittee should be formed to review the information that is currently displayed on the website and review the procedures for ensuring that accurate information is posted on the web site. The subcommittee should also consider what could be added to the website to enhance access to court processes and information (i.e., providing streaming videos of court proceedings and posting decisions online), explore other ways that the Internet can be used to increase electronic access, including interactive options (creation of an online avatar to connect public with resources based on question/answer) and other web-based services. (Some of these additions to the web site are being considered by the committee on self-represented parties.) In determining the type of access to court processes and information that should be added to the web site, the subcommittee should solicit input from the bar, line staff from court service centers and clerks' offices, the media and the public through online surveys.

The Committee should be comprised of the following members:

Line staff from the JD and GA courts

A privacy law advocate/expert

A representative from the consumer credit industry

The subcommittee should include the following members:

A representative from the Information Technology Division/member of the technology committee

A representative from External Affairs Division/ representative from the Web Board

A representative from the Judges' Advisory Committee on efilng

A representative from Superior Court Operations Unit

A representative from the Law Libraries

A representative from the Judicial-Media Committee

## **INFORMATION/PRIVACY**

A representative from the self-represented parties committee

Representatives from bar groups

The committees 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 measures as defined by the strategic plan.

Other agencies:

DOIT

SES

CSSD

Administrative Services

The Committee is to submit its recommendations to the Chief Court Administrator by March 15, 2009.

## UTILIZATION OF FACILITIES

**Goal I**                    **Access: The Judicial Branch will provide equal access to all of its facilities, processes and information through the identification and elimination of barriers.**

Strategy:    I.4            Improve the utilization of Judicial Branch facilities.

Activity:     I.4.1            To examine more flexible scheduling of cases

                  I.4.2            To consider court users in the design and renovation of court facilities

                  I.4.3            To evaluate the feasibility of extended hours of court operation

These activities will be accomplished through the creation of a committee that will make recommendations to improve the utilization of Judicial Branch facilities. In many court facilities, calendar calls and multiple cases are scheduled at the same time, resulting in delays in entering court facilities, long lines for all services and overcrowding of hallways, conference spaces, and courtrooms. Further, the current hours of operation of courts and facilities can have a negative impact on many of those who interact with the court system. This committee will assess the utilization of facilities to ensure that the mission of the branch, the interests of justice, and interests of the public are being addressed and furthered in a fair, efficient and effective manner, with due regard for the concerns of those who interact with the Branch.

It is suggested that the work of this committee be divided into two sections, with a subcommittee tasked with each general area. One subcommittee should conduct a site by site evaluation of Judicial Branch facilities to assess the use of space, with the intent of optimizing the use of space to accommodate the needs of the public and the staff. Particular consideration should be given to the need for providing adequate space for attorney/client conference and interview rooms, either through the creative use of existing space or through other options including unlocking existing conference rooms or using existing space in a more flexible way (an empty courtroom as an interview room, for example). Priority in conducting these evaluations should be given to older Branch facilities. Recommendations on the optimization of use of available space should be

## UTILIZATION OF FACILITIES

developed. The other subcommittee should assess the feasibility of increasing the hours of operation of Branch facilities, considering the possibility of starting earlier or implementing night or weekend court hours. In addition to assessing the feasibility of increasing hours of operation, this committee will examine the options for more flexible scheduling, including staggered dockets, calls of the calendar scheduled in the morning and in the afternoon, individual scheduling of pretrials, status conferences and trials, or scheduling short calendar hearings on cases of large filers at the end of the day or at a specific time. (Note: the suggestions of staggering times on Promises to Appear, decreasing the number of court appearances by doing paperwork for the Alcohol Education Program or Accelerated Rehabilitation prior to the court date, and establishing a domestic violence docket in each court will be referred to the Criminal Practice Commission.)

The committee on Facilities/Environment will examine the process of planning for future construction and renovation of facilities, including seeking the input of the community, bar groups, prosecutors, public defenders, and victim advocates, legislators, and others who interact with the courts. That committee will develop recommendations on future planning standards for construction and renovations of facilities.

The Committee should be comprised of the following members:

Deputy Chief Court Administrator (chair)

A presiding judge – criminal

A presiding judge - civil

A presiding judge – family

Representatives from the bar

Line staff familiar with civil, family, housing and criminal

Line staff from CSSD

Line staff from SES

A representative from Judicial Branch administrative services division with knowledge of employment contracts

## **UTILIZATION OF FACILITIES**

A representative from court operations administration

A representative from Judicial Marshal Services

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 measures as defined by the strategic plan.

The Committee is to submit its recommendations to the Chief Court Administrator by March 15, 2009.

## DIVERSITY IN THE BRANCH WORKFORCE

**Goal II**                    **Changing Demographics: The Judicial Branch will provide a diverse and culturally competent environment that is sensitive to the values and responsive to the needs of all who interact with it.**

Strategy:    II.1        Ensure the workforce of the Judicial Branch reflects the ethnic and cultural diversity of those who interact with the Branch.

Activity:     II.1.1      Develop outreach strategies for making information about Branch job opportunities known to minority communities; and coordinating hiring efforts to secure applicants from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds.

These activities will be accomplished through the creation of a committee that will recommend an action plan for ensuring that as the diversity of Connecticut's population continues to grow, the efforts made to develop and maintain a diverse and culturally competent workforce that is sensitive to the values and responsive to the needs of all who interact with the Branch will continue.

The committee will consist of employees, court administrators, and people with direct court experience from around the state. Part of the initial charge to the committee will be to seek and receive information on the current Branch workforce population and the current demographics of the state. A needs assessment will be conducted to determine the population served by the courts and a workforce profile reflecting diversity at all levels will be developed.

The committee will also be charged with reviewing the existing recruitment methods. The committee will research outreach and aggressive recruitment methods on both the local and national level including the use of web based broadcasts with a goal of improving the overall recruitment and hiring process by making it more user-friendly.

The committee will interface with the diversity committee of the Branch to explore various outreach mechanisms including job fairs, career employment events and college fairs.

## **DIVERSITY IN THE BRANCH WORKFORCE**

The committee will develop a program (recommend an action plan) to promote and ensure diversity in the hiring and retention of Judicial Branch employees and will propose strategies to facilitate timely implementation of the initiative.

The committee should be comprised of the following members:

The Judicial Branch Affirmative Action Officer (Human Resource Management Legal Counsel as Chair)

Representative of the Committee on Diversity

Representatives from the Judicial Human Resource Management Unit

Representatives from Division Human Resource Management and Operational Units

The committee will develop outcome indicators to measure the success of the activities within 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 measures as defined by the strategic plan.

The committee will submit its recommendations to the Chief Court Administrator by January 15, 2009.

## SPEAKERS' BUREAU

**Goal II                    Changing Demographics: The Judicial Branch will provide a diverse and culturally competent environment that is sensitive to the values and responsive to the needs of all who interact with it.**

Strategy:    II.2        Ensure that all programs and services offered by the Judicial Branch are in response to the ethnic and cultural differences of its participants.

Activity:     II.2.2      Consulting with representatives of minority populations about how the Branch can ensure its programs are effective.

Strategy     II.3        Ensure that judges, family support magistrates, non-judicial officers and staff act in a manner that shows awareness of the cultural values of the people whom they serve while providing consistent treatment in cases regardless of one's ethnicity or cultural background.

                 II.3.1      Developing and implementing effective training programs designed to promote cultural competence.

**Goal V                    Accountability: The Judicial Branch will ensure a judicial system where all participants can expect and experience clear, fair, and consistent justice from an independent and impartial judiciary.**

Strategy     V.1        Establish clear and consistent expectations and processes for all constituents.

Activity     V.1.4      Establishing additional career paths and opportunities for Branch staff.

The External Affairs Division has managed a Speakers' Bureau of judges since 1999. The purpose of the Speakers' Bureau is for judges to go out into the community and address issues of interest with particular groups. The goal is to enhance the public's understanding of the judicial system, thereby increasing the public's trust and confidence in the courts.

Some of the activities included in the strategic plan involve enhancing the Speakers' Bureau both in terms of the groups who participate and the topics that are covered. In

## **SPEAKERS' BUREAU**

addition, one activity from the Accountability Committee suggests expanding the Speakers' Bureau to Judicial Branch staff. Finally, the Changing Demographics Committee recommended that judges visit schools to talk about avoiding the criminal justice system.

To accomplish these activities, the External Affairs Division will undertake a thorough evaluation of the Speakers' Bureau program. This evaluation will involve obtaining feedback from community organizations and participating judges, reviewing statistics from the program and evaluating the materials that are offered to the judges who participate. In addition, the External Affairs Division will conduct research to determine whether other state judiciaries have comparable programs and, if so, how they are managed. The National Center for State Courts will also be consulted. Thought will be given to developing presentations on different topics that can be used by the participating judges. In addition, the development of a training program for participating judges will be considered. The goal is to adopt best practices and to improve the existing program.

Lastly, thought and consideration will be given to expanding the participating speakers to include Judicial Branch employees, as well as judges and family support magistrates. The External Affairs Division will recommend an appropriate process for the recruitment and training of prospective employees to participate in the enhanced Speakers' Bureau.

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 External Affairs Division will submit its recommendations to the Chief Court Administrator by February 2009.

## ALTERNATE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ADR)

**Goal III                      Delivery of Services:    The Judicial Branch will provide effective, uniform and consistent delivery of services by enhancing the management of court practices.**

Strategy:    III.1    Increase the utilization and effectiveness of Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR).

Activity:    III.1.1    Improving the ADR scheduling process through the use of technology

                 III.1.2    Providing training in ADR for judges, court personnel and volunteers

                 III.1.3    Providing consistent ADR programs in each judicial district.

These activities will be accomplished by creating a committee whose charge will be to study and assess the current ADR program, in order to propose changes that will improve its utilization and effectiveness. ADR is a tool that assists the parties involved in disputes, as well as the Judicial Branch, in resolving matters in a fair, timely, and efficient manner. The utilization of ADR programs can have a measurable impact on the time it takes to dispose of a case, and can result in a significant savings in time and expense for the parties. The parties who utilize ADR should be confident that they will be treated fairly and with respect, and that the ADR providers will maintain a high level of professionalism and uphold the integrity of the program.

The committee will address the following items including, but not limited to the scheduling process for ADR cases, the training for ADR providers and the consistency of ADR programs statewide.

The committee is to consider whether the current technology utilized is adequate in meeting the scheduling needs and management of cases referred to ADR. The committee will focus on factors such as the volume of cases in which ADR is requested or referred, the length of time it takes for a case to be evaluated and scheduled for an ADR program,

## **ALTERNATE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ADR)**

the method of notice to the parties, and the occurrence rate of requests for continuance of an ADR session. The committee should determine what scheduling functions may be streamlined by eliminating manual processes that may be converted to automated functions through technology. The ability to more expeditiously schedule cases for ADR will benefit the branch and the parties involved. The committee will communicate with JIS and Court Operations in the evaluation of technology as a tool to improve the ADR scheduling process.

As uniformity is an important component in court practices, the committee will focus on the issue of training for ADR providers to support uniform practices and standards. The committee will study whether there are an adequate number of well-qualified judges, attorneys, court personnel and volunteers who provide ADR. It is crucial that the ADR providers be well-trained, knowledgeable, and highly-skilled, in order to facilitate effective discussion and negotiation between the parties, increasing settlement success rates for ADR cases. This will also lead to increasing the public's trust and confidence in the merits of the ADR program. The committee will consider in its study the training used to identify cases amenable to mediation.

The committee will evaluate the consistency of ADR programs. In order to determine consistency, the committee should study the practices and standards used by ADR providers in each judicial district and how those practices and standards may differ from district to district. This study will include conducting surveys of ADR providers. The committee will explore the possibility of creating a formal list of rules of practice for each ADR program. In addition, the committee will evaluate whether a certification process for ADR providers would be feasible.

In considering each of the above issues, the committee will examine the ADR programs and practices of other states and identify those practices which could be incorporated to enhance the branch's ADR program. The committee should also consider other issues, including whether ADR program participation should be mandatory, whether there

## **ALTERNATE DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

should be a separate mediation docket, or whether judges should be allocated to “mediation only” assignment dockets.

To most effectively conduct the assessment of the ADR program and address the issues detailed in the activities, a broad range of subject matter expertise, practical experience, innovative thinking, and analytical problem-solving skills would be essential. The committee will be chaired by a judge, and recommended members include representatives from the following professional organizations, and other professionals:

Connecticut Trial Lawyers’ Association (CTLA)

Connecticut Defense Lawyer’s Association (CDLA)

Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA)

Insurance Association of Connecticut (IAC)

American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA)

Academic representation from a law school

Representative from the private mediation field

Consumer Interest representative, such as Statewide Legal Services

Court personnel should include representatives from the Civil, Family, Juvenile, and Housing divisions

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 March 1, 2009.

## ALTERNATIVES TO COURT APPEARANCES

**Goal III                      Delivery of Services:    The Judicial Branch will provide effective, uniform and consistent delivery of services by enhancing the management of court practices.**

Strategy:    III.4        Increase efficiency of case management and court practices.

Activity:     III.4.3    Expanding the use of telephonic and video technology for court appearances.

This Committee will also need to review and make recommendations for upgrading and enhancing the current technological infrastructure of the Branch. The 47 courthouses and 35 other administrative and service-based judicial facilities throughout the state are all connected to the main data center that is maintained by the Information Technology Division in East Hartford. The fast-paced changes in technology today require that the underlying network infrastructure be kept up to date and ready to handle the burden placed on it by solutions such as video conferencing. High speed data lines must be in place in each Branch location to ensure that no court or office will be left without the means to provide the best possible service to the public.

In order to ensure consistent quality in the video and audio components of video and telephonic technology, special care must be taken to make certain that state of the art equipment is utilized, adequate acoustic systems are present, courtroom recording equipment (i.e., FTR) is in place and that proper training on the systems is provided. The Committee should also examine whether the video or telephonic technology can be used to produce the court record and how that record should be captured, stored and made available for playback. The Committee should also consider the burden that could be placed on digital storage space, archiving and what technology would be needed to send the recordings to Branch staff, external agencies or the public via the internet. The procurement of a server and storage technology with adequate capacity is vital for the success of expansion. These are just a few of the items the Committee must take into consideration for the accomplishment of this strategy.

## **ALTERNATIVES TO COURT APPEARANCES**

In developing a plan for expanding the use of video and telephonic technology the committee must also consider issues of security and confidentiality with regard to the use of this technology in sensitive matters such as juvenile proceedings. The committee should consider less expensive video or telephonic systems for matters that do not require heightened network security. The network is currently equipped to provide security for transmitting such hearings. However physical security at the video or telephonic locations should also be taken into consideration.

The Judicial Branch continues to expand its delivery of services both in the courts and through the use of technology. This Committee will need to evaluate current staffing levels and whether additional staff is necessary to support the expansion of video and telephonic technology. Staffing levels may need to be increased or reallocated for such things as the initial installation, training, scheduling, case management, coverage in the courtroom and ongoing technical support.

The Committee should be comprised of the following members:

The Chief Administrative Judge from each Division (Criminal, Family, Civil and Juvenile)

A representative from the Probate Courts

A representative from the Court Operations Unit

A representative from the Judge Support Services Unit

A representative from the Legal Services Unit

Representatives from Court Clerks' offices (of varied caseloads and demographics)

A representative from the Support Enforcement Services Unit

A representative from the Office of Victim Services

A representative from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

A representative from the Court Support Services Division

A representative from the Information Technology Division

A representative from the Department of Correction

A representative from the Chief State's Attorney's Office

## **ALTERNATIVES TO COURT APPEARANCES**

A representative from the Chief Public Defender's Office

A Private Sector Attorney

A representative from the Commission on the Blind and Hearing Impaired

A representative from the Connecticut Bar Association

A representative from Administrative Services Division Facilities Unit

Non-attorney members

The committee will develop outcome indicators to measure the success of the activities within 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 measures as defined by the strategic plan.

The committee will submit its recommendations to the Chief Court Administrator by January 2, 2009.

## CASE MANAGEMENT (CIVIL)

**Goal III                      Delivery of Services:    The Judicial Branch will provide effective, uniform and consistent delivery of services by enhancing the management of court practices.**

- Strategy:    III.4    Increase efficiency of case management and court practices.
- Activity:    III.4.1    Studying specialty dockets and specialty courts to examine their efficiency in handling certain case types.
- III.4.2    Developing a strategic plan for technology to improve the consistency and efficiency of court practices and to provide cost effective litigation management.

The activities and areas of concern will be addressed by the Civil Commission, a group that was formed by the former Chief Justice, the Honorable Francis M. McDonald, Jr. in 2000. The Civil Commission, which includes members of the judiciary and members of the Bar, is charged with the review of the civil docket and the development of practices that will improve the administering of judicial services to litigants, the bar and public, and will promote the resolution of cases in a fair, timely, open and cost-effective manner. Inefficiency in case management can result in wasted time for parties, attorneys, judges, jurors and court staff, delays in the resolution of cases and increased costs of legal services. Changing numbers, types and complexity of cases and evolving technology make it essential that the Judicial Branch review its case management practices to ensure that they are designed to address changes, incorporate new technology and serve all who interact with the courts fairly and efficiently. The Civil Commission will examine issues associated with case management practices and procedures.

First, it is recommended that the Civil Commission examine ways of addressing issues that arise in connection with discovery. Some possibilities include designating a “discovery judge” to handle discovery disputes by telephone, letter, or other less formal procedure, considering ways to streamline the discovery process, concentrating more staff on handling discovery issues, considering limitations on the amount of discovery permitted without court approval, examining enforcement of discovery rules, and the

## **CASE MANAGEMENT (CIVIL)**

implementation of a Special Masters Program similar to that of the federal courts (F.R.C.P. 53). A second general area to be examined is case processing. The Civil Commission should examine time standards and current definitions of success in processing cases. As a part of this examination, the Commission may examine the experiences of the federal courts in establishing a “rocket docket,” with its streamlined discovery deadlines and firm scheduling dates. The Commission should also consider ways to streamline the process of getting motions heard, examine the feasibility of individual scheduling or staggered hours for scheduling of motions or scheduling short calendar hearings on cases of large filers at the end of the day or at a specific time, assess possible ways to ensure that case preparation does not wait until the time of the pretrial, examine ways to make the pre-trial process more effective, and consider ways to control the abuse of the pleading process. The more efficient handling of foreclosures represents a third area for the Commission’s review, including the possibility of having a dedicated foreclosure docket on a separate day, the feasibility of devoting a judge and clerk specifically to foreclosures, and a review of the recommendations from the Bench-Bar Foreclosure Committee. A final area for the Commission to consider is the development of special dockets.

Many specialty dockets are being considered and evaluated by the Criminal Practice Commission, including domestic violence docket, drug courts, for example. The development of an Elderly Court is an area that may be considered by the Civil Commission in conjunction with the Criminal Practice Commission. As the numbers of elderly are increasing, issues involving this population are also increasing rapidly, making the consideration of a specialty court for a potentially beneficial idea for this growing senior population.

It should be noted that while many of the issues associated with the expansion and full implementation of electronic filing in all civil cases are being considered and addressed by a Judges’ Advisory Committee on e-filing, the Civil Commission will also be examining the impact of electronic filing on the efficiency of case management and court practices.

## COMPLEX LITIGATION

**Goal III                    Delivery of Services:    The Judicial Branch will provide effective, uniform and consistent delivery of services by enhancing the management of court practices.**

- Strategy:    III.4    Increase efficiency of case management and court practices.
- Activity:    III.4.1    Studying specialty dockets and specialty courts to examine their efficiency in handling certain case types.
- III.4.2    Developing a strategic plan for technology to improve the consistency and efficiency of court practices and to provide cost effective litigation management.

In conducting over 90 focus groups, the Public Service and Trust Commission obtained feedback from attorneys, judges, community organizations and others about how to improve the court system. As several of the issues raised concerned the Complex Litigation Program, the Chief Justice, after discussing the concerns with Judge Quinn, Judge Carroll and Judge DiPentima, determined that it would be appropriate to accelerate review of the Complex Litigation Program and address the areas of concern.

The Complex Litigation Committee was formed, chaired by Honorable Dennis Eveleigh, and comprised of members of the judiciary and the bar: Honorable Barbara M. Quinn, Honorable Arthur A. Hiller, Honorable Robert E. Beach, Jr., Honorable Marshall K. Berger, Jr., Honorable Alfred J. Jennings, Jr., Honorable Linda K. Lager, Honorable Joseph M. Shortall, Attorney Joseph Burns, Attorney Catherine Smith Nietzel, Attorney Jonathan Orleans, Attorney William Prout, Attorney John Rose, Attorney Richard A. Silver, and Attorney Richard Weinstein.

The charge of the Complex Litigation Committee is “to review and evaluate the Complex Litigation Program, including the program’s criteria and standards, and to identify possible areas of improvement.” The first meeting of the committee was held on

## **COMPLEX LITIGATION**

April 25, 2008, during which the committee identified three specific areas to address, for which subcommittees were formed: Administrative; Procedural; and Standards. The subcommittees were charged with reviewing and discussing current practices, and formulating recommendations for changes and improvements in their respective areas of concern. Each committee met and developed recommendations, which were circulated in a meeting of the full committee on June 13, 2008.

The Complex Litigation Committee will meet on August 27, 2008, for the purpose of each subcommittee presenting their final list of proposals. The full committee will then vote on final recommendations for changes to improve the Complex Litigation Program.

## CRIMINAL PRACTICE

**Goal III                      Delivery of Services:    The Judicial Branch will provide effective, uniform and consistent delivery of services by enhancing the management of court practices.**

- Strategy:    III.4    Increase efficiency of case management and court practices.
- Activity:    III.4.2    Developing a strategic plan for technology to improve the consistency and efficiency of court practices and to provide cost effective litigation management.
- III.4.3    Expanding the use of telephonic and video technology for court appearances.

The Criminal Practice Commission was reconstituted as a result of focus groups conducted by the Public Service and Trust Commission. The Criminal Practice Commission consists of judges and key players in the criminal justice community brought together to take steps to enhance the efficiency, professionalism and civility in the criminal courts. The commission is chaired by Honorable Patrick L. Carroll, III and is comprised of the following members: Honorable Joette Katz, Honorable Patrick Clifford, Honorable Joan Alexander, Honorable Richard Damiani, Honorable David Gold, Honorable James Ginocchio, Honorable Gary White, Attorney Kevin Kane, Attorney Joseph D'Alesio, Attorney Patricia Froehlich, Attorney Edward Gavin, Attorney Gail Hardy, Attorney Raymond Hassett, Attorney M. Elizabeth Reid, Attorney Eugene Riccio, Attorney Charles Stango, Attorney Susan Storey, Attorney Thomas Ullman, William Carbone, and Lawrence D'Orsi.

The charge of the Criminal Practice Commission, as reflected in its mission statement, is the improvement of the criminal justice system. The first meeting of the commission was held on July 16, 2008 during which several areas requiring the attention of the commission were identified, including: habeas corpus reform, uniformity in the courts, practice book changes, issues surrounding the notification of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, allocation of courthouse space including areas for confidential communications, night/weekend court, professionalism and civility, frequency of trials in

## **CRIMINAL PRACTICE**

the geographical area courts, cooperation between the bench and the bar, consideration of a permanent sentencing commission and payment/waiver of court costs and fees.

In addition to the topics discussed by the commission, the focus groups yielded additional topics for consideration at future meetings, including: more interaction between the bar and the court service center staff, separating victim advocates from prosecutors' offices, the designation of a statewide judge for domestic violence matters, decreasing the number of court appearances, providing guidelines and forms in lay terms, examining the criminal canvass, having criminal defendants sign the canvass, defining the role of the court service center, creating separate pro se dockets, expanding the use of video conferencing hearings at prison, the rotation of judges sitting on sentence review, more frequent rotation of judge's assignments within the Judicial District, joint training with domestic violence advocates and family relations, having a domestic violence docket in each court, more specialization on domestic violence issues, and online/electronic adjudications that allow for payment of fines in appropriate cases. This is not intended to be an exclusive list of what the Commission will consider.

The commission will also be evaluating the various existing specialty dockets. In conjunction with the Civil Commission, the Criminal Practice Commission should assess the feasibility and need for the creation of an Elderly docket.

Currently, work groups are being formed to address issues related to the topics of Practice Book/Discovery Rules Review, Habeas Reform, and Professionalism and Civility. Once formed, these subcommittees will meet and report back to the commission. Additionally, a space utilization survey is underway in an effort to address issues regarding overcrowding in the Public Defender's offices and whether or not adequate confidential conference space is available or can be created. The Criminal Practice Commission will meet again in October 2008.

## FAMILY SUPPORT MAGISTRATE RULES

**Goal III                      Delivery of Services:    The Judicial Branch will provide effective, uniform and consistent delivery of services by enhancing the management of court practices.**

Strategy:    III.4    Increase efficiency of case management and court practices

Activity:    III.4.1    Studying specialty dockets and specialty courts to examine their efficiency in handling certain case types.

This goal will be accomplished, in part, by the Work Group on Family Rules' creating a subcommittee to develop rules for the Family Support Magistrate Division.

The Family Support Magistrate Division was created by statute in 1986 in response to federal law which requires each state to provide expedited hearings for the establishment, enforcement and modification of IV-D child support and spousal support cases. Existing civil and family practice book rules do not address the goals of a forum charged with providing expedited hearings. Family Support Magistrate hearings are currently presided over by nine family support magistrates, two family support magistrate referees, and a number of judge trial referees. The establishment of practice book rules would result in greater efficiency, consistency and uniformity of procedures across the many family support magistrate sessions held throughout the state. For example, there are diverse practices among judicial officers in handling evidentiary issues, which is particularly important in hearings in which most participants are self-represented. Service of process procedures for serving parties who live out of state also vary widely. Over 95 % of litigants appearing at family support magistrate hearings are self-represented. A simplification of court rules would enhance both litigants comprehension of the hearings process and their ability to participate in a more meaningful way.

The subcommittee should include representatives with expertise in family and family support magistrate matters. Therefore, it is recommended that the subcommittee be comprised of:

## **FAMILY SUPPORT MAGISTRATE RULES**

A family judge (CAJ Family) as co-chair

A family support magistrate as co-chair

A judge trial referee

A family support magistrate (2)

Representatives of the Support Enforcement Services Unit

A representative of the Court Operations Unit

A representative of the Department of Social Services (Connecticut's lead IV-D agency)

A representative of the Attorney General's Office

Support staff will be provided by the Support Enforcement Services and Court Operations Units.

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 measures as defined by the strategic plan.

The subcommittee should make every attempt to submit its recommendations to the Rules Committee in time to be included with the rules which will be submitted to the judges at their annual meeting in June of 2009.

## JURY

**Goal III                      Delivery of Services:    The Judicial Branch will provide effective, uniform and consistent delivery of services by enhancing the management of court practices.**

- Strategy:    III.2    Improve jurors' participation and experience in jury service.
- Activity:    III.2.1    Using jury surveys to determine juror comfort and satisfaction.
- III.2.2    Developing user-friendly technology to educate jurors on their role, to provide them with clear information on jury service, and to automate the processes involved in jurors managing and scheduling their service.

This activity will be accomplished by creating a committee to study and evaluate our jury system. Nearly one third of Connecticut's adult (18 and older) population is summoned for jury duty. By providing the best possible service to jurors and ensuring a meaningful jury experience, the Judicial Branch will make a significant, positive impact on the public's trust and confidence in the court system as a whole. Because jurors are in continuous contact with the Branch from the time that they are initially summoned through either the completion of their service or the discharge of their obligation through disqualification, there are many opportunities to promote the mission, functions and good work accomplished by the state court system. Significantly, the experience and interaction jurors have with jury staff and court personnel leaves a lasting impression of both the quality and character of the institution.

The work of this committee will support the Judicial Branch core values of fairness, integrity, professionalism and respect.

It will be this committee's task to determine whether the Judicial Branch uses best practices for summoning, notification, management and utilization of jurors and to recommend new approaches and initiatives. The committee will accomplish this task by studying the jury systems of other states and localities as well as the federal system to identify best practices; by examining the Judicial Branch's jury system in the context of

## **JURY**

the American Bar Association (ABA) Principles for Juries and Jury Trials; by evaluating the appropriateness of expanding the Jury Administrator's role in the oversight of the jury process in the court; and by identifying the different practices used by each of the 19 court locations that summons jurors and making recommendations for standardization of those procedures.

Additional areas for the committee to consider include, but are not limited to, examining the confidentiality of juror information and juror privacy; reviewing the information communicated to jurors on such topics as duration of service; obtaining a public relations firm to revise and re-write jury publications such as the summons and notices; stressing the importance and value of juror service in all jury publications; assessing the assistance provided to disabled jurors; providing briefing materials and suggestions to jurors to prepare them for serving; involving the bar and other stakeholders in the revision of the confidential questionnaire; conducting routine exit surveys to obtain juror feedback; looking at the amount of time taken for juror orientation; revising and updating the current jury orientation films and replacing them with a single film; assigning the same judge to conduct juror orientation each day; training court staff to provide regular updates to jurors throughout the process; increasing juror pay; clarifying the information provided to jurors regarding term of service; expanding the current jury outreach program; providing comfortable, aesthetically appealing facilities for jurors; providing counseling services for jurors serving on highly stressful cases; providing additional staff training to include issues related to crime victims and increased cultural sensitivity; expanding materials available in other languages; increasing electronic services such as postponements; and addressing jurors' increased expectations regarding evidence, also known as the "CSI effect."

This committee will be chaired by a judge and its diverse membership should be drawn from a variety of disciplines and areas of expertise to ensure its ability to fully explore the numerous factors and issues impacting the jury system. Recommended membership should include:

## **JURY**

Representatives from Jury Administration as well as court-based jury personnel;

A private sector consumer advocate;

A private sector customer service expert;

A member of the George W. Crawford Black Bar Association;

A member of the Hispanic Bar Association;

A member of the Asian Pacific Bar Association;

The Dean of Quinnipiac University School of Law;

A representative from the Connecticut Bar Association litigation section;

A representative from the Office of the Chief States Attorney;

A representative from the Office of the Chief Public Defender;

A public relations specialist;

A former juror; and

A representative from a government group such as the League of Women Voters

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 findings, recommendations for changes, including expansion and/or development and implementation of new programs to the Chief Court Administrator by February 1, 2009.

## SELF-REPRESENTED PARTIES

**Goal III                      Delivery of Services:    The Judicial Branch will provide effective, uniform and consistent delivery of services by enhancing the management of court practices.**

Strategy:    III.3    Improve the clarity of court procedures and information so that individuals without legal representation may more effectively participate in the court process.

Activity:    III.3.1    Increasing the number of available plain language forms and instructions.

                 III.3.2    Creating educational tools for self-represented parties

                 III.3.3    Increasing support services for self-represented parties through Court Service Centers.

These activities will be accomplished through the creation of a committee that will examine ways to assist self-represented parties in effectively participating in the court process. Many of the people interacting with the courts are self-represented parties, particularly in housing and family cases. This committee will look at ways to enhance guidance and assistance provided to those who interact with the court. An underlying goal of this committee should be that *all* Judicial Branch staff treat people fairly and with integrity. The committee will stress the need for all staff to recognize the importance of conducting themselves in a professional manner and in a manner which treats people with respect. This committee shall study ways to improve the court experience for self-represented parties through increasing the support services available through the court service centers and providing clearer court procedures and information.

The court environment can be intimidating and unfamiliar, and this committee will study the feasibility of increasing the number and availability of forms available in plain language, so that new and existing forms are easily understood by all. An extension of the committee's work will look at how to make these forms readily accessible and available. This committee will create a work group to explore all the options for making forms and literature accessible to all those who may need them. The committee is also to

## **SELF-REPRESENTED PARTIES**

consider creating additional educational tools for self-represented parties. Such consideration will include exploring the feasibility of creating and conducting educational workshops in a variety of areas. The committee will create a work group to determine which areas would most benefit from educational workshops. In addition, the Committee will examine the need to create training, instructional and “how-to” manuals for self-represented parties to assist them in navigating the court system. Some of these educational tools might include informing parties of available services and how to best access those services through the creation of such resources as an interactive website.

The legal services network in Connecticut is establishing a computerized web-based system for making legal information available to their client communities. The system will include a user-friendly website through which legal services organizations can provide information to individuals who cannot be taken on as clients because of limited funding and other resources. The system will allow users to find information about their problems, link to the Judicial Branch website and locate other services such as hotlines, pro bono networks, and lawyer referral services. This committee will form a work group to explore different ways of cooperating with the legal services network in the development of this website. In addition, the legal services network is planning to develop web tools designed to assist self represented litigants.

This committee will also consider the feasibility of implementing “advice days” for self-represented parties utilizing the services of volunteer attorneys. This committee shall research potential pitfalls of “advice days” including, but not limited to malpractice and liability issues for the court and for volunteer attorneys. Furthermore, as all court staff deal with self-represented parties, it is important that the committee determine the extent to which staff in addition to court service center staff, are trained on the psychology of dealing with frustrated and often irate self-represented parties.

Additionally, as an extension of the Judicial Branch’s commitment to self-represented parties and in recognition of the importance of the continued relationship between the legal aid community and the Judicial Branch, this committee shall explore ways in which

## **SELF-REPRESENTED PARTIES**

to enhance this relationship. Such exploration shall include, but not be limited to, assessing various methods to stabilize funding sources for legal aid through collaboration with the Connecticut Bar Foundation and other specifically identified organizations. This committee shall form a work group to consider the full range of options available in developing a plan to supplement and stabilize these funding sources. The Judicial Branch is committed to the partnership with the legal aid community, and the work of this committee shall serve to ensure the continuation of this unique partnership.

Furthermore, the committee will consider the need to increase support services for self-represented parties through the Court Service Centers. As the Judicial Branch is committed to assisting the self-represented, this committee shall evaluate new and inventive ways to meet the needs of this growing population, including, but not limited to, assessing the feasibility of creating dedicated dockets specifically for self-represented parties, examining the need for designated self-represented clerks to assist self-represented parties at trial and appellate levels, and considering the implementation of a courthouse greeters program to welcome and direct all courthouse patrons as they enter the facility. Additionally, the committee will examine a variety of methods to make mediation services more readily available to self-represented parties.

In addition, as the self-represented population has increased, so too, has the use of unbundled legal services. This Committee shall assess the impact of unbundling legal services on various bar groups, including, but not limited to legal aid, the business process of the courts, and self-represented parties, through the formation of a working group.

Issues concerning criminal matters and procedures, specifically an examination of the criminal canvass, shall be studied by the Criminal Practice Committee, and therefore not addressed by this committee. It is further recommended that issues concerning victims, victim services and courthouse security be dealt with through the formation of separate committees.

## **SELF-REPRESENTED PARTIES**

In order to ensure that the Committee can effectively examine each of the above referenced areas, it will be important for it to have broad representation from the bench, bar and Judicial Branch staff with expertise in areas concerning self-represented parties.

Therefore, it is recommended the committee be comprised of:

A Superior Court judge(s) chair/co-chair – civil and family;

A family support magistrate;

A small claims magistrate;

A representative from the Judicial Branch law libraries;

A representative from Superior Court Operations – Family, Support and Juvenile Matters;

A representative from Superior Court Operations – Housing Matters

Managers from Court Service Centers;

Representatives from various Bar Groups, including but not limited to, the Connecticut Bar Association with emphasis on family law practitioners, Minority Bar Associations, Statewide Legal Services and Connecticut Legal Aid.

A representative from the Support Enforcement Unit;

A representative from the Legal Services Unit;

A representative from the Information Technology Division familiar with web design;

Representation from Judicial Branch clerk's office staff;

Possible representation from community groups.

Other contributing divisions and agencies:

Attorney General's Office

Department of Social Services

External Affairs

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

## **SELF-REPRESENTED PARTIES**

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 March 1, 2009.

## SMALL CLAIMS

**Goal III                      Delivery of Services:    The Judicial Branch will provide effective, uniform and consistent delivery of services by enhancing the management of court practices.**

- Strategy:    III.4    Increase efficiency of case management and court practices.
- Activity:    III.4.1    Studying specialty dockets and specialty courts to examine their efficiency in handling certain case types.
- III.4.2    Developing a strategic plan for technology to improve the consistency and efficiency of court practices and to improve cost effective litigation management.

As a result of information obtained at several of the Public Service and Trust Commission's focus groups, Judge Barbara Quinn, after consultation with Chief Justice Rogers, Judge Carroll and Judge DiPentima, formed the Bench Bar Centralized Small Claims Committee to study the small claims court and to make recommendations for its future success. The committee is chaired by Honorable Clarence Jones, and is comprised of the following members of the judiciary, the creditors' and consumers' bar, legal service providers and magistrates: Honorable Barbara M. Quinn, Honorable Patrick L. Carroll III, Honorable James W. Abrams, Attorney Joseph D'Alesio, Attorney Nancy L. Kierstead, Attorney Maureen P. Finn, Attorney Natalie K. Erickson, Magistrate Elaine Braffman, Magistrate Sydney W. Elkin, Magistrate Joseph J. Patchen, Magistrate Michael Ross, Attorney Marshall R. Collins, Attorney Joanne S. Faulkner, Attorney Kevin R. Hennessy, Attorney Karen Lahey, Attorney Adam Olshan, Attorney Robert L. Peat, Attorney Raphael Podolsky, Attorney Sarah Poriss, Attorney William G. Reveley, Attorney Kenneth Rozich, and Attorney Richard A. Terry.

The charge of the Bench Bar Small Claims Committee is to review Practice Book rules, recommend uniform practices throughout the state, and consider legislative changes to improve the small claims process. The first meeting of the committee was held on June 3, 2008, during which the committee identified issues of concerns for magistrates, attorneys, unrepresented litigants and the small claims court itself. The committee also

## **SMALL CLAIMS**

discussed the formation of subcommittees to further discuss issues raised at the meeting, and to make appropriate recommendations. Three subcommittees were formed: Subcommittee on Legal Issues; Subcommittee on Access & Quality of Service; and Subcommittee on Operational Process. The subcommittees are charged with meeting to discuss their respective areas of concern, and to report their ideas and substantive suggestions at a full committee meeting, to be scheduled for September, 2008.

## TECHNOLOGY PLAN

**Goal III                      Delivery of Services:    The Judicial Branch will provide effective, uniform and consistent delivery of services by enhancing the management of court practices.**

Strategy:    III.4        Increase efficiency of case management and court practices.

Activity:    III.4.2    Developing a strategic plan for technology to improve the consistency and efficiency of court practices and to improve cost effective litigation management.

This activity will be accomplished through the formation of a committee/work group that will be charged with developing a 3-5 year technology plan for the Branch that will ensure the Branch's infrastructure is secure and up-to-date and all technology initiatives are aligned with the goals and critical business needs of the Branch as well as the needs of the bar, other state agencies and the public. Like the Strategic Plan for the Judicial Branch, this technology plan must be a quantifiable plan of action for the present and the future, a technology roadmap for the Branch. The technology plan must have clearly defined milestones that are monitored and modified when necessary to ensure it remains aligned with the priorities of the Branch.

Technology is woven through nearly every aspect of Judicial business whether it's the Judge in her chambers accessing the E-Research Tower from her PC, the Clerk in his office processing a case continuance, the Bail Commissioner in the lock-up recording a client interview on a laptop, a citizen checking our website to see if she must report for jury duty the next morning or the defendant and his lawyer appearing at a video conference for a support hearing. As these examples illustrate, the requirements to employ technology in the Branch have no physical boundaries, not only for the Judges and staff but for those who come to our courthouses, offices and website. In pursuit of providing this ubiquitous access to technology, this Committee must consider recommending technologies that allow case parties who are not present in the courtroom to nevertheless participate in proceedings and that bring the ability to have access to technology to every corner of a courthouse through expanded video conferencing,

## TECHNOLOGY PLAN

statewide real-time digital recording and archiving of courtroom proceedings and wireless connectivity. As the Committee sifts through these priorities, it must also address the increasing demand for a more paperless world and consider the expansion of e-filing beyond the civil courts.

The Committee must also define how technology can further support the Branch's mission of serving "the interests of justice and the public by resolving matters brought before it in a fair, timely, efficient and open manner" by recommending improvements to the quantity and quality of information provided through our website, by requiring increased electronic information sharing among its operating divisions and other agencies and by identifying ways to enhance case processing and case management applications so they provide procedural flexibility where necessary while encouraging uniform practice and better data integrity. Currently, two mission critical applications (the Criminal Motor Vehicle System and the Centralized Infractions Bureau system) as well as the Branch's administrative applications such as purchasing, accounts payable, payroll and personnel are in serious need of upgrade. Most are at least 15-25 years old and were developed using outdated technology that is becoming increasingly harder to support. Enhancements and changes to these applications are difficult at best and finding staff skilled in these older technologies is nearly impossible. Replacing these applications would not only solve the problems associated with supporting very old technology but would result in applications aligned to how the Branch's business is done today and built to accommodate evolving needs and more easily share information electronically with other applications within and outside the Branch. However, the Committee should note that this will be achievable only with a significant commitment of funds and project staffing.

The Branch has an Information Technology Division which will, in large measure, be charged with carrying out the Technology Plan and which is dedicated to serving the technology needs of the Branch and its constituents by providing a modern, secure infrastructure and the technical staff necessary to support it. Because technology

## TECHNOLOGY PLAN

advances at such a rapid pace, the need for technical staff education at conferences and training courses will be continuous and the infrastructure will have to be regularly refreshed or upgraded to ensure it can provide uninterrupted support of critical business processes and meet increasing demands for services. Therefore, another task of this Committee is to identify a stable and regular revenue stream for technical staff education and for renewal and growth of the Branch's entire hardware and software computing infrastructure: in the data center, through the network and on the desktop so the goals of the Plan can be met. Lastly, because a state-of-the-art computing infrastructure needs well-trained users to take best advantage of it, a separate but related portion of the plan must address on-going technology training for all Branch staff using a variety of delivery methods.

In order to ensure that the Committee can effectively examine each of the above-referenced areas, it will be important for it to have broad representation of the bench, the operating divisions, the bar, criminal justice agencies and the non-legal community with expertise in various fields. Therefore, it is recommended that the Committee be comprised of:

The Deputy Chief Court Administrator (Chair)

Chief Court Administrator, as an ex officio member;

Judges of the Superior Court, Appellate Court and Supreme Court;

Executive Directors of the Judicial Branch and their designees;

Representatives from various Bar Groups – Connecticut Bar Association, Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association, Attorneys with varied expertise in civil, criminal, family, juvenile;

Representatives from the Legislative and Executive Branches of Government such as those in state criminal justice agencies, DOIT and OPM;

“Non-Attorneys” – Public

## **TECHNOLOGY PLAN**

The committee will develop outcome indicators to measure the success of the activities within 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 measures as defined by the strategic plan.

The Committee is to submit the Technology Plan with defined goals, milestones and performance measures to the Chief Justice by April 1, 2009.

## UNIFORMITY OF COURT PROCEDURES

**Goal III                      Delivery of Services:    The Judicial Branch will provide effective, uniform and consistent delivery of services by enhancing the management of court practices.**

Strategy:    III.4    Increase efficiency of case management and court practices.

Activity:                      Although no single activity specifically addresses the need for uniformity of court practices and case management procedures, the lack of uniformity impedes efficient case management and court practices and causes inefficiency, confusion and frustration for parties, attorneys, judges, family support magistrates, non-judicial officers and court staff. Therefore, to serve the interests of justice, fulfill the Branch mission, and serve the people who interact with the courts with fairness, respect, professionalism and integrity, the Judicial Branch must increase uniformity to increase efficiency.

This increase in the efficiency of case management and court practices through uniformity will be accomplished through the creation of a committee that will examine practices and procedures in civil, housing, family and juvenile courts in Judicial Districts statewide to facilitate practice in multiple jurisdictions for attorneys and support staff. Typically self-represented parties do not interact with different courts in different districts statewide and experience fewer uniformity issues; however, they will also benefit from the clarification and standardization of practices in some areas. Issues with respect to uniformity of practice and procedure in the criminal courts are specifically excluded from this committee's consideration because they will be addressed by the Criminal Practice Commission. Similarly, issues regarding uniformity of practice and procedure in complex litigation, foreclosures and small claims will be addressed by the Complex Litigation Committee, Bench-Bar Foreclosure Committee and Bench-Bar Centralized Small Claims Committee. Therefore, this committee will focus on the civil (including housing) and family (including juvenile) areas.

Essential to this committee's examination will be obtaining information from four focus groups: two held with members of the bar and two held with law office support staff.

## **UNIFORMITY OF COURT PROCEDURES**

Focus groups that have already been conducted established that a lack of uniformity exists so the purpose of these four focus groups will be to identify specific areas where the lack of uniformity impacts the bar. To obtain a broad range of feedback on uniformity issues statewide, the groups should include members of the Connecticut Bar Association, Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association, Civil Defense Lawyers, Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, and members of state, regional and local paralegal and legal assistant organizations.

Once the information is obtained, two subcommittees should be formed: one to address civil uniformity problem areas; the other, family uniformity problem areas. In addressing these areas, it is anticipated that the subcommittee will examine, in each Judicial District, such areas as existing pretrial procedures and standing orders; the current markings process; the current scheduling and coordination of calendars, including the possibility of moving family short calendar to later in the week to minimize conflict over weekend visitations; procedures for accessing family relations services; the fee waiver process; the transcript request process and local variations on the Practice Book rules in all areas. Based upon the assessment and examination by the two subcommittees, the committee as a whole will make recommendations to the chief court administrator to make practices and procedures uniform on a statewide basis. If after examination of current practices and procedures, the committee finds that some variation in practices and procedures must exist, based on such factors as availability of space or staff, demographics, or similar reasons, the committee will recommend that such local rules be uniform to the extent possible and that the rules be published online and available on paper in order to provide the bench, bar and self-represented parties with a clear understanding of policies, procedures and court practices.

Recognizing that change is inevitable, this committee should also make recommendations as to ways to ensure that the uniformity that has been achieved will also be maintained.

## UNIFORMITY OF COURT PROCEDURES

The committee should include representatives with expertise in various subject matters, specifically but not limited to Civil, Family, Housing and Juvenile. Therefore, it is recommended the committee be comprised of:

A Superior Court Judge (civil) (co-chair);

A Superior Court Judge (family) (co-chair);

Representation from bar groups, including the Connecticut Bar Association (particularly Civil, Family and Young Lawyers sections), Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association, Civil Defense Lawyers Association and paralegals/legal assistants with civil, family, housing and juvenile experience;

A representative from the Superior Court Operations – Civil Matters;

A representative from Superior Court Operations – Family, Support and Juvenile Matters;

A representative from the Support Enforcement Unit;

A representative from Court Support Services Division - Family Relations;

Representation from clerk's offices with expertise in civil, family, housing and juvenile matters.

**Note:** Extensive involvement of representatives from various units of the Superior Court Operations Division with expertise in civil, family, housing and juvenile matters will be needed as part of the support staff for this committee.

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 is to submit its report of recommendations to the Chief Court Administrator by March 1, 2009.

## CHIEF COURT ADMINISTRATOR/ATTORNEY GENERAL

**Goal IV**                    **Collaboration: The Judicial Branch will improve its communication and collaboration with the Executive and Legislative Branches of government and their agencies, the Bar, other partners, and the public, as well as within the Branch, to better serve the needs of all who interact with it.**

- Strategy:    IV.1    More effectively convey information between the Branch and other entities.
- Activity:    IV.1.2    Developing partnerships designed to encourage information sharing.
- Strategy:    IV.2    Expand and strengthen joint efforts between the Branch and other entities.
- IV.2.1    Collaborating with other state entities, as well as researchers and academic institutions, to improve the quality of services and programs.

The Judicial Branch interacts with attorneys from the departments within the Office of the Attorney General. Developing mechanisms to regularly address issues encountered by these attorneys who frequently interact with the Branch will ensure that the needs of the public are met efficiently and effectively.

The Chief Court Administrator shall direct that semi-annual breakfast/lunch meetings be held between the Office of the Chief Court Administrator and the Office of the Attorney General. These meetings would provide opportunities for dialogue between the Chief Court Administrator and the various departments within the Office of the Attorney General to address issues and enhance understanding of the functions and roles of departments and individuals within the Attorney General's office.

## CHIEF COURT ADMINISTRATOR/CLERKS AND BAR

**Goal IV**                    **Collaboration: The Judicial Branch will improve its communication and collaboration with the Executive and Legislative Branches of government and their agencies, the Bar, other partners, and the public, as well as within the Branch, to better serve the needs of all who interact with it.**

Strategy:    IV.2    Expand and strengthen joint efforts between the Branch and other entities.

Activity:    IV.2.2    Developing more effective ways to partner with the bar.

This activity will be accomplished, in part, by the Chief Court Administrator, who shall direct clerks' offices throughout the state to enhance their relationship with local bar associations and members of the bar as a whole. Specifically, clerks' offices will be directed to organize periodic meetings (at least annually) with the administrative judge, key clerk's office staff and members of the bar. These meetings may also include support staff from local law offices. These meetings will provide a forum for discussing various local issues, providing information about the implementation of new statutes, Practice Book rules, or policies, and addressing any problems that may arise between the clerk's office and members of the Bar. The chief clerk should work with the local bar association to establish a mutually convenient time for these meetings. Summaries of these meetings should be prepared and submitted to the Chief Court Administrator and the administrative office of Court Operations.

Other means of enhancing the relationship between the clerks' offices and the local bar associations and members of the bar should also be considered. Some recommendations would include, but are not limited to, regular contributions by the clerk's office to the local bar association newsletter, development of brief seminars in conjunction with the bar association on substantive and procedural changes, assessment of the possibility of providing young lawyers the opportunity to be temporary assistant clerks, allocation of a bulletin board or area for the posting of information of interest to the Bar, coordination of

## **CHIEF COURT ADMINISTRATOR/CLERKS AND BAR**

periodic informal “brownbag” lunches or coffees with staff, members of the bar, and judges, or attendance at or participation in Bar functions and activities.

## CHIEF COURT ADMINISTRATOR/INFORMATION SHARING

**Goal IV**                    **Collaboration: The Judicial Branch will improve its communication and collaboration with the Executive and Legislative Branches of government and their agencies, the Bar, other partners, and the public, as well as within the Branch, to better serve the needs of all who interact with it.**

Strategy:    IV.3        Improve cooperation and information sharing within the Branch

Activity:     IV.3.1        Improving communication and information sharing between the Branch's various divisions.

This activity will be accomplished, in part, through the Chief Court Administrator, who shall direct that meetings be conducted between and among judges and staff on several levels to improve communication and information-sharing within and between the Branch's divisions. First, the Chief Court Administrator shall conduct meetings with the Executive Committee quarterly. These meetings will include the exploration of the current functions and responsibilities of the Executive Committee. It is recommended that members of the Executive Committee be directed to review the meeting agendas with the judges they represent prior to the meeting to solicit input from those judges. The Chief Court Administrator will also conduct periodic meetings (at least quarterly) with the administrative judges. These meetings may be used to discuss operational issues, provide information about new statutes, Practice Book rules, or policies, update the judges on current or future projects or available resources, address problems and solicit feedback from the judges. The Chief Court Administrator should direct administrative judges to meet with the judges assigned to their districts to disseminate information, foster communication and address any problems. It is recommended that these meetings be held, at a minimum, after each quarterly administrative judges meeting, with additional meetings to be scheduled as needed. Summaries of these meetings should be prepared and submitted to the Chief Court Administrator. The Chief Court Administrator should also direct the administrative judge to coordinate meetings between and among judges and key staff members in each courthouse, as a means of improving communication between judges and staff and addressing any issues that arise.

## **CHIEF COURT ADMINISTRATOR/INFORMATION SHARING**

It is further recommended that the Chief Court Administrator develop a template and direct that it be completed and used by the administrative judges in the orientation of newly assigned judges. Information from this template would include both general and location-specific information about the courthouse, staff and available resources, and would be a part of an overall orientation program the administrative judge will provide for newly-assigned judges. An additional component of that orientation program would direct that the administrative judge introduce newly-assigned judges to local staff.

Finally, it is recommended that local offices of other divisions also be directed by the Chief Court Administrator to meet on a periodic basis, both within each division as well as with local staff in other divisions. These meetings would serve to enhance communications, both within and across all divisions, between managers, supervisors and staff regarding resource availability, ongoing or future projects, and shared issues.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION SYSTEM (CJIS)

**Goal IV**                    **Collaboration: The Judicial Branch will improve its communication and collaboration with the Executive and Legislative Branches of government and their agencies, the Bar, other partners, and the public, as well as within the Branch, to better serve the needs of all who interact with it.**

Strategy:    IV.1    More effectively convey information between the Branch and other entities.

Activity:    IV.1.1    Supporting efforts to develop integrated information systems between the Branch and other state agencies.

During the January, 2008, Special Session of the Connecticut General Assembly, Public Act 08-01, “An Act Concerning Criminal Justice Reform” was passed. It defined and required the design and implementation of a “comprehensive, state-wide information technology system to facilitate the immediate, seamless and comprehensive sharing of information between all state agencies, departments, boards and commissions having any cognizance over matters relating to law enforcement and criminal justice, and organized local police departments and law enforcement officials.” The act went on to describe a system intended to be “a central, integrated electronic repository of criminal justice records and documents.”

The Judicial Branch has a key role to play in this vital and ambitious endeavor. The Branch maintains a number of automated criminal justice applications that are integral to the operations of its courts and support offices and which contain information and documents of great interest and value to the entire criminal justice community. These applications will be primary contributors of information to this repository. The Judicial Branch has a history of being committed to supporting the electronic exchange of information with other agencies as evidenced by its electronic interfaces with the state and local police, the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Department of Correction which have been operational for more than 15 years. More recently, the Branch has developed real-time event interfaces from its applications to the Offender Based Tracking

## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION SYSTEM (CJIS)**

System (OBTS) developed by OPM and DOIT. Currently, the Judicial Branch has taken a leadership role in the development of a SAVIN-compliant Victim Notification System that was also required as part of PA 08-01. When fully realized, it will provide crime victims with near real-time access and notification of criminal justice events from the Branch, the Department of Correction and the Division of Criminal Justice. Final evidence of the Branch's commitment to these criminal justice reform efforts is the central role that Judge Patrick Carroll, Deputy Chief Court Administrator, plays as co-chair of the CJIS Governing Board.

As its past and current efforts demonstrate, the Judicial Branch stands ready to commit its resources and considerable expertise to assist in the realization of this critical criminal justice initiative.

## ASSIGNMENTS/ALLOCATION (JUDGES)

**Goal V**                    **Accountability: The Judicial Branch will ensure a judicial system where participants can expect and experience clear, fair and consistent justice from an independent and impartial judiciary.**

- Strategy:    V.3            Assess policies/processes to ensure appropriate judicial discretion.
- Activity:     V.3.1           Consider the feasibility of assigning a case to a specific judge for duration of the case.
- V.3.3            Reassess support resources and workloads across the Branch.
- V.3.4            Consider the merit of judges specializing in certain areas of the law.

The above activities along with a review of the present process for assigning and allocating judges to a Judicial District location should be examined together because of their interrelationship. Unquestionably, the assignment and allocation of judges is one of the most important responsibilities of the Chief Court Administrator and is of great concern to the judges. The Chief Court Administrator should, therefore, lead a committee of judges to review these areas. The committee's review should include, but not be limited to, an assessment and evaluation of the length of assignments, the start and end of the assignment term, the method of obtaining assignment preferences from judges, the assignment of judge trial referees and senior judges, and the existing process of obtaining input on the assignments from the various Chief Administrative Judges. The committee should also examine the feasibility of establishing weighted caseload standards that could be used as a basis for the allocation of judges. As a part of its examination, the committee should review any existing weighted caseload standards developed in other jurisdictions or by the National Center for State Courts. The committee should also obtain input from judges, through surveys and/or focus groups regarding any recommendations they may have about the assignment and allocation of judges. Finally, this committee should assess all of the various types of resources available to judges to determine if judicial needs are being met. This phase of the

## **ASSIGNMENTS/ALLOCATION (JUDGES)**

committee's work should be completed before the beginning of the 2009-2010 assignment process.

Issues surrounding the feasibility of assigning a case to a specific judge for the duration of the case (commonly known as individual calendaring) and the merit of judges' specializing in certain areas of the law are two activities that require in-depth study and input from various sources. A review of current methods employed by other jurisdictions in these areas should be examined. The National Center for State Courts along with the Conference of State Court Administrators' list serves are two resources that can be used to obtain information. Input should also be obtained from judges, the Civil Commission and various bar groups.

The committee that is to review the assignment and allocation of judges should be expanded when it undertakes this task to include members of the bar.

The Committee should be comprised of the following members:

- Chief Court Administrator (Chair)
- Deputy Chief Court Administrator
- Chief Administrative Judge, Civil
- Chief Administrative Judge, Criminal
- Chief Administrative Judge, Family
- Chief Administrative Judge, Juvenile
- A Civil Presiding Judge
- A Criminal Presiding Judge
- A Family Presiding Judge
- A Juvenile Presiding Judge

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

### **ASSIGNMENTS/ALLOCATION (JUDGES)**

project toward attaining the specific strategy addressed and its accompanying performance measures as defined by the strategic plan.

Committee is to complete the first phase of its work by March 1, 2009 and the second phase by January 1, 2010.

## CAREER PATHS

**Goal V**                    **Accountability: The Judicial Branch will ensure a judicial system where participants can expect and experience clear, fair and consistent justice from an independent and impartial judiciary.**

Strategy:    V.1        Establish clear and consistent expectations and processes for all constituents.

Activity:     V.1.4     Establishing additional career paths and opportunities for Branch staff.

These activities will be accomplished through the creation of a committee that will make recommendations regarding how to improve the service that is provided to the public and the public's perception of Judicial Branch employees through increased job satisfaction and morale. Lack of job satisfaction and poor morale may have a negative impact on both the service that is provided to the public and the public's perception of Branch staff.

During the information-gathering phase of the Judicial Branch strategic planning process, suggestions were made regarding how to increase job satisfaction and morale among Branch employees. The suggestions focused primarily on facilitating the upward mobility of employees by establishing additional career paths and opportunities. Specific suggestions were made regarding: providing more opportunities for temporary employees to move to permanent positions; reexamining limitations on the Branch's ability to promote employees; creating a HR newsletter; expanding career paths and avenues for advancement; making the managerial levels more diverse; providing career counseling; providing incentives for continuing education; providing pay differential to bilingual staff; implementing a better performance evaluation process and promoting employee wellness programs.

The committee should assess the utility of these suggestions and any others in improving job satisfaction and employee morale. It should report on the specific initiatives that can be undertaken within current resources and those that should be undertaken with

## **CAREER PATHS**

additional resources because they are cost effective, practical and of value to the Branch and its employees.

The Committee should be comprised of the following members:

The Personnel Manager for Employee Services (Chair)

Representatives of the Committee on Diversity

Representatives of Judicial HRM Unit

Representatives of Division HRM and operational units

The committee will develop outcome indicators to measure the success of the activities within 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 measures as defined by the strategic plan.

The committee will submit its recommendations to the Chief Court Administrator by January 15, 2009.

## CIVILITY/DECORUM IN THE COURTS

**Goal V**                    **Accountability: The Judicial Branch will ensure a judicial system where participants can expect and experience clear, fair and consistent justice from an independent and impartial judiciary.**

Strategy:    V.1            Establish clear and consistent expectations and processes for all constituents.

Activity:     V.1.3          Provide information to all who interact with the Branch regarding courtroom decorum and court processes

This activity can be accomplished in part through greater interaction between the Branch and the Standing Committee on Professionalism of the Connecticut Bar Association (see attachments). The Chief Justice, Chief Court Administrator and Deputy Chief Court Administrator should meet with members of the Standing Committee to explore ways to either formalize or institutionalize the Branch's relationship with the Standing Committee. Branch Committees and Commissions such as the Executive Committee, the Civil Commission and the Criminal Practice Commission should discuss issues surrounding civility and courtroom decorum and provide the Chief Court Administrator with any recommendations.

## COURT SECURITY

**Goal V**                    **Accountability: The Judicial Branch will ensure a judicial system where participants can expect and experience clear, fair and consistent justice from an independent and impartial judiciary.**

Strategy:    V.3            Assess policies/processes to ensure appropriate judicial discretion

Activity:     V.3.3          To reassess support resources and workloads across the Branch.

These activities will be accomplished through the formation of a permanent committee that will make recommendations to address courthouse security, focusing on issues related to the safety and well-being of all individuals within the courthouse; emergency preparedness, including planning for and responding to emergencies once they occur; and continuity of operations, including plans that should be implemented following an emergency to allow the resumption of normal operations.

A safe and secure environment must be provided and maintained in Judicial Branch facilities on a daily basis in order to ensure that interests of justice are served and public confidence in the court is preserved. The nature of business conducted in Judicial Branch facilities often involves conflict; thus Judicial Branch facilities must be held to a standard of security that provides an atmosphere that is safe and free from fear and intimidation, while treating all individuals who enter a Branch facility in a manner that is respectful, fair, consistent and professional. This committee shall assess the number and class of security personnel required by the Branch; the nature and extent of training received by security personnel; the process of risk assessment and emergency response; and the effective use of electronic security devices in Branch facilities. The possible expansion of training for marshals to include victimization issues and dealing with special populations such as children and disabled persons will be addressed by the training committee in consultation with this security committee.

Thorough planning, training and collaboration with other agencies are critical elements in the development of plans to anticipate and respond to emergency situations of all varieties and to maintain the ability of the Branch to function in their aftermath. This

## **COURT SECURITY**

committee shall assess potential risks that may impact courthouse security and how to best address them, including an assessment of the successes and failures of other states that have experienced similar situations. The committee will examine its emergency preparedness plan, contingency plan and security manual and recommend any necessary updating. It will examine the feasibility of the development of an intranet site as a central repository of information; look into the use of teleconferencing and videoconferencing to ensure that the Branch is capable of carrying out its essential functions, and examine the extent and nature of training of all of courthouse personnel so that the court is capable of performing its essential functions in the midst of an emergency or in the aftermath of a disaster.

It is suggested that two subcommittees be formed: the first to address matters pertaining primarily to the management and training of security personnel and the second to address issues primarily pertaining to the development of emergency preparedness and contingency plans.

The Committee should be comprised of the following members:

Chief Court Administrator or designee (chair)

Incident Management Team (The IMT includes the Incident Commander, Division Planning Section Chiefs (Appellate Court System, Court Support Services, Administrative Services, Information Technology, External Affairs, Court Operations); Finance Officer, Human Resources Officer, Legal Counsel, Public Information Officer, Safety/Security Officer, Emergency Operations Center Liaison Officer, Administration, Logistics.)

A representative from Judicial Marshal Academy - accreditation

A representative from the Judicial Marshal Academy

A representative from Judicial Marshals Services Administration

A lead judicial marshal

A supervising judicial marshal

## **COURT SECURITY**

Contributing Agencies and Divisions: (Emergency Preparedness and Contingency Plans)

Attorney General

State's Attorney

Public Defender

Department of Social Services

Department of Public Safety

Department of Correction

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 April 1, 2009.

## EXPECTATIONS OF THE PUBLIC

**Goal V**                    **Accountability: The Judicial Branch will ensure a judicial system where participants can expect and experience clear, fair and consistent justice from an independent and impartial judiciary.**

Strategy:    V.1        Establish clear and consistent expectations and processes for all constituents.

Activity:     V.1.1      Making information on the court process readily available.

                  V.1.2      Displaying expectations of court staff prominently.

                  V.1.3      Providing information to all who interact with the Branch regarding courtroom decorum and court processes.

                  V.1.5      Instilling a “How can I help you today?” attitude and culture.

These activities will be accomplished through the creation of a committee that will examine ways to define and communicate clear and consistent information about expectations and court processes for and to all who enter Judicial Branch facilities or interact with the Branch - litigants, jurors, attorneys, public, media, victims, and other branches of government and their agencies. Underlying these expectations are the core values of the Branch - fairness, integrity, professionalism and respect - all of which are important to the people who interact with the Branch. Providing clear and consistent information on what to expect or do in court is a key component in maintaining the public’s trust and confidence in the judicial system.

When a person does not know what to expect or what to do, court can be an unsettling and overwhelming place. The Committee will alleviate some of these concerns by considering, as a first step, activities that will emphasize, essentially market, existing Judicial Branch programs and services that assist the public in navigating the court system. Some of those programs and services include, but are not limited to, the Court Service Centers and Public Information Desks, a variety of Commission on Legal Publications (COLP) publications, and the information displayed on the Self-Help pages on the Judicial Branch website.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF THE PUBLIC**

The committee should recommend a plan to enhance these existing programs and services, create new ones, and make all programs and services more visible and readily available to the public. For example, outreach and education on the availability of Judicial Branch programs and services for targeted populations such as the elderly should be considered. The Committee may also consider the creation of new COLP publications and the expansion and/or restructuring of the Self-Help pages and Frequently Asked Questions on the Judicial Branch website. In conjunction with the creation of new programs and services and the enhancement of existing ones, it is essential that efforts be made to disseminate information on the available programs and services. Committee representatives from COLP and the media may assist in the marketing of available programs and services by suggesting creative measures such as radio public service announcements, televised commercials, signage and print publications.

The committee should evaluate methods of providing and displaying basic information about the court systems and procedures. Such information should be specific to the various courts (criminal, small claims, family-related, court services for children, and other specialized court services). For each court, the information should provide an individual with a general understanding of what his or her court experience will involve including: what type of information will be heard; who will be hearing the matter; how a docket is called; how long a hearing might last; where to obtain detailed information on a file; how to pay a fine; and when a decision would be reached. Some of the work of this committee will be closely connected to the efforts of the committee that is addressing uniformity issues, and it is recommended that the membership of these committees overlap to some degree.

The Committee should develop a statement in some form that outlines the standards of service and performance people can expect when interacting with the Branch and the steps to take when those standards are not met. This statement should be prominently displayed both in Branch facilities and online. The standards should be based on the ideals of Public Service Excellence and therefore, may be dependent on the work of other committees. At a minimum, members of the public should expect Branch staff to identify

## **EXPECTATIONS OF THE PUBLIC**

themselves by name, to be professional, to provide fair and equal treatment regardless of a person's physical or social attributes, to address them directly with respect, to treat them courteously and to provide an apology or explanation if things go wrong.

The Committee should also develop a statement that clearly outlines the minimum standards of courtroom decorum for all who use the court system. It is a collective effort of the judge or magistrate, marshals and court staff to enforce rules of decorum and ensure the dignity of the court. Written publications, signage, and/or information on the website should clearly communicate information as to how to dress when coming to court; what to expect when they arrive at the court facility, including information on the role of the metal detectors and other safety devices in ensuring personal safety; how to obtain the services of an interpreter, including when interpreters are assigned; and how to address the court.

In order to ensure that the Committee can effectively examine each of the above referenced areas, it will be important for it to have broad representation from the bench, bar, litigants, jurors, Judicial Branch staff and other branches of government and their agencies. Therefore, it is recommended the committee be comprised of:

A Superior Court judge(s) - chair/co chair from the bench, preferably Civil

A small claims magistrate;

A motor vehicle magistrate;

A housing specialist;

A representative from the Court Service Centers;

A representative from the Commission on Official Legal Publications;

A representative from the Centralized Infractions Bureau;

A representative from the Bar;

A representative from Legal Aid;

A representative from the Support Enforcement Unit;

A representative from the Information Technology Division familiar with web design;

## **EXPECTATIONS OF THE PUBLIC**

Representatives from Judicial Branch clerk's office staff;  
A representative from the Branch's ADA team;  
A representative from Jury Administration;  
A representative from the Court Operations SCOPS team;  
A representative from the Public Service Excellence team

Other contributing divisions and agencies:

Court Support Services Division  
Administrative Services Division  
External Affairs Division  
Department of Social Services

The committee will develop outcome indicators to measure the success of the activities within 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 measures as defined by the strategic plan.

The committee will submit its recommendations to the Chief Court Administrator by March 1, 2009.

## JUDGES' NEW ASSIGNMENT ASSESSMENT/ORIENTATION

**Goal V**                    **Accountability: The Judicial Branch will ensure a judicial system where participants can expect and experience clear, fair and consistent justice from an independent and impartial judiciary.**

Strategy:    V.3            Assess policies/processes to ensure appropriate judicial discretion.

Activity:     V.3.3          Reassessing support resources and workloads across the Branch.

This goal will be accomplished, in part, through the Chief Court Administrator, who shall establish a program for judges assigned to areas in which they have limited experience that assesses their knowledge and skills regarding the subject matter with which they will be dealing in their new assignment and provides orientation to assist them in that new assignment.

The program will involve a meeting between the judge who has received the new assignment and a judge who is familiar with the subject matter (possibly the chief administrative judge) to develop a program tailored to meet the needs of that particular judge. The program can include, but is not limited to, attending specific seminars offered in the subject matter area, observing a sitting judge assigned to that subject matter area, reviewing written or online materials or obtaining other resources needed in order for the judge to feel comfortable in his or her new assignment.

To tailor the program to the specific needs of the judge, the assessment process should be formal, with specific questions' being posed to the judge who will be starting the new assignment. Whether or not the program is to be mandatory is to be determined.

The Chief Court Administrator will charge the Deputy Chief Court Administrator with meeting with the chief administrative judges to develop the assessment tool and to make recommendations regarding the implementation of the program.

## JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PROGRAM

**Goal V**                    **Accountability: The Judicial Branch will ensure a judicial system where participants can expect and experience clear, fair and consistent justice from an independent and impartial judiciary.**

Strategy:    V.3            Assess policies/processes to ensure appropriate judicial discretion.

Activity:     V.3.2        To assess the current evaluation and feedback process by a group composed of judges and others who interact with the courts.

This activity will be accomplished through the creation of committee that will be charged with examining the existing judicial performance evaluation program. An evaluation process that guarantees anonymity of individual respondents and provides fair, unbiased and statistically reliable feedback will assist judges in identifying areas requiring additional training and support and will provide for an appropriate level of accountability. It will also provide more transparency in the judicial process for the public. Periodic evaluation of judges and feedback from those who interact with the courts will ensure accountability and a means for self-improvement. Improvement of individual judges and the bench, in its entirety, is a goal that can be sustained through a well-developed and established judicial evaluation program. Therefore, it is important for the Committee to explore beyond the existing program. The Committee is to consider the feasibility of establishing evaluation programs for family support magistrates, judges who preside over high volume courts, judge trial referees, magistrates who preside over small claims sessions and motor vehicle dockets, and quasi-judicial officers such as factfinders, arbitrators and attorney trial referees. The committee is to also consider, but is not limited to, expanding the categories of respondents who evaluate trial judges to include litigants and court staff; reevaluating the criteria for evaluating judges to determine whether the criteria should be expanded or amended; assessing whether the questionnaire method is the “best method” for gathering the evaluation information and whether the comment section is to be reinstated. Furthermore, the Committee is to consider expanding information on the Judicial Branch website to include information on the judicial performance evaluation process; to review whether additional procedures can be

## **JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PROGRAM**

implemented to reassure the Bar that the necessary safeguards are in place to protect the anonymity of the respondents; to assess the existing program in comparison with the ABA Model; to reexamine the distribution guidelines, which are currently based on a “single proceeding poll,” to determine whether they should be retained or changed; and to explore the reestablishment of an Advisory Panel and its role.

To ensure the effective examination of each of the above referenced areas and to provide varied and valuable input to ensure the dynamic nature of an evaluation program, the Committee should include a diverse and broad-based representation from the bench, the bar, the executive and legislative branches of government, and the non-legal community. The Committee, therefore, should be comprised of the following members:

The Deputy Chief Court Administrator (Chair)

Chief Court Administrator, *ex officio* member;

Justices of the Supreme Court;

Judges of the Appellate Court;

Judges of the Superior Court;

A Family Support Magistrate;

Representatives from various Bar Groups, including but not limited to Connecticut Bar Association, Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association and Minority Bar Associations;

Attorneys with varied expertise in civil, criminal, family, juvenile;

Representatives from the Judicial Selection Commission and Judicial Review Council;

Representatives from the Legislative and Executive Branches of Government (e.g., Governors’ Legal Counsel);

Academia – Dean of Law School

“Non-Attorneys” – Public

Additionally, resources such as survey research experts should be made available to the Committee.

The Committee will develop outcome indicators to measure the success of each of the intermediate activity included in this project. The committee will also develop outcome

## **JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PROGRAM**

indicators that show the combined contribution of the individual activities included in this project toward attaining the specific strategy addressed and its accompanying performance measures as defined by the strategic plan.

The Committee is to submit its recommendations for changes, including expansion and or the development and implementation of new programs to the Chief Justice by April 1, 2009.

## MEDIA CAMPAIGN FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

**Goal V**                    **Accountability: The Judicial Branch will ensure a judicial system where participants can expect and experience clear, fair and consistent justice from an independent and impartial judiciary.**

Strategy:    V.2            Develop and execute a robust communications campaign and feedback process.

Activity:     V.2.2        Develop a media campaign to advance public education on the role of the Branch.

During the course of developing the Judicial Branch's strategic plan, members of the Public Service and Trust Commission considered more than a dozen ways to improve and/or execute a communications campaign designed to better educate the residents about the role and function of the judiciary. The External Affairs Division is the Judicial Branch administrative division charged with handling legislative relations, media relations, community outreach initiatives, and public education. Therefore, this Division is poised to evaluate the myriad suggestions that were proffered by the Commission based upon the input received from over 90 focus groups.

The thorough review will include consultation with the Judicial Media Committee, representatives of the media, various commissions representing different segments of Connecticut's society, youth leadership organizations, and the law libraries. In addition, the External Affairs Division will work with the Consortium for Law and Citizenship Education and the Department of Education to discuss ways to better educate Connecticut's elementary and high school students. Finally, the External Affairs Division will consult with the National Center for State Courts and other state courts to determine how other state judicial branches educate the public about their role and function.

This review will focus not only on specific suggestions already put forth, but also on other ideas that the External Affairs Division will solicit from these organizations as to how the Branch can better educate the public about the court system.

## **MEDIA CAMPAIGN FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION**

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 External Affairs Division shall report its recommendations to the Chief Court Administrator by June 2009.

## PUBLIC SERVICE EXCELLENCE (PSE)

**Goal V**                    **Accountability: The Judicial Branch will ensure a judicial system where participants can expect and experience clear, fair and consistent justice from an independent and impartial judiciary.**

Strategy:    V.1        Establish clear and consistent expectations and processes for all constituents.

Activity:     V.1.5      Instill a “How can I help you today?” attitude and culture.

This activity will be addressed through the creation of a committee whose charge it is to advance and foster a service excellence culture throughout the entire Branch. Every impression made by the Branch must be one that speaks of a professional, efficient, and effective workforce that demonstrates courtesy understanding and compassion for the concerns of everyone who interacts with the Branch. All members of the Branch should provide assistance without consideration of personal gain or favor in an environment that is devoid of bias or favoritism, guided by the values of fairness and integrity.

Existing service excellence efforts/programs will be identified, assessed for effectiveness, and woven into a Branch-wide effort reflecting a unified philosophy and a culture of commitment to the principles of exceptional service that will ultimately serve to enhance the public’s trust and confidence in this state’s judicial system.

Some of the existing programs include *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, a Superior Court Operations division-wide program promoting personal and interpersonal effectiveness, equipping employees with the tools and skills necessary to maximize effective relationships at home and at work; *Creating a Professional Public Service Image*, training for employees reinforcing the basic principles of public service; *Support Enforcement Training for Child Support Workers*, a training program adapted from a training developed by the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE), designed specifically to address the challenges faced by Connecticut’s child support staff; and *Positive Interaction, Positive Performance*, a training program for Judicial Marshals to instill an understanding of those who utilize Branch services. This last training

## **PUBLIC SERVICE EXCELLENCE (PSE)**

program has already been expanded as a result of information obtained at various focus groups.

Through a blend of education and training, expectation, assessment and accountability, strides will be made in enhancing the efforts of the Branch to meet its vision of being effective and responsive to the community it serves.

To this end, a comprehensive service excellence program will be developed that includes executive and management training that focuses on leadership, visibility, setting the example, motivating the workforce, and professional development, Branch-wide skills training of general application, unit-tailored individual training modules, training on how to utilize process improvement techniques and manage interactions with those utilizing Branch services, and employee wellness training.

Realizing that all functions within a courthouse interact with each other, service excellence efforts, whenever possible, will encompass, and influence all Judicial and non-Judicial offices that provide services to the public.

To ensure that the entirety of the Branch is moving forward in congruence with the Vision, Mission and core values, it is critical that the committee be chaired by the Chief Court Administrator or Deputy Chief Court Administrator, and that additional membership consist of:

Judges, Family Support Magistrates, Non-Judicial Officers selected by the Chief Court Administrator

Executive Directors or designees of Superior Court Operations Division, Administrative Services Division, Court Support Services Division, Information Technology Division, and External Affairs Division

Directors of the individual units within each Division

Chief State's Attorney and Chief Public Defender

## **PUBLIC SERVICE EXCELLENCE (PSE)**

It is expected that subcommittees in each Division will be formed and charged with pursuing specific units that address the Branch's commitment to the core values.

## SENIORS AND THE LAW

**Goal V**                    **Accountability: The Judicial Branch will ensure a judicial system where participants can expect and experience clear, fair and consistent justice from an independent and impartial judiciary.**

Strategy:    V.1            Establish clear and consistent expectations and processes for all constituents.

Activity:     V.1.1          Making information on the court process readily available.

                 V.1.2          Displaying expectations of court staff prominently.

The External Affairs Division organizes a *Seniors and the Law* program and has offered it since 2001. Originally, the program was offered twice a year in different regions of the state, and it featured presentations on avoiding scams, elder abuse, wills and trusts, identity theft, and your rights and responsibilities as a juror. As the program has been held in virtually all judicial districts, it is now held once per year.

To accomplish these activities, the External Affairs Division will conduct an extensive review of the *Seniors and the Law* program, including its content and the methods utilized to reach out to the elder population. Included in this review will be a study of whether the topics are pertinent, whether there is a more successful method to delivering the information, including the possibility of making available DVD's for those who are unable to travel to the event site. Another key component of the review will involve collaboration with senior organizations to get their critical input.

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 External Affairs Division shall report its recommendations to the Chief Court Administrator by March 2009.



## **WEBSITE ENHANCEMENT**

currently available on the Judicial Branch website. The Web Board will be responsible for working with and implementing the recommendations of the various committees and individuals responsible for implementing the strategic plan. It is anticipated that these recommendations may include: creating streaming video explaining various court processes, creating interactive forms, posting Superior Court opinions, expanding self-help content in the areas of the juvenile and family courts and probation, providing attorney disciplinary records, posting notices of foreclosure actions and other legal notices, as well as providing live online assistance from court personnel in multiple languages.

The more functions that can be completed online the better it is for website users. The ability to conduct online transactions is a convenience for the residents of this state and a benefit to the Judicial Branch as the budget issues make it necessary for the Branch to do more with fewer resources. The Web Board will review, in conjunction with the division or units responsible, the feasibility of offering the following transactions on-line: payment of traffic tickets, postponement of jury service, and the payment of the Client Security Fund fee.

As our state becomes increasingly multi-cultural, it is important that all residents have access to and feel comfortable utilizing the Judicial Branch website. To that end, the Web Board will collaborate with the cross-division committee established to address the needs of individuals with Limited English proficiency in order to ensure that the website content is available in the various languages spoken in this state. The website currently has a section where information is provided in Spanish and this section is in the process of being augmented.

It is equally important to ensure that the content already posted in English is understandable to the users of our website. The Web Board will conduct a thorough review of all posted content and ensure that, where possible, plain language is used.

## **WEBSITE ENHANCEMENT**

Finally, the Web Board will seek the assistance of the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, or a similar entity, to ensure that users with disabilities can access and utilize the full range of features offered on the website.

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 Web Board will submit its recommendations to the Chief Court Administrator by April 30, 2009.

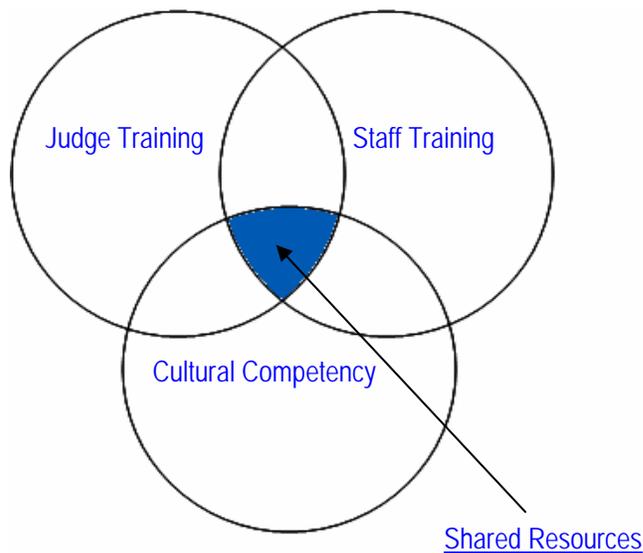
## TRAINING

**All Goals**                      **Access, Accountability, Changing Demographics, Collaboration, and Delivery of Services**

Strategy:                      Training

Activity:                      Training

These activities will be accomplished through the formation of a committee that will make recommendations to address: the enhancement and expansion of judge training, focusing on issues related to rules and procedures within the courthouse; the expansion of staff training, including rules and procedures within the courthouse with particular focus on the delivery of the highest quality service to the public; the development and delivery of comprehensive, ongoing cultural competency training for all Judicial Branch personnel; and the consolidation and coordination of the Branch's training resources.



A common thread that has been seen throughout the strategic planning process has been the need for quality, ongoing training of judges and Judicial Branch personnel. Private sector service corporations such as Disney, Marriott and Starbucks have long recognized the value that well-trained employees bring to their name, their product and their “bottom line.” These employees are often viewed as the primary factor that sets these companies

## TRAINING

apart from their competition, and ongoing, comprehensive training is regarded as a necessity, not a luxury.

The Judicial Branch is positioned similarly in this regard, with its product being justice and its “bottom line” being the trust and confidence of the public. Its most valuable resources in delivering that product and retaining that trust and confidence are the judges and staff who provide the professional expertise essential to the operation of the Branch with fairness, integrity and respect. Without their efforts, the value of “justice” would be compromised and public trust and confidence in the Branch as an institution would be lost. Ongoing, comprehensive training is as essential in the Branch as it is in the private sector.

The committee will address the training needs of judges and family support magistrates. Connecticut’s judges rotate through a variety of assignments throughout their careers and rule on a diverse assortment of civil, criminal, family and juvenile matters. Ongoing, specialized training will ensure that judges and family support magistrates acquire and maintain the breadth of knowledge necessary for them to effectively preside over matters that come before them. The committee should assess the quality and extent of judge skill training in each area of the law, (civil, family, criminal, and juvenile). In conjunction with the current Judges’ Education Committee, it should develop a proposal and implementation plan to expand and enhance skill training for judges, including but not limited to the following areas: habeas matters, e-filing, practice book rules, pleading process, orders of neglect and temporary custody, hate crimes, indicia of mental illness, mediation, technology, immigration, security and court management. It is further recommended that the committee should explore the implementation of a mentoring and executive coaching program for judges. The committee should also develop means by which to evaluate the effectiveness of judge skill training.

Knowledgeable, helpful and friendly staff are essential to develop and maintain public trust and confidence in the Judicial Branch, for the efficient operation its facilities, and to reduce the stress and anxiety of a court visit for both attorneys and members of the

## TRAINING

public. The committee should assess the quality and extent of staff skill training in each area of the court procedure, including, civil, family, criminal, and juvenile matters. It should also develop a proposal and implementation plan to expand and improve skill training for staff, including but not limited to issues related to immigration, self-represented parties, victimization, e-filing, security, Freedom of Information Act, interaction with the public, special populations, including the disabled, limited English proficiency, children and the elderly, management of people, staff management, and stress management. The committee should develop a plan to deliver foreign language (other than English) training to all Branch staff. A plan for cross-training of staff should also be developed. The committee should develop means by which to evaluate the effectiveness of staff skill training. In developing the training for staff, the committee should coordinate with the committee that is developing a comprehensive service excellence program by expanding upon existing public service excellence programs.

People who interact with the court often do so as the result of an unresolved conflict, so it is particularly important not to inflame that conflict through the misunderstanding or misinterpretation of cultural differences. In order to ensure that fair and professional treatment is provided to all who interact with the court, it is essential that judges and staff are culturally competent and sensitive to the differences of the people they serve. This committee should assess the formation of a wide-ranging and inclusive subcommittee to address the cultural competency training needs of the Branch; the development of a request for proposal that seeks ongoing, comprehensive, training for staff and judges that will establish a climate of cultural competency throughout the Branch; and the development of training regarding racial bias in the criminal justice system. It should also develop means by which to evaluate the effectiveness of cultural competency training.

The need for effective training is a common thread throughout the implementation of the Branch's strategic plan. Its application is varied and widespread and therefore must have central oversight to avoid duplication or contradiction, to allow maximization of training resources and to evaluate the effectiveness of ongoing training. This committee should

## **TRAINING**

assess the development of an overarching training plan based upon the needs of the Branch; the allocation of resources to training, and it should develop means by which to evaluate the effectiveness of all training done within the Branch.

The breadth of the committee's task is extraordinary, and it is recommended that the committee be divided into three subcommittees: one, to address the training needs of judges; a second, to address the training needs of staff; and a third, to address the cultural competency training needs of the Branch as a whole.

The Committee should be comprised of the following members:

Chief Court Administrator or designee (chair)

Chief Administrative Judges

Representative of the Judges Education Committee

Representative from the Public Service Excellence Committee

Division Executive Directors or designees

Unit Directors/Managers or designees

Representative of State's Attorney

Representative of Public Defenders

Representative of Family Support Magistrates

Representative of Judicial Branch Advisory Committee on Diversity

Representative of the Connecticut Bar Association

Representative of the Racial and Ethnic Disparity Commission

Representative of the NAACP

Representative of the Minority Bar Association

Representative of the Urban League

Representative of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission

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 April 30, 2009.