



# **State of Connecticut Judicial Branch**

## **Phase Two IMPLEMENTATION of THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

**September 2009**

**Public Service and Trust Commission**

*Hon. Alexandra D. DiPentima, Chair*

*Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers*

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## **Introduction**

In June 2008, Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers approved the Judicial Branch's first long-term Strategic Plan. The forty-page plan represents the work of the Public Service and Trust Commission in gathering information from the public, judges, the bar, Judicial Branch staff, and representatives from the Executive and Legislative branches of government, analyzing and organizing that information, and proposing strategies and goals for a plan of action for the next three to five years.

The Plan's five goals address access to justice, the state's changing demographics, the consistent delivery of services, collaboration with stakeholders and the other branches of government, and accountability. Although the goals are broad, implementing them is as direct as providing information on courthouse accessibility to a person who uses a wheelchair, translating commonly used Branch forms into languages other than English, and facilitating ongoing communication between attorneys and the courts.

Within weeks of the Strategic Plan's release, Chief Justice Rogers directed Chief Court Administrator Judge Barbara M. Quinn to develop an initial Implementation Plan consisting of thirty-six separate initiatives. Recognizing that the state's dimming economic outlook would not allow the Branch to dedicate sufficient resources to implement thirty-six initiatives concurrently, Chief Justice Rogers, Judge Quinn, Deputy Chief Court Administrator Judge Patrick L. Carroll III, and Appellate Court Judge Alexandra D. DiPentima, chair of the Public Service and Trust Commission, met to prioritize the initiatives based on a number of factors. While budgetary constraints were considered, so were the recurring themes and coming trends identified by the various stakeholders, the bench, the bar, the public, and Branch staff who participated in focus

groups, public hearings, and surveys that had been conducted during the development of the Strategic Plan.

In October 2008, Phase I of the Implementation Plan was released, focusing on twenty-seven of the original thirty-six initiatives. Those twenty-seven initiatives were assigned to a committee. Each committee was asked to examine its respective charge, to make recommendations to implement its charge and, when possible, to begin the process of implementing the recommendations. The committees were asked to report to Chief Justice Rogers by June 2009.

The various committees, and their subcommittees and workgroups included judges, family support magistrates, members of the bar, representatives from the Executive and Legislative branches, and Branch support staff who met from autumn 2008 into June 2009. The committees met numerous times during that period; some found it helpful to conduct focus groups, and others developed and utilized surveys. The committees used resources from within the Branch and state government, as well as entities from across the nation, including the New England ADA Center in Boston, the National Center for State Courts, and the New Jersey Judicial Branch, to name just a few.

Many committees determined that changes could be made, without cost to the Branch, which would yield better and more efficient services to the public. The Judicial Branch began implementing those recommendations immediately. For example, the Family Support Magistrate Rules Subcommittee drafted proposed rules to the Practice Book to be submitted to the Rules Committee of the Superior Court. The Committee on Self-Represented Parties created an informational poster and handout explaining the types of services and assistance provided by the Branch's Court Service Centers and Public Information Desks. The informational poster and

handouts are also being translated into Spanish. Additionally, the Chief Court Administrator's Legal Exchange workgroup created the Legal Exchange program which provides judges, members of the bar and courthouse staff the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas and information regularly and informally. The inaugural Legal Exchange programs were held at courthouses across the state between March and August 2009, and the programs will continue biannually in the future.

The committees' final reports to the Chief Justice contained dozens of recommendations. The full committee reports and recommendations are available at [http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne\\_Implementation\\_full.pdf](http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne_Implementation_full.pdf).

The Chief Justice reviewed every committee's recommendations with Judge Quinn, Judge Carroll, and Judge DiPentima. Chief Justice Rogers has approved the implementation of the majority of recommendations, when economically feasible, and recommended others for additional study and information-gathering. Judge Quinn and Judge Carroll have begun to consult with committee chairs and co-chairs to prioritize the recommendations. In addition, some committee chairs will meet with Branch staff to create workgroups to assist in the implementation of certain recommendations, based on such recommendations' assigned priority and available Branch resources.

This report explains Phase Two of the implementation plan. It is divided into three sections.

### **Part I: Summary of Phase One Initiatives**

The first section highlights the status and some of the recommendations from the twenty-seven Phase One initiatives. The initiatives are organized by each of the five Strategic Plan goals.

## **Part II: Phase Two Initiatives**

The second section of this report details the eleven initiatives that will be part of the next phase of the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Nine of the initiatives were identified in the development of the first phase of implementation, and two of the initiatives are new. As with each of the previous twenty-seven initiatives, these eleven initiatives are directly tied to the five goals of the Strategic Plan. Due to the current fiscal constraints under which the Branch is working, there remains one initiative, Training, which will not be addressed in this phase of implementation.

### Strategic Plan Goal: Access

Initiatives under the Strategic Plan's access to justice goal include the establishment of a Facilities (Administration) Committee, which will make recommendations to ensure that the equipment, health and environmental needs of all users of Judicial Branch facilities are met. Additionally, a Physical Access (Signs) Committee will assess the accuracy and effectiveness of existing signs at Branch facilities and directions to those facilities.

The third committee established under the access to justice goal is the Utilization of Facilities Committee. This committee will be charged with examining the feasibility of more flexible case scheduling, including the extension of hours of court operations beyond the current weekday, workday schedule. It will also conduct site evaluations to assess the use of space and make recommendations for the optimum use of space to accommodate the needs of the public and Branch staff.

### Strategic Plan Goal: Delivery of Services

Under the goal of improving delivery of services are two initiatives creating new committees: the Committee on Court Recording Monitors and Court Reporters and the Committee on Alternative Dispute Resolution.

The Committee on Court Recording Monitors and Court Reporters will make recommendations to increase access to court transcripts, improve the quality of transcripts, and improve the delivery of service provided by the Court Transcript Services Unit. The Committee on Alternative Dispute Resolution will study, assess and propose changes to the Branch's current mediation programs. It will be charged with making recommendations to improve the programs' utilization and effectiveness after considering existing scheduling processes, training for providers, and the consistency of programs across the state.

### Strategic Plan Goal: Changing Demographics

The Branch is committed to ensuring that fair and professional treatment is extended to all people and that it is sensitive to the differences of the people it serves. While the newly created Cultural Competency Committee falls under the Plan's goal of changing demographics, it also encompasses the goals of access, delivery of services, collaboration and accountability.

The committee will address the workforce's cultural competency with regards to all who come into contact with the Branch, to ensure a culture of respect, acceptance and accommodation. People who interact with the Branch include individuals from all cultures and backgrounds, including those with limited English proficiency, the elderly, the young, and people with intellectual and psychiatric disabilities. The Branch's core values of professionalism, integrity, respect and fairness mandate that the needs of all the people it serves

be addressed to ensure meaningful access to court processes and information in a culturally competent environment.

The committee will also be charged with implementing the recommendations of the Committee on Diversity in the Branch Workforce, which was formed in the first phase of implementation to promote and ensure diversity in the hiring and retention of Branch employees, and to ensure a culturally competent workforce.

Strategic Plan Goal: Accountability

Under the Strategic Plan's goal of accountability, the next phase of implementation includes the establishment of the Committee on the Utilization of Judge Trial Referees. This committee will focus on the best and most efficient way to make use of the services provided by judge trial referees, the most senior members of the bench who, although retired from daily court operations, serve on an as-needed basis to help the judicial system run efficiently.

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 Judicial Branch staff. Therefore, a Committee on Career Paths will make recommendations to increase job satisfaction and morale by establishing additional career paths and opportunities for employees within the Branch.

Finally, the Office of the Chief Court Administrator will undertake two initiatives which are connected to the goal of accountability. The Judges' New Assignment Assessment/Orientation initiative will establish a program to assist judges in their new assignments. The Assignment/Allocation (Judges) Committee will be led by the Chief Court Administrator to review the process of assigning and allocating judges to a Judicial District.

### Strategic Plan Goal: Collaboration

Collaboration with stakeholders also includes improving communication within the Judicial Branch. The Chief Court Administrator and the Deputy Chief Court Administrator will facilitate improved communication through the Information Sharing initiative. This new initiative will be implemented with the support and assistance of the bench and other key staff.

### **Part III: Strategic Plan Assessment Committee**

The third section of the phase two implementation report sets out how the Branch will assess its progress. A Strategic Plan Assessment Committee, comprised of judges, assisted by Branch administrators and staff, will review proposed performance measures for the strategies that are being employed to implement the Plan. The committee will also review the impact and effectiveness of implementation on Branch operations by using a variety of methods, including focus groups, surveys, statistics and other empirical data. Further, the committee will, when necessary, make recommendations to modify, eliminate, or add activities to further advance the goals of the Strategic Plan.

## **Conclusion**

Chief Justice Rogers began the strategic planning process in a markedly more favorable economic climate than the present. The current national economic crisis has affected how state government operates, not only in Connecticut but in the nation as a whole. One Northeast state closed its trial courts for one month in the spring of 2009. A Western state has furloughed its state workers for up to two days per month in an effort to close its enormous budget gap.

Connecticut's courts must continue to operate efficiently regardless of the economic climate. Lean economic times present not only unique challenges, but also opportunities for

improving efficiency. The Judicial Branch is committed to continuing to improve how it serves the public and ensuring that any changes made will benefit the people it serves and address budget constraints.

The operational changes being implemented Branch-wide are in direct response to and with input from the people for whom the Branch exists. It is the stated mission of the Branch to resolve matters brought before it in a fair, timely, efficient and open manner. The ongoing implementation of the initiatives will help ensure that the Branch meets its mission and increases the public's trust in the justice system.

# Part I: Summary of Phase One Initiatives

# ACCESS

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

## **Initiative: Americans with Disabilities**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Committee was charged with evaluating what resources are currently offered by the Judicial Branch to accommodate individuals with physical disabilities and the elderly; assessing accessibility to that information; and recommending more effective ways to disseminate, both online and at facilities, information to people who may need an ADA accommodation.

Among the recommendations approved by the Chief Justice for implementation are the Branch's adoption of the free, national "711" telecommunications relay service to communicate with people who have speech and hearing disabilities; performing ADA compliance checks at Branch facilities; and investigating ways to make the Branch's Internet site more user-friendly and accessible to those with differing needs. The full Committee report, containing all its recommendations, is available at

[http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne\\_Implementation\\_full.pdf](http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne_Implementation_full.pdf).

The Committee has completed its work. The Chief Justice has directed the Chief Court Administrator to appoint two individuals to oversee the implementation of the Committee's recommendations and to ensure Branch-wide consistency in the handling of ADA issues. One individual will be responsible for overseeing issues related to Judicial Branch employees. The other individual will be responsible for overseeing issues related to members of the public. Both individuals will coordinate their work with the Legal Services Unit of the Judicial Branch's Superior Court Operations Division. These individuals will assist in the development of ADA training programs for judges, family support magistrates and Branch employees, making them aware of the ADA services provided by the Branch. They will also ensure that each Branch

facility has a trained ADA coordinator and a duly assigned back-up, and that all ADA complaints are tracked to monitor emerging or consistent patterns.

The Chief Court Administrator and the Deputy Chief Court Administrator will meet biannually with the individuals appointed to oversee the implementation of the Committee's recommendations to review the progress made in the implementation process and to determine if additional areas need to be addressed.

The Committee's recommendation for the Branch to investigate the benefits of hiring a certified Computer Assisted Real Time (CART) transcription reporter has been referred to the newly created Committee on Court Recording Monitors and Court Reporters (See Part II).

## **Initiative: Limited English Proficiency**

The Committee on Limited English Proficiency is an ongoing committee that was charged with eliminating language barriers to facilities, processes and information that are faced by individuals with limited English proficiency. These individuals may be impacted in their ability to access the judicial process.

Among the recommendations approved by the Chief Justice for implementation are the Branch's translation of forms into languages other than English, giving precedence to the forms and languages that are used most frequently; expanding the scope of providing telephonic and in-person interpreting outside of the courtroom through the Telephonic Bilingual Service; making the Branch's Internet site more user-friendly for those with limited English proficiency; and using an audio recording for the advisement of Constitutional rights in Spanish, recorded by certified Spanish-language interpreters. In regard to the last recommendation, the Chief Justice expressed the importance of a judge being present when the audio recording is being played to ensure that parties hear and understand the recording. The full Committee report, containing all its recommendations, is available at

[http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne\\_Implementation\\_full.pdf](http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne_Implementation_full.pdf).

The Committee on Limited English Proficiency has already taken significant steps in gathering information that will help eliminate barriers faced by individuals with limited English proficiency. The Committee will analyze the results of the Branch-wide language assistance survey it conducted and continue its outreach efforts to individuals with limited English proficiency, particularly through the organizations that serve these individuals. Additionally, Branch-wide training on civil rights, national origin discrimination and the services available to

individuals with limited English proficiency has commenced with the judicial marshals and a schedule will be developed to reach all Branch employees.

The Committee has been directed to prioritize its recommendation list and submit it, along with a timetable for implementation, to the Chief Court Administrator by October 1, 2009.

The Committee will also submit quarterly progress reports to the Chief Court Administrator.

## **Initiative: Information/Privacy**

The Committee on Judicial Information Policy was charged with increasing public access to court processes and information, while taking steps to ensure that the Branch is using best practices to safeguard the information of those who become involved in the court process.

The Committee drafted revisions to the Connecticut Practice Book rules that were approved at the Annual Judges' Meeting in June of 2009, and will become effective on January 1, 2010. Those rules direct filers not to submit personal identifying information in documents filed with the court (new Practice Book Section 4-7) and permit a streamlined process for removing or sealing personal identifying information that appears in court documents (revised Practice Book Sections 11-20A and 25-59A). Practice Book Section 4-2(b) on signatures on pleadings was also revised to include the signer's acknowledgement of compliance with the provisions of Practice Book Section 4-7.

The Chief Justice has also approved a number of other recommendations for implementation, including the development of a comprehensive policy on access to court records; drafting a rule to provide for the submission of personal identifying or other confidential information, that is required for adjudicative purposes, in a sensitive data form not available to the public; and the development of education materials for the public regarding the public nature of materials that are filed with the court. The full Committee report, containing all its recommendations, is available at

[http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne\\_Implementation\\_full.pdf](http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne_Implementation_full.pdf).

The Committee has been directed to prioritize its recommendation list and submit it, along with a timetable for implementation, to the Chief Court Administrator by October 1, 2009. The Committee will also submit quarterly progress reports to the Chief Court Administrator.

# 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.

**Initiative: Diversity in the Branch Workforce**

The Committee on Diversity in the Branch Workforce was charged with recommending an action plan to promote and ensure diversity in the hiring and retention of Judicial Branch employees and to ensure a culturally competent workforce.

Among the Committee recommendations approved by the Chief Justice for implementation are that the Branch develop a training curriculum on cultural competency for all Branch employees; develop a system to collect and analyze data regarding staff and the population served by the Branch to determine how best to hire and retain a diverse and culturally competent workforce; establish a training program for Affirmative Action Coordinators to ensure that the interview process is conducted in a consistent manner; and promote careers within the Branch through outreach programs with high schools, business schools and colleges. The full Committee report, containing all its recommendations, is available at [http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne\\_Implementation\\_full.pdf](http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne_Implementation_full.pdf).

The Committee has completed its work. The Branch can make the greatest impact on matters related to culture and diversity by having a single committee responsible for carrying forward this Committee's recommendations to make the Branch workforce more diverse and culturally competent. The newly created Cultural Competency Committee (see Part II) will prioritize and implement the recommendations of the Committee on Diversity in the Branch Workforce. This new Committee will submit a prioritized recommendation list, along with a timetable for implementation, to the Chief Court Administrator by December 1, 2009.

# DELIVERY OF SERVICES

The Judicial Branch will provide effective, uniform and consistent delivery of services by enhancing the management of court practices.

## **Initiative: Alternatives to Court Appearances**

The Committee on Alternatives to Court Appearances was charged with exploring possibilities for expanding the use of videoconferencing and teleconferencing for court appearances in order to make judicial proceedings and services more accessible and to promote efficient and cost effective case management.

The Committee developed a host of recommendations regarding the use of teleconferencing and videoconferencing for various proceedings in civil, criminal, family, juvenile and appellate matters. For example, the Committee recommends videoconferencing for a variety of inmate proceedings, such as arraignments conducted between the holding area of a courthouse and a courtroom, modification hearings with individuals incarcerated in an out-of-state or federal facility, pre-sentence investigation interviews between inmates and probation officers, and sentence review hearings. In order to provide these services, the Committee recommends upgrading the technology in the courts and administrative offices, purchasing new equipment, and adopting new rules and revising existing rules to allow for its recommendations.

The Chief Justice generally approved the concepts contained in the recommendations with the understanding that many can only be implemented after further discussion with the chief administrative judges, chief clerks, Chief State's Attorney, the Division of Public Defender Services, and members of the criminal bar.

The full Committee report, containing all its recommendations, is available at [http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne\\_Implementation\\_full.pdf](http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne_Implementation_full.pdf).

A permanent standing committee on videoconferencing and teleconferencing will be established to continue the work of the Committee on Alternatives to Court Appearances and to create a prioritized plan for implementation.

The prioritized plan, along with a timetable for implementation, will be submitted to the Chief Court Administrator by October 1, 2009. The standing committee will also be responsible for submitting quarterly progress reports to the Chief Court Administrator.

## **Initiative: Case Management (Civil)**

This initiative involves examining issues associated with case management practices and procedures concerning the civil docket. It was referred to the Civil Commission, an ongoing commission whose existence pre-dates the Strategic Plan, to ensure that civil case management practices and procedures are designed to address the changing numbers, types and complexity of cases, incorporate new technology, and serve all who interact with the courts. The Civil Commission formed two subcommittees, Case Processing and Discovery, to address specific areas of its charge.

The Civil Commission will continue its work in case processing and discovery over the coming year. The Chief Justice has also requested that the Commission explore the concept of individual calendaring for judges along with differentiated case management.

The Commission will be asked to submit periodic reports to the Chief Court Administrator on the status of its findings.

## **Initiative: Complex Litigation**

The Complex Litigation Committee was one of the first committees formed as a result of information gathered by the Public Service and Trust Commission in its efforts to develop the Branch's Strategic Plan. The Committee was charged with reviewing and evaluating the Complex Litigation program, including the program's criteria and standards, and the identification of possible areas of improvement.

Among the Committee recommendations approved by the Chief Justice for implementation are the establishment of a means for the bar to provide input on the selection of judges who hear Complex Litigation cases; streamlining the application process for case referrals to the Complex Litigation docket; developing information sheets that more clearly describe the criteria used to determine whether a case is eligible for complex litigation; extending a judge's assignment to the Complex Litigation docket to allow the judge to manage cases through trial in accordance with the principles of an individual calendar method of case management; and the feasibility of assigning one or more judge trial referees to be available to hear Complex Litigation matters, when necessary. The full Committee report, containing all its recommendations, is available at

[http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne\\_Implementation\\_full.pdf](http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne_Implementation_full.pdf).

A small workgroup consisting of the Chief Administrative Judge for Civil Matters and the Deputy Director of Civil will prioritize and implement the Committee's recommendations, many of which are in the process of being implemented. Some will be referred to other committees and commissions of the Strategic Plan for further consideration. A few, unfortunately, cannot be implemented, due to the severe budgetary constraints under which the Judicial Branch must currently operate.

## **Initiative: Criminal Practice**

The Criminal Practice Commission, an ongoing commission, was charged with examining and evaluating a wide range of issues associated with the criminal justice system. These issues were identified in the various focus groups conducted during the development of the Strategic Plan.

The Commission made a number of recommendations that were approved by the Chief Justice, and implementation of those has already begun. On January 1, 2010, several revisions to Practice Book rules concerning discovery, and a new rule, also concerning discovery, will take effect. After months of discussion and compromise, the Commission was able to craft the rule revisions and new rule, which were ultimately approved by the Rules Committee of the Superior Court and by the judges at their Annual Meeting in 2009. The changes were the result of the Commission's efforts to resolve significant and long-standing disputes between the state's attorneys and defense attorneys in the area of discovery.

In addition to the Practice Book changes, the Commission has recommended ongoing dialogue with bar groups regarding attorney input into the reappointment process of judges. This important outreach work is being facilitated through the Commission's Civility and Professionalism Committee.

At the direction of the Chief Justice, the Criminal Practice Commission also created a Committee to examine habeas corpus practices and procedures. Among the habeas issues that the Chief Justice directed the Commission and its Habeas Committee to explore is the feasibility of specifically designating judges as "habeas judges" who would be assigned to hear habeas corpus matters throughout the state rather than being assigned to a single district to hear such matters. The Habeas Committee is examining a number of other issues, including the possibility

of decentralized habeas hearings throughout the state and revisions to the Practice Book to discourage the serial filing of habeas petitions.

The Commission has also formed an Immigration Committee to begin assessing the manner in which the Branch interacts with the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency.

The Criminal Practice Commission will continue its work over the coming year by implementing its existing recommendations and making new recommendations. The Commission will be asked to submit periodic reports to the Chief Court Administrator.

## **Initiative: Family Support Magistrate Rules**

The Family Support Magistrate Rules Subcommittee is a subcommittee of the Family Commission. The Subcommittee was charged with developing rules for the Family Support Magistrate Division. The Family Support Magistrate Division was created in 1986 in response to federal law that requires each state to provide expedited hearings for the establishment, enforcement and modification of IV-D child support and spousal support cases.

Establishing Practice Book rules is necessary to create greater efficiency, consistency and uniformity of procedures across the state in those cases heard before family support magistrates.

The Subcommittee conducted a comprehensive review of the Practice Book to determine which rules should apply to family support magistrate cases and to identify areas where new rules should be drafted. Areas addressed in the proposed rules drafted by the Subcommittee include discovery, automatic orders, case management, depositions and the issuing of subpoenas.

The Subcommittee has completed a draft of rules for the Family Support Magistrate Division, which has been submitted to the Family Commission for review. Upon final approval of the proposed rules by the Family Commission, the draft will be forwarded to the Chief Court Administrator and ultimately to the Rules Committee of the Superior Court for action.

## **Initiative: Jury**

The Jury Committee was charged with recommending new approaches and initiatives for the Branch's overall juror system, from the initial contact through the utilization of jurors for service and beyond.

Among the Committee's recommendations approved by the Chief Justice for implementation was the Branch's substitution of the term "jury service" for "jury duty." The term "jury service" is meant to reinforce the aspect of public service and recognize the very important contributions that jurors make to the court system and their communities at large. Other Committee recommendations approved by the Chief Justice include improving juror utilization by implementing techniques to reduce the daily number of requested jurors; maintaining and updating forms, publications and the Judicial Branch website, and employing video and orientation materials to provide information regarding jury service; expanding and updating information about the rights of employed and unemployed jurors; improving juror comfort in court by ensuring comfortable seating and quiet waiting areas; and providing free counseling to jurors who report mental health challenges as a result of their jury service. The full Committee report, containing all its recommendations, is available at

[http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne\\_Implementation\\_full.pdf](http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne_Implementation_full.pdf).

The chairs of this Committee will create a workgroup, which will include the Judicial Branch Jury Administrator and a member of the bar, to prioritize and implement the Committee's recommendations. The Chief Justice is requesting that this workgroup conduct further research on more active judicial involvement of the voir dire process. They will also work with the External Affairs Division to promote to the public and to the bar the improvements made to jury service.

The prioritized plan, along with a timetable for implementation, will be submitted to the Chief Court Administrator by October 1, 2009. The workgroup will also be responsible for submitting quarterly progress reports to the Chief Court Administrator.

## **Initiative: Problem Solving in Family Matters**

The Problem Solving in Family Matters Committee was charged with assessing the applicability of a problem-solving justice model to child support dockets for the Family Support Magistrate Division.

The Chief Justice approved many of the Committee's recommendations for implementation and because many of those involve the Department of Correction (DOC), it is important that DOC be involved in the implementation process. Some of the recommendations involving DOC include requiring its intake and assessment to include a self report of possible child support obligations; collaboration between DOC and the Branch's Support Enforcement Services Unit (SES) to allow SES to initiate communication regarding modifications while an individual is incarcerated; development by DOC and SES of a process for addressing capiases while an individual is incarcerated; and including a provision for fatherhood program participation or parenting education for inmates with IV-D child support cases in every Offender Accountability Plan.

In addition to the recommendations involving DOC, some of the other approved recommendations include establishing a working group to develop a pilot program to formally refer parties from the family support magistrate docket to existing resources; developing a mechanism to improve case scheduling with an awareness of cases scheduled in other courts; and providing scheduling information on the Judicial Branch's Internet site to increase awareness, attendance and compliance. The full Committee report, containing all its recommendations, is available at [http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne\\_Implementation\\_full.pdf](http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne_Implementation_full.pdf).

The Committee will prioritize its recommendation list and submit it, along with a timetable for implementation, to the Chief Court Administrator by October 1, 2009. It will thereafter submit quarterly reports.

## **Initiative: Self-Represented Parties**

The Committee on Self-Represented Parties was charged with examining ways to improve the clarity of court procedures and information so that individuals without legal representation may effectively participate in the court process.

Among the Committee's recommendations approved by the Chief Justice for implementation are the development of hand-outs explaining the short calendar marking procedures; generating a letter to self-represented parties to provide contact information for local legal aid and lawyer referral services, and marketing other available resources, including services provided by the court. Others include expanding access to commonly used forms and publications in non-judicial facilities, such as public libraries and senior citizen centers; and creating instructional videos and easy-to-follow checklists to guide self-represented parties through some of the basic procedures involved in civil and family litigation. It was further recommended that all print material, whether existing or new brochures, forms and other publications, be written in plain language and translated into Spanish. The full Committee report, containing all its recommendations, is available at

[http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne\\_Implementation\\_full.pdf](http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne_Implementation_full.pdf).

The chairs of this Committee will create a small workgroup to prioritize and implement the Committee's recommendations. Many of the recommendations will be implemented using the Judicial Branch's internal resources. The workgroup should consult with various stakeholders in developing its prioritized list. Emphasis should be placed on developing a pilot program for advice days provided by volunteers from the bar. This workgroup should also consult with the bar to examine, in depth, the concept of unbundling legal services and make

recommendations as a result of its findings. In addition, the concerns expressed by the Committee on Self-Represented Parties' minority report should be taken into consideration.

The prioritized plan, along with a timetable for implementation, will be submitted to the Chief Court Administrator by October 1, 2009. The workgroup will also be responsible for submitting quarterly progress reports to the Chief Court Administrator.

## **Initiative: Small Claims**

The Bench/Bar Centralized Small Claims Committee was formed to study the small claims court and to make recommendations for its future success. The Committee was charged with reviewing Practice Book rules, recommending uniform practices throughout the state, considering legislative proposals to improve the small claims process, and examining whether any changes should be made in the small claims process.

Among the Committee's recommendations approved by the Chief Justice for implementation are an update to the Judicial Branch Internet site to include tutorials on how to file a small claims case and improving the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section related to small claims matters; permitting the voluntary use of the bulk e-filing system; permitting all fees to be paid by credit card; and revising the "Small Claims Process" pamphlet to make it more user-friendly and available in Spanish. The full Committee report, containing all its recommendations, is available at

[http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne\\_Implementation\\_full.pdf](http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne_Implementation_full.pdf).

The Committee has completed its work. The Superior Court Operations Division will create a small workgroup, consisting of a cross-section of members from the original committee, to prioritize the Bench/Bar Centralized Small Claims Committee recommendation list and submit it, along with a timetable for implementation, to the Chief Court Administrator by October 1, 2009. The new workgroup will also be responsible for submitting quarterly progress reports to the Chief Court Administrator.

## **Initiative: Technology Plan**

The Judicial Branch's Information Technology Division (ITD) was charged with developing a three-year technology plan that addresses infrastructure requirements, seeking to ensure that the technical infrastructure is in place to support ongoing Branch operations and any new initiatives anticipated over the next three to five years.

The ITD developed a long-term Technology Plan, which has been approved by the Chief Justice. Some of the recommendations in the Plan include upgrading the network infrastructure of the Judicial Branch Data Center; implementing a videoconferencing solution in each region of the state; purchasing and installing additional Alternate Processing Center (APC) Phase II Servers and Software for mission-critical applications; and accelerating the "For the Record" (FTR) statewide deployment. The full ITD report, containing all its recommendations, is available at [http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne\\_Implementation\\_full.pdf](http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne_Implementation_full.pdf).

The ITD had planned to begin initiating five of their recommendations in July, 2009: performing data center router and switch upgrades, performing a network security audit, expanding the use of virtual servers, upgrading/replacing all field switches and the implementation of statewide videoconferencing. Due to the fiscal constraints under which the Judicial Branch is working, however, the ITD has not been able to implement the recommendations in a comprehensive way. The ITD has been replacing routers and switches on an emergency basis when they break and, when funding is available, proactively replacing one or two. Similarly, as funding is available, the ITD is replacing old, non-supported servers with new virtual servers.

The Executive Director of ITD and the Deputy Chief Court Administrator will devise a plan for implementation of the recommendations as funding becomes available. The Executive Director of ITD will provide quarterly progress reports to the Chief Court Administrator.

## **Initiative: Uniformity of Court Procedures**

The Committee on Uniformity of Court Procedures was charged with examining practices and procedures in civil, housing, family and juvenile courts to facilitate the uniformity of practice Branch-wide.

Among the recommendations approved by the Chief Justice for implementation are the adoption of uniform civil Courtside and Jury Trial Management Orders and Land Use Appeals Standing Orders; adopting uniform family Case Management Orders, Pretrial Orders and Trial Management Orders; developing a three-phase process for civil jury trials; developing a uniform special proceedings process modeled after the procedures currently in place in Hartford, New Britain and Waterbury; and establishing a procedure for monitoring and posting any changes to the standing orders to ensure that accurate, current information is provided on the Judicial Branch website and made available to the public at all times. The full Committee report, containing all its recommendations, is available at

[http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne\\_Implementation\\_full.pdf](http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne_Implementation_full.pdf).

The Chief Justice and the Office of the Chief Court Administrator will meet with the chief administrative judges to communicate the importance of these recommendations. In order to ensure uniformity of procedures from courthouse to courthouse, the Office of the Chief Court Administrator will establish a mechanism to monitor compliance with the uniform standing orders.

The Committee has completed its work. The Chief Court Administrator will prioritize the Committee's recommendations and devise a plan for implementation throughout the Judicial Branch.

# 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.

## **Initiative: Chief Court Administrator/Attorney General**

This initiative involves periodic meetings between the Office of the Chief Court Administrator and representatives from the Office of the Attorney General. Both entities frequently interact with each other in the administration of justice, and therefore, ongoing communication between them is beneficial.

In a meeting conducted in the fall of 2008, the participants made several recommendations, such as Branch-sponsored training for the assistant attorneys general in online services including scheduling, short calendar, judicial notices and case detail information. The full report, containing all the recommendations, is available at

[http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne\\_Implementation\\_full.pdf](http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne_Implementation_full.pdf).

The Chief Justice approved the recommendations and believes the discussions are an invaluable resource in improving communication between the Branch and the Office of the Attorney General. Implementation of the recommendations made at the first meeting is to be an ongoing process, and the meetings will continue over the coming year. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 2009.

## **Initiative: Chief Court Administrator/Clerks and the Bar**

The purpose of this initiative is to improve communication and enhance the relationship between and among the clerks' offices, local bar associations and members of the bar as a whole. The Chief Justice established a small workgroup to develop what is now called the Legal Exchange Program.

The Legal Exchange Program involves periodic meetings held in every Judicial District between judges, court staff, and members of the bar to discuss local issues, provide information about new statutes, rules or policies, and address local problems that may arise. To enhance the program, the workgroup recommends inviting participation from other administrative units within the Branch that provide services which impact the relationship between the court and the bar, such as the Court Support Services Division's Family Services. The workgroup also recommends scheduling future programs on specific topics based on requests from the bar to allow for detailed presentations to smaller groups.

The Chief Justice approved all of the recommendations and implementation has already begun either by the workgroup or by referring recommendations to other Branch committees or commissions for implementation. The full workgroup report, containing all its recommendations, is available at

[http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne\\_Implementation\\_full.pdf](http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne_Implementation_full.pdf).

The program has proven to be an invaluable resource for the Judicial Branch in improving communication and collaboration with the bar. The workgroup will continue the Legal Exchange Program and submit any additional recommendations to the Chief Court Administrator. Future meetings will focus on educating the bar on e-filing and e-services.

## **Initiative: Criminal Justice Information System**

The Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) Governing Board, created by state statute, is representative of the collaboration among the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches of government. The statute mandates 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” central to the criminal justice system.

The Deputy Chief Court Administrator chairs the CJIS Governing Board with the Lieutenant Governor, and the Judicial Branch is committed to the success of this initiative.

# 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.

## **Initiative: Civility/Decorum in the Courts**

The Chief Justice, Chief Court Administrator, Deputy Chief Court Administrator and others met with representatives from the Connecticut Bar Association's Standing Committee on Professionalism in late 2008 to discuss how collaboration between the bench and the bar would enhance civility and courtroom decorum. As a result of that initial meeting, the Branch has undertaken a number of steps to improve and increase collaboration to benefit not only members of the bench and bar, and Branch employees, but also the public and all participants in the judicial system.

That collaboration has continued and will continue, as the Public Service and Trust Commission Chair, Appellate Court Judge Alexandra D. DiPentima, is now a member of the Bar's Standing Committee on Professionalism. The Association has also invited Judge Salvatore C. Agati to become a member of the Standing Committee to continue this valuable exchange.

Additionally, the Chief Justice has accepted the Standing Committee's invitation to meet with its representative and the deans of area law schools to discuss the need for law students to understand and respect the need for civility and decorum in the courts as a matter of course. The Branch will continue to seek input from various Branch committees, such as the Executive Committee, the Civil Commission, and the Criminal Practice Commission to identify ways to enhance civility and decorum.

Civility and decorum are not limited to members of the bar and the bench. The Branch recognizes that many participants in the court process may not understand or appreciate what is expected when they appear. It must be emphasized that the best model for civility and decorum is the conduct of members of the bench, the bar, and Branch employees. The Branch is

committed to ensuring that Branch staff understands, as do members of the bench and the bar, that the respect shown to the bench and the court must be extended to all who enter our doors.

## **Initiative: Courthouse Observation and Simulation Team**

The Courthouse Observation and Simulation Team was formed to address consistency in the quality of the delivery of services from one courthouse to another. The team is composed of more than two dozen Branch employees from the various units within the Superior Court Operations Division. The team visits courthouses and Support Enforcement Services offices throughout the state as if they were members of the public.

Members assess the overall impression that the Branch makes on the public through in-person visits and telephone calls to various courthouses and auxiliary offices. By observing the operations, looking at the physical facilities and interacting with staff though as a member of the public, the team is able to note any opportunities for improvement and to recognize the quality services that are being provided.

The Branch's values mandate that each member of the public who enters a Judicial Branch facility be treated with respect and dignity. The team's use of active and passive observations seeks to ensure that the Branch has made these values a part of its culture. Following each observation, the team meets with the Executive Director of Superior Court Operations to review its findings.

The team will continue its observations and report its findings. The team plans on completing its first round of visits to each Judicial District by early 2010. The team will then begin to do follow-up visits to track the progress made.

The Chief Court Administrator will meet with the administrative judges to inform them of the program's goals and to discuss individual observation results.

## **Initiative: Court Security**

The Court Security Committee was established as a permanent committee charged with providing recommendations on security within Branch facilities and emergency preparedness planning. In order to ensure a safe and secure environment in Branch facilities, it is important that the different stakeholders who interact within Branch facilities are represented on the Committee. Accordingly, in addition to the Deputy Chief Court Administrator, other judges, Branch employees, and judicial marshals, the Committee's membership includes the Department of Correction, local law enforcement personnel, the Office of the Chief Public Defender, the Office of the Chief State's Attorney and members of the bar.

The Committee has begun its work by reviewing the Branch's Emergency Response Plan and its Continuity of Operations Plan. The Committee has also looked at the present state of security within the Branch, with a focus on the transportation of prisoners, the nationally accredited Judicial Marshal Academy, and the Branch's Security Audit Unit, which assesses whether judicial marshals comply with statutes, policies and procedures.

The Committee has also created a subcommittee charged with updating and revising the Branch's Security Manual, which was last updated in 1995. The revised Security Manual will highlight the major aspects of current security programs and Branch policies and procedures.

The Committee will submit quarterly progress reports to the Chief Court Administrator.

## **Initiative: Expectations of the Public**

The Committee on Expectations of the Public was charged with examining and recommending ways to define and communicate clear and consistent information about expectations and court processes for all who enter Branch facilities or interact with the Branch.

Among the Committee's recommendations approved by the Chief Justice for implementation are the revision of all Branch publications and online information to ensure that the material for the public is understandable for court users; publishing brochures, some of which are in the process of being produced, in the areas of criminal/motor vehicle matters, housing, small claims and support enforcement that provide information on what an individual can expect when going to court for each of these proceedings; reviewing, updating and expanding the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) page on the Branch's website, making them available in multiple languages and at multiple locations; and making information available to the public in multiple formats. The full Committee report, containing all its recommendations, is available at [http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne\\_Implementation\\_full.pdf](http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne_Implementation_full.pdf).

The Committee has completed its work. The Chief Court Administrator will prioritize the Committee's recommendations and devise a plan for implementation.

## **Initiative: External Affairs Advisory Board – Speakers’ Bureau, Media Campaign for Public Education; Seniors and the Law**

The External Affairs Advisory Board was charged with increasing the public’s understanding of the role and function of the Branch by enhancing the Speakers’ Bureau both in terms of the groups that participate and the topics that are covered, executing a communications campaign to better educate the public about the judiciary, and evaluating the Seniors and the Law program to determine its effectiveness and utility.

The Chief Justice approved many of the Committee’s recommendations for implementation, including impressing upon judges the importance of speaking to the public about the Branch’s mission; expanding the Speakers’ Bureau to include family support magistrates and Branch employees; working with local schools to provide resources and opportunities for judges to speak with students at their schools and to have students visit a courthouse; and suggesting to the Probate Court Administrator that the Probate Court take over the Seniors and the Law program since most issues affecting seniors are addressed in the probate court system. The full Advisory Board report, containing all its recommendations, is available at [http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne\\_Implementation\\_full.pdf](http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne_Implementation_full.pdf).

The Chief Court Administrator and the Deputy Chief Court Administrator will work with the Advisory Board to develop talking points and gather noteworthy information and statistics for judges to utilize when speaking to community organizations or members of the public. Judges and community organizations will also be given the opportunity to suggest specific topics of interest. The Advisory Board must develop recommendations to publicize the availability of the Speakers’ Bureau.

The Advisory Board has been directed to prioritize its recommendation list and submit it, along with a timetable for implementation, to the Chief Court Administrator by October 1, 2009.

The Advisory Board will also be responsible for submitting quarterly progress reports to the Chief Court Administrator.

## **Initiative: Judicial Performance Evaluation Program**

The Judicial Performance Evaluation Program Committee was directed to examine the Branch's existing judicial performance evaluation program, and consider the feasibility of establishing evaluation programs for judges who preside over high volume courts, family support magistrates, judge trial referees, small claims and motor vehicle magistrates, and quasi-judicial officials.

The Chief Justice generally approved the concepts contained in the recommendations with the understanding that many can only be implemented after further discussion with the bench, members of the bar and the legislature. The recommendations include using the same standard to evaluate the performance of a judge trial referee as is used to evaluate a judge doing the same work; the development of an attorney evaluation questionnaire that requests information about a judge's decisiveness, courtesy and patience during proceedings; and evaluating Supreme Court Justices and Appellate Court Judges, among other items. The full Committee report, containing all its recommendations, is available at [http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne\\_Implementation\\_full.pdf](http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne_Implementation_full.pdf).

The Chief Justice has directed the Chief Court Administrator to establish a permanent standing committee that will include members of the bar and the legislature to review and implement the Committee's recommendations. The Chief Justice has stated that the work of this new committee will be one of the Branch's priorities for the coming year.

## **Initiative: Public Service Excellence (PSE)**

The Public Service Excellence (PSE) workgroup was charged with developing methods to advance and foster a service excellence culture throughout the entire Branch.

The workgroup recommends introducing new service excellence principles that will steer behavior, guide expectations, and become the foundation for every service excellence program or activity within the Branch.

To that end, the workgroup recommends developing a new Branch-wide public service excellence program with a curriculum for management and staff. The management curriculum reinforces that managerial staff are agents for change in transforming the work environment. They will participate in a workshop, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*®, which is designed to maximize their potential for success in the workplace, followed by a program that will reinforce learning and explore specific examples and opportunities for applying the *7 Habits* at work.

The new service excellence principles will be the basis for two additional programs for management and staff. Managerial staff will participate in a workshop that integrates the previously mentioned programs with fundamentals of effective leadership, including focusing on visibility in their offices, setting the example, and managing everyday interactions and situations. Staff will participate in a workshop that is tailored to the business of their Division or unit.

The Chief Justice approved the recommendations and directed the workgroup to create a prioritized plan for implementation. The prioritized plan, along with a timetable for implementation, is to be submitted to the Chief Court Administrator by October 1, 2009. The workgroup will also be responsible for submitting quarterly progress reports to the Chief Court Administrator.

## **Initiative: Website Enhancement**

The Judicial Branch Web Board, a pre-existing operational committee, was charged with reviewing the content of the Branch's website, ensuring adequate site navigation, and enhancing the website to allow users to conduct business online.

The Web Board made several recommendations that were approved by the Chief Justice for implementation, including the addition of the ability to view online case information for matters on appeal; adding the ability to postpone jury service via the website; developing self-help information in the areas of juvenile, family and probation, and producing streaming videos for additional self-help; enhancing e-filing services capability; and improving website navigation and design. The full Committee report, containing all its recommendations, is available at [http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne\\_Implementation\\_full.pdf](http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/PhaseOne_Implementation_full.pdf).

In addition, a large number of recommendations from virtually all of the Phase I committees involve enhancements to the Branch's website, and the Web Board's involvement is critical to their implementation. Some of these recommendations include the newly launched Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) homepage accessible from the Judicial Branch website; providing greater access to court forms and self-help publications for self-represented parties; and expanding Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and other online information to assist individuals with what to expect when entering the courthouse.

The Web Board is to continue its work not only by implementing its recommendations, but also by working with individuals from the various Strategic Plan initiatives and new committees/workgroups to implement their recommendations. The Web Board will also submit quarterly progress reports to the Chief Court Administrator.

# Part II: Phase Two Initiatives

## 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:                Improve physical access to Judicial Branch facilities.

                              Improve the utilization of Judicial Branch facilities.

Activity:                 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 Branch facilities are met. Courts and other 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 the 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 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 Americans with Disabilities Act (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 (i.e., expanded videoconferencing, 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 the 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 following people and resources should be consulted, particularly during the long term planning stages: the bar; the State Department of Public Works; the Office of Policy and Management; the Legislature; ADA and Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) specialists; construction specialists and architects; and fire and health code officials.

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

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 Spring 2010.

## 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:                      Improve physical access to Judicial Branch facilities.

Activity:                        To increase appropriate signs.

                                      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 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 they currently exist 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 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 subcommittee should be formed with the Branch's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinators to review these codes and determine applicable standards

for the signs, maps, 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 Committee on Limited English Proficiency for comment. The committee will submit its recommendations to the Chief Court Administrator, who will then invite the input of the administrative judges of each Judicial District.

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 Spring 2010.

## 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:            Improve the utilization of Judicial Branch facilities.

Activity:            To examine more flexible scheduling of cases.

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

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 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 the 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 evaluation of each Branch facility 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

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 subcommittee 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 (Administration) 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 renovation of facilities.

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 Spring 2010.

## **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:                      Increase the utilization and effectiveness of Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR).

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

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

   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, 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 the Branch's Information Technology Division and the Superior Court Operations Division 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 should be a separate mediation docket, and whether judges should be allocated to "mediation only" assignment dockets.

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 Spring 2010.

## 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:                      Improve cooperation and information sharing within the Branch.

Activity:                        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 quarterly meetings with the Executive Committee. 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 judges 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.

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 judges 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.

## 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: Assess policies/processes to ensure appropriate judicial discretion.

Activity: Reassess support resources and workloads across the Branch.

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, reviewing any existing 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 the Branch's needs are being met.

Issues surrounding the merit of judges' specializing in certain areas of the law requires in-depth study and input from various sources. A review of current methods employed by other jurisdictions in this area 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 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 will submit its recommendations by Spring 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:                      Establish clear and consistent expectations and processes for all constituents.

Activity:                        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's 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 Human Resource 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 additional resources because they are cost effective, practical and of value to the Branch and its employees.

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 Spring 2010.

## 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:                    Assess policies/processes to ensure appropriate judicial discretion.

Activity:                     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 should 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.

## Utilization of Judge Trial Referees

**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:                    Assess the processes and policies for the method of annual designation of state referees to serve as judge trial referees by the Chief Justice to ensure appropriate utilization, and develop policy recommendations based on the assessment.

Activity:                    Determine whether there is a need for a more formalized evaluation process for judge trial referees to assist in the annual designation process.

Examine the current scheduling system of judge trial referees to maximize their utilization.

Determine how judge trial referees can most benefit from additional technology-related training.

The Committee on the Utilization of Judge Trial Referees was created by the Chief Justice to address and make policy recommendations for the effective utilization of judge trial referees, a uniquely talented and experienced group of judges who provide the Judicial Branch and the people of the state with invaluable judicial service. Effective utilization of judge trial referees can and does enhance the services provided by Connecticut's courts. This Committee, which will be co-chaired by a judge and a judge trial referee, will be charged with examining a wide range of issues.

The Judicial Performance Evaluation Program Committee has recommended an expansion of current evaluation practices for all members of the bench, from the Supreme Court to the Appellate Court and the Superior Court, as well as family support magistrates and the magistrates who preside over the small claims and motor vehicle dockets.

The new Committee on the Utilization of Judge Trial Referees will consider the four recommendations of the Judicial Performance Evaluation Program Committee's Subcommittee on Evaluating Judge Trial Referees. Those recommendations include similarly evaluating the performance of judge trial referees with that of judges doing similar work and discussing, in a timely manner, concerns or issues that may arise as a result of the evaluation.

The new committee should develop recommendations for a formalized, internal evaluation process that would buttress the annual designation process by the Chief Justice for judge trial referees. The committee can and should review what processes other states use and what guidelines they have developed to evaluate judge trial referees, as well as suggested guidelines from the American Bar Association and other bar associations.

The committee also should examine and make recommendations about whether peer review and performance evaluations by other judges or attorneys would be a useful tool in the proper and accurate evaluation of a judge trial referee's abilities. Such evaluations may be useful but the committee should consider determining whether there should also be procedures in place to allow judge trial referees input into the process.

With utilizing judge trial referees in a manner that best serves the needs of the Judicial Branch as the principle factor in its assessments, the committee should also evaluate the current scheduling process, including the feasibility of aggregate scheduling within the scope of statutory compensation requirements, and the availability of the judge trial referee and the needs of the Administrative Judge in each Judicial District.

The committee will also assess ways of ensuring that judge trial referees have access to the same kinds of ongoing legal education opportunities available to other judges, including any specialized training to encourage and facilitate judge trial referees' access to and use of emerging technologies.

Judge trial referees bring a depth and breadth of knowledge and experience to the Bench, and this committee should consider the manner in which those areas of expertise and strength should inform the assignment process.

## Cultural Competency

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

Strategy:                      Create a culturally competent environment within the Judicial Branch.

Activity:                      To develop and provide training to judges, family support magistrates and Branch staff on cultural competency.

To prioritize and implement the recommendations of the Committee on Diversity in the Branch Workforce.

To develop and provide training to judges, family support magistrates and Branch staff to help them recognize and appropriately accommodate people with intellectual and psychiatric disabilities.

These activities will be accomplished through the establishment of a cross-division committee that will develop a comprehensive, ongoing training curriculum on cultural competency for every Branch employee. The population served by the Branch cuts across all racial, ethnic, cultural, intellectual and socio-economic lines. In order to ensure that fair and professional treatment is provided to all who interact with the Branch, it is essential that all judges, family support magistrates and staff are sensitive to the differences of the people they serve. When an individual enters a Branch facility, he or she must be assured that they will be treated in accordance with the Branch's core values of fairness, integrity, professionalism and respect.

Establishing an environment within the Branch that is sensitive to the differences of those who use the court system is necessary. Accordingly, the committee should assess the training needs of the Branch and develop an ongoing, comprehensive training program addressing cultural competency. The training program developed must be implemented on a Branch-wide basis, including every judge, family support magistrate and all Branch staff. In order to ensure that the curriculum is effective, the committee should develop a means in which it can evaluate its impact.

The Judicial Branch can make the greatest impact on matters related to culture and diversity by having a single committee address the issues. Therefore, the existing Judicial Branch Advisory Committee on Diversity will be integrated into the Cultural Competency Committee. In addition, the recommendations developed by the Committee on Diversity in the Branch Workforce, which was created to recommend an action plan to promote and ensure diversity in the hiring and retention of Branch employees and to ensure a culturally competent workforce, will be forwarded to the Cultural Competency Committee to prioritize and implement. The Cultural Competency Committee will submit the prioritized recommendation list from the Committee on Diversity in the Branch Workforce, along with a timetable for implementation, to the Chief Court Administrator by December 1, 2009. The committee will also provide quarterly progress reports on the implementation of the recommendations from the Committee on Diversity in the Branch Workforce to the Chief Court Administrator.

One of the initiatives not addressed in the first phase of the Implementation Plan related to intellectual and psychiatric disabilities. This initiative will be addressed by the Cultural Competency Committee. People with intellectual and psychiatric disabilities face many challenges in participating in court processes and in obtaining and comprehending information about those processes. The committee will define the obstacles faced by those individuals with intellectual and psychiatric disabilities who try to access the court system and examine what steps are being taken nationally to address those issues. The committee will develop a training program for judges, family support magistrates and Branch staff, which should address how to recognize, respond to, assist and accommodate people with intellectual and psychiatric disabilities.

This committee will be chaired by Appellate Court Judge Richard A. Robinson and is comprised of a cross-section of judges, a family support magistrate, Branch staff and members of the bar.

The committee is to submit its recommendations to the Chief Court Administrator by Spring 2010.

## **Court Recording Monitors and Court Reporters**

**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:                      Improve the quality of transcripts.  
  
   Improve the delivery of services provided by the Court Transcript Services Unit.

Activity:                        To examine the current training provided to court recording monitors and court reporters.

These activities will be accomplished through the formation of a committee that will make recommendations to increase access to transcripts, to improve the quality of the transcripts and to improve the delivery of service provided by the Court Transcript Services Unit. The Judicial Branch's Court Transcript Services Unit is responsible for making verbatim recordings of most court proceedings and producing typed transcripts of these recordings upon request. Despite significant improvements in technology, there has been little change in the statutory and procedural rules that govern the Court Transcript Services Unit. As a result, the Court Transcript Services Unit is constrained by historic processes and procedures that have little utility in a modern court and impede efforts to operate in an environment characterized by greater demand for service and increased access to transcripts.

The Court Transcript Services Unit employs approximately 250 individuals. More than eighty percent of these employees are court recording monitors, who use audio recording equipment. The remaining employees are court reporters, who create the record by using stenographic machines. The committee should examine staff needs to ensure that court reporters and court recording monitors are properly supervised, effectively allocated and adequately trained.

The committee should assess the current training provided by the Judicial Branch and make recommendations for its expansion. The committee should also examine the need for

certification of court recording monitors and determine the role of temporary employees. The committee should also examine the use of “CU” time by court reporters, which allows court reporters to take paid time away from work to produce transcripts for private parties. The committee must also clarify the restrictions placed on producing transcripts at home and at the office.

In May of 2006, then Senior Associate Justice David M. Borden created the Judicial Branch’s Public Access Task Force, which was charged with making concrete recommendations for the maximum degree of public access to the court. One of the recommendations to come out of the Task Force for further study was to develop ways to reduce the cost and difficulty of obtaining transcripts. The committee will examine this issue and propose specific ways to address it.

The committee should assess the best ways to use and deploy technology in order to meet increased service needs, including the use of video and online access to transcripts. In assessing the best ways to utilize technology, the committee should look into whether the public can purchase copies of audio recordings of court proceedings. The committee will also investigate the benefits of hiring a certified Computer Assisted Real Time (CART) transcription reporter, as recommended by the Americans with Disabilities Act Committee.

Finally, the committee should review the statutes, rules and regulations that impact the production of transcripts and make recommendations that will remove those obstacles that impede access to transcripts.

The committee is to submit its recommendations to the Chief Court Administrator by Spring 2010.

# Part III: Strategic Plan Assessment Committee

The Branch's Strategic Plan is not a single project with a starting point and a finish line. It is an ongoing process that was begun in 2007 with the development of the Plan and is continuing with the implementation of the strategies and activities contained in the Plan.

Successful implementation of a Strategic Plan is not an easy task. Implementation involves judges, the Office of the Chief Court Administrator, Branch staff in every one of the five Branch divisions, Executive Branch agencies and the Legislative Branch. It requires tracking the implementation of hundreds of recommendations; developing and assessing performance measures for those recommendations; and identifying environmental changes and assessing their impact on the Branch and the Plan.

Recognizing the challenges to successfully implementing the Plan and achieving its five goals, the Branch is creating a Strategic Plan Assessment Committee. This committee, which will monitor the ongoing implementation process, will be comprised of judges assisted by Branch administrators and staff, and will be chaired by Judge DiPentima.

The Strategic Plan Assessment Committee will be charged with four tasks:

- Assessing the changes in the Judicial Branch's environment and recommending modifications to the Strategic Plan to respond to those changes
- Evaluating the effectiveness of implementation of the Strategic Plan to date
- Making recommendations to fully incorporate the Strategic Plan into the culture of the Judicial Branch, among judges and staff and across all Branch divisions
- Submitting an annual report to the Chief Justice

The first task of the committee will be to assess the changes in the Branch's operating environment since the Strategic Plan's development in 2007. For example, environmental changes could include the current economic situation or the changing demographics of the state, both of which could impact the Branch.

After assessing the ways in which the operating environment has changed since 2007, the committee will gather information on the impact of those changes using multiple resources.

To that end, the committee will:

- Review statistical data on caseloads, the economy and demographics
- Review recommended and implemented activities from Phase I and Phase II of implementation in light of the existing environment
- Conduct focus groups, surveys, questionnaires, public hearings or meetings, targeting those areas that have changed or are in the process of changing since the Plan's development
- Make recommendations to modify, eliminate or add activities to those originally set out in the Strategic Plan

The second task of the committee is to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the Strategic Plan to date. This committee will accomplish this task by assisting in the development of performance measures for all of the Implementation Plan committees.

Performance measures are critical to the success of strategic planning. They are the barometer by which the Branch can assess whether the implementation is working overall and whether the recommendations outlined in this report are supporting the goals. The committee may also choose to recommend new or modified performance measures.

The third task of the committee is to make recommendations to fully incorporate the Plan into the culture of the Branch, from the bench to the staff. It is only by making the Branch's vision, mission, values and goals an integral part of its ethic and culture that the Strategic Plan can be successful.

A strategic plan is developed from the top down, but, to succeed, it must be implemented from the bottom up. Significant numbers of judges, administrators and staff were involved in the development of the Plan; many others were involved in the first phase of implementation, as committee chairs, members, or support staff to committees. The recommendations of many of

the Phase I committees have already been implemented. Nevertheless, a number of Branch staff remain unaware of the Plan, the vision, mission and values, or the many changes that have already been made by the Branch to assist the public.

The absence of methods and plans to promote awareness of the Plan and its implementation, and the absence of a concerted effort to incorporate the vision, mission and values at a grassroots level is a shortcoming of the first phase of implementation that will be addressed directly by this committee in the second phase.

The fourth task of the committee is submitting an annual report to the Chief Justice. That report will provide information on the progress of the implementation process, recommend any modifications or changes to the strategies, activities or performance measures, and assess the effectiveness of the Branch's efforts in meeting the goals of the Strategic Plan.

In each of these tasks, the committee will be assisted by the Superior Court Operations Division's strategic management unit, which will monitor, track and evaluate the progress of implementing the hundreds of recommendations approved by the Chief Justice, and will develop performance measures in conjunction with the implementation committees. The unit will also provide the committee with research, reports and studies related to economic and demographic data, court trends from around the country, and other relevant data and will serve as a research and training resource.

In addition to the four specific tasks, some other facets of the implementation of the Strategic Plan will also be addressed by the Strategic Plan Assessment Committee. The committee should consider ways to encourage the participation in the implementation of the Plan by other entities that operate within the court system. When members of the public interact with public defenders, states' attorneys and the assistant attorneys general, for example, they are often

unaware that these entities are not part of the Judicial Branch. Because of the perceived connection between these entities and the Branch, taking steps to encourage their participation should be part of the implementation process.

In addition, many of the recommendations will require collaborative partnerships with Executive Branch agencies and the Legislature. The committee should consider the most effective ways of engaging those entities in the implementation process. For example, performance measures could demonstrate the benefits of expanded videoconferencing, the efficiency of a problem-solving justice model within the Family Support Magistrate Division, or the more effective and economical use of resources resulting from increased use of technology.

The work accomplished in Phase I was only the beginning. Much remains to be accomplished in order to achieve the five goals of the Strategic Plan – access to justice, effective response to changing demographics, efficient and consistent delivery of services, collaboration with stakeholders and other branches of government, and accountability to the people the Branch serves. The Strategic Plan Assessment Committee will ensure that the efforts of the Branch are continuous and effective.