



# **State of Connecticut Judicial Branch**

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

**October 2011**

**Public Service and Trust Commission**

*Hon. Alexandra D. DiPentima, Chair*

*Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers*

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*If we are to keep our democracy, there must be one commandment: Thou shalt not ration justice.* – Judge B. Learned Hand (1872-1961), to the New York Legal Aid Society, 1951; also attributed to the Greek playwright Sophocles (496 B.C. – 406 B.C.)

Sixty years ago, Judge Billings Learned Hand advocated for access to justice with his acknowledgement that the existence of this country’s democracy can be sustained only by the guaranteed right of all people to be heard, to have the ability and opportunity to seek redress in disputes, to equally enjoy the protections afforded to all American citizens by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

The Connecticut Judicial Branch’s [Strategic Plan](#) was developed with the belief that the public’s trust in the judiciary is further enhanced when access to justice, transparency, integrity and accountability serve as the foundation of the judicial system.

Each year, millions of people come through our courthouse doors; their missions vary but each individual has the expectation that they enjoy the same access to justice as those around them, regardless of their education level, socioeconomic status, native language, or physical ability.

Utilizing the Strategic Plan as a blueprint, the Branch has responded to the needs of our stakeholders by increasing access to justice, responding to changing demographics, improving the delivery of services, collaborating with our judicial partners and external stakeholders, and ensuring accountability. This has been done through the implementation of hundreds of recommendations developed in the strategic planning process by the committees of the [Public Service and Trust Commission](#) in 2007 and 2008. The committees and subsequent workgroups have been comprised of a wide variety of stakeholders, including members of the bench and Judicial Branch staff, as well as members of the bar and the public, community advocates, and representatives from our partner branches of government.

Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers and the chair of the Public Service and Trust Commission, Chief Appellate Judge Alexandra D. DiPentima, have worked closely with Chief Court Administrator Judge Barbara M. Quinn and Deputy Chief Court Administrator Judge Patrick L. Carroll III to prioritize every recommendation within the framework of available resources. It has not been an easy task.

The economic recession that began in earnest in 2007 and the flagging recovery from that downturn have presented challenges to the Branch that have not been seen in more than two decades. Simply put, there are more self-represented parties to cases, growing numbers of people with limited English proficiency, and more demands for services and assistance at precisely the time there are far fewer dollars to support those needs. In 2010, for example:

- The Branch provided in-person language translation services 48,177 times for people with limited English proficiency, up from 47,069 occasions in 2009. While Spanish interpretation accounts for about 90 percent of in-person translations, services have been provided in languages from Latvian and Wolof to Bulgarian, Bantu and Korean.
- Telephonic translation services installed in clerk's offices, probation offices, Support Enforcement Services sites and Court Service Centers were used in some 10,000 phone interactions, in thirty-nine languages. The service, known as Language Line, provides a necessary service in a cost-efficient manner.
- In approximately 84 percent of Family cases, at least one person was self-represented; on the Civil docket, 27 percent of cases had at least one self-represented party, an increase of 101 percent in a five-year period. In all during 2010, there were 68,092 self-represented parties to Civil and Family cases. Additionally, more than 273,300 self-represented parties were assisted in our Court Service Centers.
- Sign language interpreter services were provided to sixty-six jurors, an increase of ten jurors from 2009, as well as a total of ninety-six audio-related accommodations for jurors. Additionally, trained ADA Contact people, available in every judicial district, administrative offices, and serving all Branch divisions, provided more than 800 ADA accommodations in 2010 in everything from court hearings in civil and family cases, to defendant and family participation in court ordered probation and treatment programs. Last year the Branch spent in excess of \$315,000 on sign language interpretation and \$50,000 for live, real-time transcription services for people with disabilities.

These numbers are relevant because they are illustrative of the growing demand placed on the judicial system precisely when budgeting has remained essentially flat for core adjudicative duties. The Branch's budget for 2011 was about \$500 million and almost half of that is spent on non-adjudicative functions, such as adult and juvenile probation, victims' services, child support enforcement and operating juvenile detention facilities. While those non-adjudicative, non-core

functions have received some increased funding in the last five years, our core functions and obligations have not, despite the increased demand for services.

The Branch's budget represents just 3 percent of the *total* state budget; that is not likely to increase in conjunction with the rise in the number of people served or the level of services required. However, a tipping point has appeared on the horizon and it is becoming less clear that we will consistently be able to fulfill the stated promise of *timely* resolving all matters. It is essential to remember that the Judicial Branch is not a program, an agency, or a fungible entity that can close for a day with minor inconvenience to the public. When funding is inadequate to sustain even core judicial functions, then justice is compromised, and without access to an independent judiciary, our democratic system of government fails.

The state Constitution, in Article I, Section 10, states, "All courts shall be open, and every person, for an injury done to him in his person, property or reputation, shall have remedy by due course of law, and right and justice administered without sale, denial or delay." The Judicial Branch takes seriously its role in fiscal responsibility and accountability to the public, and the design and implementation of cost-saving measures are ongoing. For example:

- A \$1.2 million federal grant was obtained to install videoconferencing equipment in courtrooms and probation offices. In the six-month period between December 2010 and June 2011, more than 1,500 videoconferencing events took place, with the service being utilized by the Appellate Court, in the Judicial District and Geographical Area courts, and by the Court Support Services Division. As an example of savings, videoconferencing was used sixty-seven times in lieu of court appearances for inmates from Garner or Northern correctional facilities, saving the state an estimated \$37,520 in staff costs. Videoconferencing also supports a safer environment in our facilities, cuts down on wear and tear of state-owned vehicles, reduces fuel costs, and creates efficiencies in judge and staff time.
- The Branch in 2010 completed the streamlining of its prisoner transport system with the creation of a Centralized Transport Unit, cutting by nearly half the number of Judicial Marshal staff dedicated to moving approximately 1,000 incarcerated defendants each day between jails, prisons and courthouses. Prior to centralization, moving prisoners required approximately 104 Marshals and thirteen Supervising Marshals; that function now operates with approximately sixty Marshals and five supervisory staff. Centralization has also allowed for the scheduling of Marshals who provide transportation to also work in courthouses between trips, thus boosting

staffing local staffing levels without adding staff. Overtime costs have also been reduced, and the elimination of duplication reduces empty or low-volume trips and fuel consumption costs.

- Electronic filing of cases is mandatory for attorneys in all Civil and Small Claims cases, thereby reducing the need for certain data entry functions and costly storage of paper documents. E-filing also creates savings for attorneys, and thereby their clients, by eliminating some postage and courier costs. Further, attorneys and judges have near real-time access to filed documents and the ability to more quickly respond to those motions and other filings, allowing for better utilization of human resources.
- A pilot program that sought to improve juror utilization rates proved successful and led to the development of a new formula for summoning adequate numbers of jurors. Between October 2009 and September 2010, some 552,390 potential jurors were summoned, a reduction of 5,181 from the previous court year. Of those summoned jurors, 102,528 served at least one day, an increase of 7,633 over the 2009 court year. It is estimated that the Branch will save about \$30,000 annually on printing and postage costs associated with summoning and canceling fewer jurors.

The following pages detail more specifically the progress that has been made, since July 2010, to improve justice for all people. Additionally, recommendations for further improvements have been made by the committees, workgroups and implementation designees of the Office of the Chief Court Administrator, and are subject to available human and financial resources.

The fourth phase of implementation also includes the establishment of three new committees that will assist the Branch in overseeing efforts aimed at widening access to justice for all people: The [Access to Justice Commission](#), chaired by the Hon. Raymond R. Noriko; the [Pro Bono Committee](#), chaired by the Hon. William H. Bright Jr.; and the [Advisory Board on the Americans with Disabilities Act](#), chaired by Judge Carroll. Members of the new committees include the bench and Branch staff and nearly twenty volunteer members of the bar, representing law firms of all sizes, the legal aid community, in-house corporate counsel, public service and the academic community. The charges of each of these new entities vary from one another, yet they are interrelated in supporting the development and implementation of ideas to increase access to justice and ensure accountability to the public.

In particular, the Access to Justice (ATJ) Commission will include representatives from the Pro Bono Committee, the ADA Advisory Board, and existing Public Service and Trust Commission

committees and workgroups, such as the [Committee on Limited English Proficiency](#), the [Self-Represented Parties Workgroup](#), and the [External Affairs Advisory Board](#). The ATJ Commission will serve as an umbrella of sorts, with its members collaborating on improved access for people of many different backgrounds. The Pro Bono Committee, which has been active since early 2011, was established to examine the need for civil legal assistance for low- and moderate-income people, and to work together to develop programs that will provide a consistent source of civil legal aid for as many qualified people as possible. This Committee's work is particularly critical in the current environment, in which federal funding for civil legal aid programs through the Legal Services Corporation is proposed to be drastically reduced or, possibly, eliminated completely with the abolishment of the Corporation. The ADA Advisory Board consists of Judicial Branch staff members from most divisions, who are responsible for developing and implementing improvements to the services and procedures currently offered for people with disabilities.

These new committees understand that Connecticut's population is changing. Consider, for example, that more than 9 percent of Connecticut's 3.5 million residents live at or below the federal poverty guidelines; that one in five speaks a language other than English at home; that more than 41 percent of Connecticut residents have a twelfth-grade or fewer education; that an estimated 8.5 percent of adults twenty-one and older are disabled. Consider also that a 2008 survey commissioned by the Connecticut Bar Foundation found that more than 7 in 10 of households in poverty had a civil legal problem within the last year (most commonly reported were housing, employment and consumer issues). [The survey](#) showed that only 1 in 4 low-income people with a civil legal problem successfully sought and obtained legal assistance; many were unaware of existing legal aid programs for the poor, but still others were unable to receive assistance because the demand outstripped the availability of programs.

Much of what has been accomplished in the last three years of implementation was designed to benefit the greatest number of stakeholders, including the most vulnerable. From expanding language services, to adopting plain language principals for Branch forms and brochures so that they are more easily understood by more people; to expanding e-filing for attorneys, establishing online payments for infraction tickets, and opening our courthouse doors a half-hour earlier each day in order to limit wait times at entrances; to providing online tutorials for self-represented parties and access to computers in our Court Service Centers, the Branch has sought to ensure access to justice.

## **Going Forward: Meeting challenges**

Across the country, judicial systems are struggling with the cut-at-all-costs approach to court funding taken by so many legislative and executive branches. The impact of underfunding the judiciary has become so critical that the American Bar Association in 2010 launched a Task Force on Preservation of the Justice System to bring to the public's attention what the risks are when court systems are not adequately funded. The Task Force has conducted public hearings and surveyed judicial stakeholders about the state of access to justice in their areas, including Connecticut, and the results are at best disheartening, and at worst, ominous for those who value timely access to justice and an independent, co-equal branch of government.

In Ohio, one local court system requires the public to bring their own paper and pens to the clerk's office to create a document. In New Hampshire, a family has been waiting nearly a decade to go to trial on a claim that their child was made severely ill by lead paint, while another family had to wait four months to see their child because the clerk's office was so backed up the necessary court order was not timely processed. In Los Angeles, the closing of certain courtrooms means that parties to some juvenile and family cases have to travel through gang-ridden areas to other courts to adjudicate their cases, adding literally hours of travel time. In Georgia, which dedicates *less than 1 percent* of its state budget to the judicial system, local courts solicit pen and pencil donations from private vendors and staff some clerk's offices with unpaid college interns. On October 3, 2011, San Francisco Superior Court will close 25 courtrooms and reduce the hours of operations for its clerks' offices, the result of repeated deep budget cuts that led to the lay-off of 200 employees.

In the last three years, the Connecticut Judicial Branch has been forced to make some very tough decisions in response to de-funding, including the closing of the Norwalk Juvenile Court and law libraries in Norwich and Milford. These were not easy decisions and unquestionably peoples' lives were impacted and their access to justice affected, but there was simply no choice.

As detailed in the previous pages, the Strategic Plan has helped the Branch to clarify its operational vision by implementing initiatives that are designed to increase the public's trust by increasing access to justice for all people, in a collaborative and transparent manner. Many if not most of the initiatives were done with little additional cost to the Branch; rather, they have been designed and implemented to become part of our daily business practices through more efficient management of existing resources. In fact, building on our existing technology has been key to much of what has been accomplished.

Without question, Connecticut is light years ahead of other states in exploiting technological resources to benefit the public, including the members of the bar. What started as an idea a decade ago, to offer electronic case filing similar to the federal judiciary, has resulted in unprecedented electronic access to the court system. In addition to mandatory e-filing for attorneys in all Civil and Small Claims matters, it is now possible to use our website to pay infraction tickets; view Civil case documents (subject to applicable disclosure laws and sealing rules) on public computers in our courthouses; check daily court dockets and calendars for most cases; be notified via e-mail of certain defendant information; and read Supreme and Appellate Court decisions and briefs, to cite just a few available options.

Notably, advancements in utilizing technology, shaping it for our and the public's best use, and making the most efficient use of scarce dollars has been accomplished under the Strategic Plan in no small measure by the creative, talented, and dedicated judicial information systems staff. There exists a collective willingness among the staff to not only craft solutions to problems, but to identify possibilities for improvements, and to create and build on them in ways that support collaboration between all Branch divisions. Such collaboration ensures uniformity and reduces unnecessary duplication of staff efforts.

Going forward, the Branch will continue to exploit available technology to its fullest and make investments in developing technologies that will contribute to more streamlined and efficient operations and improve access for the public. Development is underway to expand electronic filing to certain Family matters in 2013, while, in 2012, self-represented parties may also be given the option of e-filing Civil cases. The Branch is also developing the protocol and technology to allow remote access to some e-filed case documents for the public, and to allow remote access to and the purchase of audio recordings of certain court proceedings. The committees and workgroups will continue to develop recommendations designed to assist self-represented parties enjoy a level playing field within the judicial system, which benefits not only those parties but the system itself and members of the bar who are slowed when processes, rules and protocol are not understood by non-attorneys. It is also worth noting that the use of technology has to some extent changed the way in which our court system operates; therefore, re-engineering our clerks' offices to make the best use of our people will be the focus of a sustained effort in the coming year. Finally, the Branch will begin the development and implementation of performance measures that will help gage whether the implementation process has been successful.

The Strategic Plan was developed in 2007 and 2008, and we are now in the beginning of the fourth year of implementation. The Plan was designed to encompass a three- to five-year period, therefore in 2012, regardless of what the state's fiscal situation is or what challenges the Branch may endure, the next plan will begin to take shape. As we have learned, the strategic planning process does not yield a static result: the plan and its subsequent implementation process, combined with the total environment in which the Branch operates, have given rise to new ways of thinking and doing business. The Branch has worked to expand justice, not to see it rationed because of fiscal challenges.

*New  
Initiatives  
In  
Phase IV*

## **CHARGE OF THE CONNECTICUT JUDICIAL BRANCH ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMMISSION**

The mission of the [Access to Justice Commission](#) is to develop recommendations to help ensure equal access for all people, including low- and moderate-income individuals, people with different physical or developmental abilities, the elderly, limited English proficient and ethnic, cultural and racial minorities.

Despite Connecticut's status as one of the wealthiest enclaves in the nation, the Nutmeg State has not been immune from the results of the severe downturn in the job market, housing values, and the stock market. When the [Public Service and Trust Commission](#) was formed, Connecticut's unemployment rate was 4.6 percent and 15,773 foreclosure cases had been added to the court's civil docket. By August 2011, Connecticut's unemployment rate hovered at 9 percent; 15,614 foreclosure cases had been filed over the previous year, and another 28,718 collections cases had been added to the civil docket. Between July 1, 2010 and June 20, 2011, some 65,582 Small Claims cases had been added statewide.

The numbers, of course, offer only statistical snapshots of a period of time and not the stories behind the snapshots. Every small claims case, foreclosure, civil case and unemployment number represents a person. The out-of-work, overwhelmed, and under-represented are the real stories behind the docket numbers.

Each day, the recommendations of the Strategic Plan's committees and workgroups are being implemented to assist low- and moderate-income people, self-represented parties, limited-English proficient individuals, and those with differing abilities, to actively participate in the judicial system.

For example, collaboration with local bar associations resulted in the creation of Volunteer Attorney programs in the Hartford and Waterbury family courts that, in little more than a year, have served nearly 800 self-represented parties. The program has been so successful it was expanded in May 2011 to the New Haven Judicial District with the assistance of the New Haven Bar Association to assist self-represented parties with foreclosure cases. This program will dovetail with the Branch's foreclosure mediation program, which since July 2008 has resolved more than 8,300 foreclosure cases.

Nearly two-thirds of the funds that support pro bono lawyers in civil cases come from the revenue generated by Interest On Lawyers' Trust Accounts ([IOLTA](#)). Without adequate funding, the legal aid community would be unable to assist Connecticut's indigent self-represented parties who rely on them for access to justice and a chance to be heard. In 2009, the state's failing housing market resulted in an 80 percent reduction in available IOLTA funds. The Judicial Branch partnered with the [Connecticut Bar Foundation](#) and legal aid providers to promote and support new legislation to help stabilize funding for legal aid programs through the statutory increase of certain court fees. As a result of this collaborative effort, the Connecticut Bar Foundation received approximately \$9 million in funding for legal aid service providers in 2010.

The Strategic Plan also led to the creation in January 2010 of the Volunteer Information Officer program. More than 7,300 stakeholders, in four courthouses, have been served by these seasoned Branch employees who not only provide directions and general guidance, but also serve as a reassuring presence while allowing judicial marshals to concentrate on the security of our facilities and all who enter.

Improving access for people with limited English proficiency has driven many initiatives such as the installation of Language Lines in all clerks' offices and Court Service Centers. This telephonic service

provides near-instant translation in more than 170 languages and, since its installation, has served thousands of people who otherwise may have not been heard or understood.

Indeed, technology has played an important role in advancing the public's trust and understanding of the court system by increasing access to justice, as forms and publications explaining certain court protocols and processes have been created in plain language and posted not only in courthouses but on the Branch's [Internet page](#). The website is a [rich source](#) of information for attorneys and the public; along with daily case dockets and calendars, there are links to video tutorials explaining how to file certain forms; an area dedicated to the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) and the Branch's related available services; links to the Practice Book and state statutes, as well as new and archived Supreme Court and Appellate Court [decisions](#), [Family Support Magistrate Court decisions](#), [frequently asked questions](#), and [common legal words](#). In addition, numerous webpages, forms, brochures and other printed materials are available in [Spanish](#).

Technology has also figured prominently in the evolution of improving access to court records. For example, the Chief Justice has approved more than a dozen recommendations that will guide an overhaul of the memorialization of the court record. Paper transcripts, while useful and necessary to some, have proven for too many people to be a costly barrier to seeking redress in the court system. Going forward, access to justice will be improved by making the audio record available online at a nominal cost.

Recognizing that there are people whose access to justice is compromised because they do not have access to the Internet; the Branch has installed public access computers outside the clerks' offices, in its thirteen Court Service Centers and in the Law Libraries. Additionally, the Branch has activated Microsoft Accessibility software in two of its busiest Court Service Centers. The software allows people of different physical abilities to enable tools that improve access, such as by enlarging font and reading aloud text.

With so many initiatives underway and more in development, the Access to Justice Commission will bring under its broad umbrella a number of existing Public Service and Trust Commission committees, and establish new subcommittees to develop recommendations to expand access to justice in Connecticut. The Commission's membership is collaborative and representative of all of the stakeholders who are united with the Judicial Branch in its goal to provide equal access to justice. In part, the Access to Justice Commission incorporates some members of the [Pro Bono Committee](#), the [Self-represented Parties Workgroup](#), the [Standing Committee on Video and Teleconferencing](#), the [Advisory Board on the Americans with Disabilities Act](#), and the [Committee on Limited English Proficiency](#). Additionally, there are members of the bar representing the private sector, including major corporations, and the public sector.

The members of the Judicial Branch Access to Justice Commission are:

- Hon. Raymond R. Norko, Chair
- Atty. Faith P. Arkin, Judge Support Services
- Hon. William H. Bright Jr.
- Deputy Attorney General Nora R. Dannehy
- Atty. Steven D. Eppler-Epstein, Connecticut Legal Services
- Atty. Eric George, Connecticut Business and Industry Association
- Atty. Johanna Greenfield, Court Operations
- Atty. Barry C. Hawkins, Shipman & Goodwin
- Ms. Rhonda Stearley-Hebert, Judicial Branch External Affairs

- Ms. Krista Hess, Court Operations
- Chief State’s Attorney Kevin T. Kane
- Ms. Aileen Keays, Central Connecticut State University Research Specialist
- Ms. Sandra Lugo-Gines, Court Operations
- Atty. Mark Nordstrom, General Electric
- Ms. Roberta Palmer, Court Operations
- Jeremy R. Paul, Dean, University of Connecticut Law School
- Ms. Yanira Rodriguez, Community Court Social Services Team
- Hon. Elliot N. Solomon
- Chief Public Defender Susan O. Storey
- Atty. Herman Woodard Jr., Woodard Law Firm
- A Law Libraries supervisor

The success of the Access to Justice Commission will be measured by the extent to which individuals can more effectively navigate Connecticut’s justice system regardless of income or language ability. Further, the Commission will develop performance measures to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the strategies, determine the gap between actual and targeted performance and determine the effectiveness and operational efficiency of all its initiatives.

The Access to Justice Commission seeks to achieve the following:

- To call attention to the importance of legal services for indigent residents and the disparity between the need for such services and the resources available to meet those needs
- Continue to work to increase funding and resources for legal services through fee and fine surcharges, special fees and other methods
- Recommend ways to increase the number of attorneys trained, including attorneys from the corporate and business sectors, to provide pro bono legal services
- Continue to expand the availability of services and resources for the self-represented through Court Service Centers, Public Information Desks and Law Libraries, as well as through advancements in technology through the Judicial Branch website, including posting self-help videos on the Judicial Branch website to guide self-represented parties through court procedures
- Continue to expand the Judicial Branch’s Volunteer Attorney Program and Volunteer Information Officer Program, and develop and implement other programs to assist the unrepresented and the underrepresented
- Recommend ways to continue to increase the services and resources available to Connecticut’s limited English proficient population, including interpreter and translation language services, and multi-language and plain language written materials
- Continue compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act by enhancing existing resources and services, implementing new initiatives and creating new tools to better serve the ADA community
- Recommend and identify best practices in the delivery of legal services and determine the changing legal needs of those unable to afford counsel; develop strategies to meet those needs including addressing existing and proposed court rules, procedures and policies
- Continue to develop and expand new and innovative ways to provide access to justice through the use of technology in our courts

While much has already been accomplished through the ongoing implementation of the Strategic Plan, the Judicial Branch recognizes that more needs to be done to assist the tens of thousands of people who represent themselves, and that this can only be accomplished through cooperation and collaboration with all of the Judicial Branch's stakeholders. The formation of Connecticut's first formal Access to Justice Commission will ensure that the work of the Strategic Plan continues and that the voices of the unrepresented and the underrepresented are heard, so that equal access to justice can become a reality for all Connecticut citizens.

The Commission, which held its first meeting in May, will report annually to the Chief Justice.

## **CHARGE OF THE ADVISORY BOARD ON THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into federal law in July 1990 to ensure equal access to American society for all people regardless of ability.

The Judicial Branch is committed to maintaining its compliance with the ADA. This dedication is reflected in the first outcome goal of the Branch's Strategic Plan: *"The Judicial Branch will provide equal access to all of its facilities, processes and information through the identification and elimination of barriers."*

In the first prong of the Strategic Plan, the [Committee on the Americans with Disabilities Act](#) was formed to identify those barriers and make appropriate and feasible recommendations for their removal. After conducting focus groups with various stakeholders, the Committee members reviewed Branch policies and processes relating to ADA compliance.

In its 2008 report to the Chief Justice, the ADA Committee developed sixteen recommendations designed to support the Strategic Plan's first outcome goal, including the creation of a multi-pronged Internet page that provides easy [access to information](#) to the public. Among the Committee's suggestions was that the Judicial Branch establish an Advisory Board to continue reviewing progress of the implementation of the recommendations.

The [Advisory Board on the Americans with Disabilities Act](#), which is chaired by a Judge and comprised of Judicial Branch staff members from each Division, will support the Judicial Branch's continued compliance with the ADA. The Advisory Board, which meets quarterly, may also develop recommendations that support the Strategic Plan's Access goal. Additionally, the Advisory Board may expand its membership if required to meet its charge. The Advisory Board will report annually to the Chief Justice.

The members of the Advisory Board are:

- Deputy Chief Court Administrator Judge Patrick L. Carroll III, Chair
- Mr. Richard D. Byam, Court Support Services Division
- Mr. Robert D. Coffey, Administrative Services Division
- Ms. Sandra Lugo-Gines, Superior Court Operations Division
- Atty. Stephen N. Ment, External Affairs Division
- Mr. Ronald J. Macchio, Administrative Services Division
- Mr. David McCormick, Information Technology Division

The Board has formed two subcommittees to review the progress and implementation of initiatives designed to meet the public's needs and Branch employee needs. Both the [External Implementation](#) and [Internal Implementation](#) subcommittees are chaired by Ms. Lugo-Gines, who was co-chair of the original ADA Committee.

## CHARGE OF THE PRO BONO COMMITTEE

Every year, Connecticut attorneys provide tens of thousands of hours of legal services for free or at reduced rates to people who are unable to hire counsel. These acts of *pro bono publico* range from assisting tenants who refuse to pay rent for unsafe, pest-infested apartments, to advising disabled or chronically ill people who are unfairly denied Social Security benefits, to representing abused children who feel voiceless in a vast legal system that will determine their fates, to ensuring that children with developmental disabilities secure appropriate educational services.

While every person is guaranteed access to our justice system, the Judicial Branch is committed to ensuring that such access is *meaningful*. It is one thing to have the ability to walk in to a courthouse and file a complaint against a landlord, and quite another to have the necessary advocacy tools to ensure true representation.

The [Strategic Plan](#) was released a few months into the state and nation's severe and thus far sustained financial crisis, the results of which are seen daily in our courtrooms. High unemployment and a declining stock market contributed to Connecticut's skyrocketing foreclosure docket, which more than doubled from 11,700 cases in 2006 to more than 26,700 in 2010. Civil cases and small claims collections filings have also substantially increased, with civil filings increasing a staggering 101 percent between 2005 and 2010.

The failing economy and the collapse of the housing market also triggered the implosion of Connecticut's Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA) fund. Millions of dollars that had been directed to help fund legal services for low- and moderate-income people vanished within months, forcing many legal aid programs to lay off attorneys and other valuable staff. The reduction in staff naturally led to a decline in the number of people the organizations could serve, precisely at a time when the demand for services was growing.

The Branch responded to the cuts by working in tandem with its legal aid community partners, including the Connecticut Bar Foundation, to lobby the Connecticut General Assembly to increase certain court fees for distribution to legal aid providers. The success has been apparent; in 2010, the Connecticut Bar Foundation received nearly \$9 million from the increased fees to fund legal aid programs statewide. The demand, however, for free legal services remains high and there appears to be no end in sight.

Therefore, in early 2011, Chief Justice Rogers established the [Pro Bono Committee](#). Its members are:

- Hon. William H. Bright, Jr., Chair
- Atty. Livia Barndollar, Past President, Connecticut Bar Association; Member of Connecticut Bar Foundation Board of Directors; Marvin, Ferro, Barndollar & Roberts
- Atty. Greg Benson, Pfizer Inc.
- Atty. Alfred R. Casella, Murtha Cullina
- Atty. Jan Chiarretto, Statewide Legal Services, Executive Director
- Atty. Steve Eppler-Epstein, Connecticut Legal Services, Executive Director
- Atty. Amy Haberman, McCarter & English
- Atty. Barry Hawkins, Shipman & Goodwin
- Atty. Edward Heath, Robinson & Cole

- Atty. Norman K. Janes, Past President Connecticut Bar Association, Connecticut Bar Foundation Board member, Law Office of Norman K. Janes
- Atty. Timothy J. Johnston, Law Office of Timothy J. Johnston
- Atty. Ian Lodovice, Pfizer Inc.
- Hon. Brian Mahon, Meriden Probate District
- Atty. Dwight Merriam, Robinson & Cole
- Atty. Catherine A. Mohan, McCarter & English
- Atty. Mark Nordstrom, General Electric

The Pro Bono Committee has met monthly since February 2011. Additionally, Judge Bright and the members established six subcommittees:

- [Communications](#)
- [Logistics](#)
- [Training](#)
- [Metrics](#)
- [Programs](#)
- [Recognition and Recruitment](#)

Each subcommittee met several times since February 2011 to assist in the planning of the Pro Bono Summit, which was held on October 5, 2011 at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. The Pro Bono Summit, which was attended by more than 120 judges and lawyers, focused on pro bono programs that are in place and need volunteer attorneys. The Committee created a 43-page [Pro Bono Summit catalog](#) detailing the plethora of legal programs that serve the poor and people of moderate means. It also unveiled a new website, [probono.ctlawhelp.org](http://probono.ctlawhelp.org), where attorneys can find information on a myriad of pro bono programs available in the state. The Summit attendees, who included representatives from the legal aid community, law firms and in-house corporate counsel, were asked by, among others, the Chief Justice and the Governor to make a firm commitment to pro bono service by signing up to participate in one of the many available programs highlighted, which include assisting veterans, neglected children, the elderly, the mentally ill, homeowners facing foreclosure, underpaid workers and others unable to afford counsel. As was discussed at the summit, the opportunity for attorneys to volunteer their time is further facilitated by: 1) the provision of malpractice insurance by legal services providers that administer programs with which an attorney may volunteer; and 2) training provided by legal aid providers, the Connecticut Bar Association, and the judiciary.

The Committee and its subcommittees are working to identify existing pro bono resources and to make recommendations to direct new pro bono services to areas in communities where the need is the most profound. This may be done by conducting focus groups of community advocates for a wide demographic of people, including those with limited English proficiency, past clients of legal aid services, attorneys who regularly serve low-income individuals, and community-based and government entities that provide information to self-represented people, such as law librarians and law school clinicians.

The Chief Justice recommends that the Committee consult with bar associations to determine what efforts are being made to provide training to attorneys interested in providing pro bono assistance. Further, working in conjunction with various bar association sections and the legal aid community, the Committee should make recommendations for the development of training for attorneys that will allow members of the bar to provide effective assistance in areas of the law where they may not routinely practice.

Rule 6.1 of [Connecticut's Rules of Professional Conduct](#) says unequivocally that every member of the bar should render public interest legal service. The Committee should make recommendations for the development of an effective outreach program that will encourage attorneys to fulfill that commitment. The outreach program must include efforts to recruit and train attorneys of all backgrounds including corporate practitioners who may not routinely provide pro bono service because of a lack of knowledge about such opportunities.

The Committee should also make recommendations to the Judicial Branch to encourage pro bono service by providing recognition and uniform incentives, such as preferred docketing and other non-compensation strategies. The members should also work with the Branch to identify existing resources such as videoconferencing in Judicial Branch facilities that may be utilized to encourage widespread participation by pro bono lawyers. The members also should seek to determine what other judicial systems do to attract volunteer attorneys.

The Strategic Plan will provide the Committee with a rich source of material to assist the members in the development of their strategies and recommendations, as will the Branch's [Self-Represented Parties Workgroup](#). The Committee should also make recommendations for performance measures to ensure that their efforts are being uniformly implemented and identify areas that require re-working as needs change.

Some members of the Pro Bono Committee will also serve as members of the Access to Justice Commission and the Committee will report annually to the [Access to Justice Commission](#) on the status and progress of their recommendations. The Pro Bono Committee will also report annually to the Chief Justice.

*Summary of*

*Phase I, II and III*

*Initiatives*

# ACCESS

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

## **Committee on Access to Facilities (Signage)**

The [Committee on Access to Facilities](#) is charged with making recommendations to address and eliminate barriers that impede entry to and movement around Judicial Branch facilities. The committee will achieve this goal by analyzing the process of locating, entering and moving around facilities as they currently exist and identifying areas for improvement.

### **The Committee will continue its work on the following activities between July 2011 and June 2012:**

- Assess the accuracy and effectiveness of existing internal and external signs, location maps and building directories
- Assess the accuracy and expediency of online [directions to facilities](#) as provided by the Branch, and making immediate corrections to erroneous information
- Draft uniform standards for the layout and maintenance of the ‘Directions’ webpages
- Update the Judicial Branch Web Board on the progress of updating online directions for accuracy
- Coordinate the local implementation, by local staff work groups, of facility assessments that will result in recommendations to standardize signs, directions, maps, and directories throughout the Branch following any federal, state and local code requirements
- Draft a final report with the committee’s recommendations for the Chief Justice

### **As time and resources permit, the Committee will begin work on the following activities:**

- A wayfinding plan, designed to ensure uniformity and clarity of signage, will be developed by an external vendor

### **The following activities were completed between September 2010 and June 2011:**

- Informational sessions were held with wayfinding experts to better understand the process; subsequently, a Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued for wayfinding services and proposals have been reviewed
- A [Signage Workgroup](#) was created and is working to develop uniform and consistent signage standards
- A checklist was created to be used as a data collection tool
- An internal SharePoint site was created to serve as the main repository of information on signage and facility assessments completed by committee members and local workgroup staff
- A survey was created to assess accessibility for people with disabilities in collaboration with the [External Implementation Subcommittee](#) of the [Advisory Board on the Americans with Disabilities Act](#)
- Fourteen local staff workgroups were created — one for each Judicial District and one to oversee the Branch’s online content — to begin the process of facility and signage assessments and needs
- Field visits of private sector facilities including hospitals, colleges, airports and a federal courthouse were conducted
- Field visits began at some Branch facilities in order to test the checklist and the SharePoint site
- Online directions are currently in the process of being revised

## **Americans with Disabilities Act**

The [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) Committee](#) was charged with evaluating what resources are 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.

In 2009, the recommendations were assigned to the Office of the Chief Court Administrator for implementation. Additionally, in the current phase of implementation, an [Advisory Board on the Americans with Disabilities Act](#), chaired by Deputy Chief Court Administrator Judge Patrick L. Carroll III, was established and contains staff representatives from all five Branch divisions.

### **The designees under the Office of the Chief Court Administrator will continue to work on the following activities between July 2011 and June 2012:**

- Include the official Judicial Branch notice of compliance with the ADA and the address of the Branch's [ADA webpage](#) on all new and revised Branch forms
- The Legal Services Unit, which reviews all modifications to and establishment of official Judicial Branch publications, will continue to remove outdated TDD/TTY numbers from all printed materials, as the Branch has adopted the free, national 711 telecommunications phone line for people with hearing or speech difficulties
- Continue tracking the inventory of auxiliary aids and services to help identify usage and request trends, and ensure that such aids and services are available to qualifying ADA individuals
- Continue tracking ADA accommodation requests by type
- Develop instructor-led and web-based training curriculum to include a general overview of the ADA
- Continue outreach efforts about the Branch's ADA efforts to the public and Branch staff
- Develop a user-friendly format for the [ADA Contact People](#) listed on the Branch's ADA webpage
- Research disability-related agencies/organizations to be offered as resources on the Branch's ADA webpage
- In collaboration with Jury Administration, continue to explore the idea of offering ADA training to members of the bar, and develop protocol to use adaptive equipment from the State Board of Education and Services for the Blind to allow jurors who are blind or have low-vision to participate in jury service
- Continue to monitor and update the Branch's website accessibility for people with differing abilities

### **As time and resources permit, the designees of the Office of the Chief Court Administrator will begin work on the following activities:**

- Internally create an ADA newsletter for the Branch's staff ADA Contacts
- Explore alternatives to Computer Assisted Real-time Transcription (CART) services. The Branch spent nearly \$50,000 for CART services during Fiscal Year 2010-2011; comparable service alternatives that meet the ADA requirement of providing a reasonable accommodation are available and should be identified and utilized when appropriate

- Working in conjunction with the [Committee on Access to Facilities](#) and the Branch's Facilities Unit, a report will be drafted to improve access to Branch facilities
- Utilizing minimal resources, create a program to exhibit art created by people with disabilities at courthouses, using as a model the event held in July 2010 to celebrate the [20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ADA](#)

**The following activities were completed between July 2010 and June 2011:**

- The [Advisory Board on the Americans with Disabilities Act](#) was developed, along with two subcommittees, to oversee the ongoing implementation work of this initiative and develop additional recommendations
- Training was provided for newly identified ADA Contact People in the Judicial Marshal Services Unit
- More than 500 requests by members of the public for ADA accommodations were processed, including those from jurors, parties to cases and attorneys
- Visits were conducted with each Judicial Marshal Services' office in all thirteen Judicial Districts to identify disabilities-related issues and training needs for marshals
- ADA Sensitivity & Problem-Solving Training was developed for the Judicial Marshal Services Unit as a pilot program
- The Human Resources Unit resolved eight ADA complaints from the public during FY 2011
- The ADA Complaint Procedure for the Appellate Court was approved and an ADA Accommodation Request Form has been drafted; a link to the ADA Contact People webpage will be linked from the [Appellate Court's website](#)
- A pilot program revealed that the Microsoft Accessibility software that was enabled at the Hartford and New Britain Court Service Centers was not being utilized, despite signs indicating its availability; the services remains available as there is no cost to the Branch

## **Committee on Limited English Proficiency (LEP)**

The [Committee on Limited English Proficiency](#) is continuing its efforts in eliminating barriers to facilities, processes and information faced by individuals who are limited English proficient (LEP).

### **The Committee will continue its work on the following activities between July 2011 and June 2012:**

- Continue scheduling LEP training programs so that all Branch employees are able to attend. As part of this initiative, the curriculum of the LEP training program is continually refined. Additionally, LEP training to Branch vendors who provide contracted services will continue during the next year to ensure compliance with federal regulations.
- Continue working closely with the External Affairs Division in expanding outreach efforts to the LEP population through community organizations and media organizations that have targeted non-English speaking audiences.
- Continue efforts to solicit Branch employees and members of the bench who have bilingual or multilingual abilities to participate in the Branch's outreach initiatives, including the [Speakers Bureau](#). Outreach to employees who participated in the Latino Community Fellows Program offered through St. Joseph's College will be explored.
- Continue examination of whether various case management systems could be modified to identify cases/matters that require interpreter/translation services. This examination will include exploring whether a code could be developed that will appear on the printed docket to provide the on-site interpreter with caseload information to enhance the provision of interpreting services.
- Continue exploring the feasibility of expanding the use of telephonic interpreters services to certain courtroom proceedings where deemed appropriate and when the requestor, having followed all necessary steps, is unable to obtain the provision of "in-person" interpreting services. (The Interpreter and Translator Services Unit (ITS) has referred requestors from several locations across the state to Language Line, the current vendor that provides bilingual telephonic services. Using Language Line, requestors have been able to access interpreting services within seconds and at minimum cost to the Branch).
- Continue exploring the viability of providing foreign language tools to employees. There were two recommendations pertaining to making available foreign language instruction to employees. Based upon the overwhelming response in the Branch survey to employees (seventy percent of the 647 employees who responded expressed an interest in receiving foreign language instruction), the Committee agreed to combine and amend these recommendations and appoint a workgroup to further explore its viability and possible alternatives. The Committee noted possible alternatives and existing options: explore the use of computer programs, encourage enrollment in foreign language courses offered at community colleges, allow the use of educational leave time, and pursue tuition reimbursement.
- Continue reviewing the feasibility of using audio recordings of the advisement of rights. Numerous issues are involved with implementing this recommendation, including a related issue pertaining to the use of videos. A workgroup was appointed to do further research. A survey was drafted and distributed via the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) listserv to other state court administrative offices requesting information on alternative methods used by courts in providing the advisement of rights to individuals who are limited English proficient; the responses were compiled in June. The workgroup is also exploring development of a pilot project.

**As time and resources permit, the Committee will begin work on the following activities:**

- To reexamine the role of the Committee on Limited English Proficiency
- To develop a plan for using video-interpreting
- To explore the expansion of the LEP contracted Court Support Services Division (CSSD) vendor training to other vendors who provide contracted services to other units who have programs, services, and activities that involve individuals who are limited English proficient

**The following activities were completed between September 2010 and June 2011:**

- An LEP training program entitled *LEP: Why It's Important to You* was formalized for Branch employees and a modified program was developed for CSSD vendors who provide contracted services. For calendar year 2010, eighteen sessions of *LEP: Why It's Important to You* were held and 569 Branch staff participated. Between January 2011 and June 2011, training was provided to 120 contracted CSSD vendors.
- The Interpreter and Translator Services (ITS) Unit implemented a system for assigning and prioritizing interpreter requests. The Unit prioritizes requests on a daily basis in order to maximize the use of limited resources and to best meet the needs of the courts. Services are coordinated based on the type of proceedings; courtroom assignments are combined for coverage purposes and interpreters travel to different locations during the course of the day.
- Improvements to the screening process of candidates were implemented. Recently, the ITS Unit acquired a new oral screening exam and began administering it to new applicants to better test their interpreting skills. The Unit also plans to examine the implementation of an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) as a way to measure a candidate's language skills. OPI is offered over the phone to the candidate by a private provider.
- After further review and discussion, the Committee agreed to amend a prior recommendation "to hire more bilingual staff." The Committee is now recommending that the Human Resource Management Unit (HRM) assess job positions where bilingual skills would be appropriate for a particular position in a specific geographic area that serves a limited English population. Also, the Committee is suggesting that HRM examine recruiting and screening methods and examine whether bilingual ability should be a factor in hiring. (The Committee is aware of union issues and, therefore, may not act further in this area other than to suggest that this recommendation be forwarded to HRM.)
- The Committee referred to External Affairs the request to develop public service announcements and it has been incorporated into their media plan. As the Committee continues its work, it will forward suggested content to External Affairs for public service announcements. Additionally, the Committee will continue to recommend ideas to External Affairs in reaching organizations that serve the LEP population. The External Affairs Division's outreach efforts to community-based organizations are ongoing. A press release was drafted on the new [LEP Internet page](#) which will be translated into Spanish, Polish and Portuguese.
- Language assistance through telephonic services was expanded during this period. A related recommendation to "emphasize and continue to encourage use of telephonic bilingual services, particularly during non court hours and weekends" has also been accomplished. An individual has been appointed to administer this program; she provides continuous training and support statewide to all Branch offices. Also, information regarding the available telephonic bilingual services is included in the LEP training to all employees. In 2010, the telephonic bilingual services vendor provided language assistance in thirty-nine languages, in 10,000 calls for a total of 79,533 minutes.

- The ITS Unit has reviewed statistical information on civil court requests. A new statistical program was developed for interpreters to input their civil caseload information and is ready to be implemented. Training on the new statistical system has begun.
- Two new LEP webpages were developed and posted - one for the Internet and one for the Intranet. The [Internet page](#) includes the [Branch's LEP Policy Statement](#), provides answers to [frequently asked questions about LEP](#), provides information regarding available language services, and identifies various informational resources. This page has also been made available in Spanish, Portuguese and Polish. The LEP Intranet page includes the LEP Policy Statement, provides information on the LEP Committee and LEP Training and Resources, and explains the processes for requesting language assistance, translation services and sign language services.
- A mechanism for educating employees about available language assistance resources has been accomplished through the Branch LEP Training Program and the hands-on training provided on the contracted telephonic bilingual services. The training program provides information on Title VI, the Branch's policy statement regarding LEP, the cultural aspects of working with LEP individuals, and the processes for obtaining interpretation and translation services.
- Guidelines and procedures were developed and implemented for requesting the translation of documents. Also, an automated Document Translation Tracking system was developed and an internal Review Panel appointed to review and prioritize the document translation requests. The guidelines and procedures, which set forth the process and criteria for review and prioritization, are posted on the intranet.
- The recommendation pertaining to the creation of multi-discipline notices/forms that would include, for example, Spanish in the body of a form will be considered by the respective units as they determine whether the form should be translated as well as by various individuals who are involved with the review and development of the form. Additionally, the Committee supported the principle of using plain language in the translation of forms.
- The recommendation pertaining to the need for informational and instructional documents in other languages for distribution by contracted vendors is being examined by Legal Services, which is considering revisions to contract terms. Additionally, language assistance guidelines have been developed for distribution to vendors who provide contracted services for the Branch.
- Two recommendations regarding outreach to organizations that offer computer access to individuals who have limited English proficiency were combined and reworded to "Recommend that Branch Staff provide, within available resources, informational sessions to public libraries and community organizations on resources and services available to the LEP communities." Since the Law Libraries and Court Service Centers conduct outreach programs, the Committee suggests the recommendation be forwarded respectively to these units.
- The Committee assessed the value and usefulness of web-based translation programs and determined that its use must be limited and cautious. It was reported that "translation services on-line" was thoroughly researched by the Information Technology Division and that the translation of legal terms was not accurate.
- The Committee examined carefully the recommendation to develop and implement a system for the efficient tracking and scheduling of interpreters through the use of current and future technology. It was determined that the recommendation was not feasible for the reasons set forth below and reported by the ITS Unit.
  - A focus group was held and, after analysis, it was determined that human intervention is always required when scheduling interpreter services due to three main reasons:

1. There are different court sessions and each session has a unique case flow structure. Based on the download into the system, ITS can not make a determination of whether or not to assign an interpreter based on the specific proceeding held on a specific date.
2. Continued changes in court dates and cancellations may not always be entered on time for ITS to receive notice and make the necessary adjustment.
3. Different dynamics at different locations create a challenge.

ITS currently has a computer system that allows the central office staff to manually input requests organized by date, district and language. It was determined that the best course of action is to enhance the current Scheduler system to minimize certain functions and facilitate overall coordination.

- The Committee initially supported the recommendation to change the Interpreter and Translator organizational structure, but has tabled this recommendation.
- The Committee supported the recommendation to utilize monitors in public areas or lobbies as a source of providing ongoing information to the public in languages common to the LEP population; the Committee is recommending that this recommendation be referred to the [Committee on Access to Facilities](#).

# 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.

The second outcome goal of the Strategic Plan is to respond to changing demographics by providing a diverse and culturally competent environment that is sensitive to the values and responsive to the needs of all who interact with the Judicial Branch.

A *Diversity in the Branch Workplace Committee* was established and completed its work by 2009, making eighteen recommendations to support the Branch in meeting the changing demographics goal. The Chief Justice accepted the Committee's recommendations and subsequently established an [Advisory Committee on Cultural Competency](#) to, among other things, develop an implementation plan for the recommendations. The work of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Competency supports many of the Plan's outcome goals of access to justice, changing demographics, delivery of services, collaboration and accountability.

The [External Affairs Advisory Board](#) was formed, under the collaboration goal, in November of 2008 to review the Speakers Bureau, Seniors and the Law program, and the Media Campaign for Public Education, which were three initiatives identified in the Public Service and Trust Commission's Implementation plan. The [Speakers Bureau](#) is an ongoing Branch function maintained by the External Affairs Division.

While there is no single committee dedicated solely to the changing demographics goal, many other initiatives, including the [Committee on Limited English Proficiency](#), the [Advisory Board on the Americans with Disabilities Act](#), the [Pro Bono Committee](#), the [Access to Justice Commission](#), and the [Self-represented Parties Workgroup](#) by their nature support this important goal.

# Delivery of Services

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

## **Alternatives to Court Appearances: Standing Committee on Video and Teleconferencing**

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 Chief Justice established a permanent [Standing Committee on Video and Teleconferencing](#) which was charged with implementing the recommendations.

### **The Standing Committee will continue its work on the following activities between July 2011 and June 2012:**

- Monitor implementation of proposed Practice Book rules, upon passage, for criminal and juvenile matters
- Oversee and encourage usage of videoconferencing in courts and administrative offices
- Maintain and oversee equipment and services provided to courts for videoconferencing
- Maintain and oversee usage of Videoconferencing Scheduler System being used by the Branch and Department of Correction to schedule videoconferences
- Assist staff and courts with use of videoconferencing equipment
- Educate and inform the legal community (staff, judges, attorneys, etc.) on the potential uses of videoconferencing equipment for both video and teleconferencing
- Provide training on Videoconference Scheduler System for staff as needed

### **As time and resources permit, the Standing Committee will begin work on the following activities:**

- Pursue ideas for other areas to use videoconferencing, such as video appearances in lieu of court appearances in competency hearings for defendants held at the Connecticut Valley Hospital in Middletown
- Create webpage for questions regarding videoconferencing in the courts
- Purchase and install teleconferencing equipment
- Propose revisions to Practice Book rules regarding use of videoconferencing in Small Claims

### **The following activities were completed between July 2010 and June 2011:**

- Upgraded Branch network infrastructure
- Upgraded video technology in courtrooms
- Installed videoconferencing equipment in court and Court Support Services Division locations
- Trained court staff in the operation of videoconferencing equipment; as part of training, educated staff on potential uses for videoconferencing
- Piloted Videoconference Scheduler System in December 2010; rolled out statewide in April 2011
- Trained staff on the use of Videoconference Scheduler System
- Attended annual meetings in the fall of 2010 for Civil, Family and Juvenile judges to discuss and demonstrate videoconference capabilities

- Attended Legal Exchange meetings and provided information and demonstrations of videoconferencing equipment for members of the criminal bar in each judicial district
- Installed large videoconference/SMART board system at the Wethersfield administrative offices of the Court Operations unit
- Drafted Practice Book rules proposal for the use of videoconferencing in Juvenile and Criminal matters
- Offered videoconferencing to out-of-state parties to accommodate requests made under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

## **Commission on Civil Court Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)**

The [Commission on Civil Court Alternate Dispute Resolution](#) is charged with studying and assessing the utilization and effectiveness of currently available court-sponsored alternative dispute resolution (ADR) programs for civil, non-family cases from the perspective of litigants and other stakeholders, and to make recommendations that will improve the utilization and effectiveness of court sponsored ADR. The members of the Commission are:

- Hon. Linda K. Lager, Chair
- Hon. James W. Abrams
- Hon. Jon M. Alander
- Atty. Christopher Bernard, Koskoff, Koskoff & Bieder
- Atty. Joseph Burns, Rome McGuigan
- Atty. Agnes Cahill, The Hartford
- Atty. David W. Cooney, RisCassi & Davis
- Atty. Sarah F. DePanfilis, Day Pitney
- Hon. Kari A. Dooley
- Atty. Timothy S. Fisher, McCarter & English
- Hon. Frederick A. Freedman
- Hon. Robert L. Holzberg
- Atty. Irene Jacobs, Jacobs & Jacobs
- Atty. Patricia Kaplan, Executive Director, New Haven Legal Assistance
- Professor Carolyn Wilkes Kaas, Quinnipiac University School of Law
- Atty. Jeffrey T. Londregan, Conway & Londregan
- Atty. Duncan MacKay, Northeast Utilities Service Company
- Hon. Aaron Ment, former Chief Court Administrator
- Atty. David A. Reif, McCarter & English
- Atty. Roland G. Schroeder, General Electric
- Atty. Robert Simpson, Shipman & Goodwin
- Hon. Eliot N. Solomon
- Professor James H. Stark, University of Connecticut School of Law
- Hon. Dawne G. Westbrook

### **The Committee has, since its creation in December 2010:**

- Defined a successful court-sponsored ADR program as one that consists of “a procedurally fair, cost effective and ethical process designed to timely resolve the type of dispute at hand, taking in to account the needs of all the involved stakeholders; conducted by trained neutrals applying best practices which leads to an outcome or a change in position the stakeholders find satisfactory, even if the case itself does not settle”
- Conducted information gathering sessions with stakeholders in order to determine what they are looking for from [court-sponsored civil ADR programs](#) and to evaluate existing civil ADR programs. Stakeholders included Civil presiding judges; chief clerks and Civil caseflow coordinators; members of the Connecticut Bar Association’s Young Lawyers and Litigations sections; and attorneys who practice in the Middlesex and Tolland judicial districts
- Sent out over 1,800 electronic and paper surveys to stakeholders to determine what they are looking for from court-sponsored civil ADR programs and other existing ADR programs

- Created an online [Wiki page](#) that serves as a shared workspace for the commission members and provides full public access to the ongoing work of the Commission
- Created four subcommittees, each of which must consider uniformity and resource allocation:
  - **[Subcommittee on Utilization of Court-Sponsored ADR:](#)**  
**Charge:** To examine how and why court-sponsored ADR programs are used for civil cases in Connecticut by evaluating existing court-sponsored civil ADR programs
  - **[Subcommittee on Delivery of Court-Sponsored ADR:](#)**  
**Charge:** To evaluate the process of delivering ADR services by identifying standards for a procedurally fair, cost-effective, timely and ethical process; the subcommittee should consider scheduling, case management issues, and case selection
  - **[Subcommittee on Training:](#)**  
**Charge:** To identify and describe the qualities including, but not limited to, specific skills and subject-matter expertise of an effective and ethical civil ADR neutral; and identify methods to select and train effective and ethical neutrals to preside over existing and potential court-sponsored civil ADR programs
  - **[Subcommittee on Evaluation:](#)**  
**Charge:** To conduct research on processes and criteria that could be used to evaluate ADR programs and providers in a rigorous and meaningful manner; and identify methods that could be used to evaluate Connecticut's court-sponsored civil ADR programs

**The Commission is expected to conclude its work and report to the Chief Justice by December 2011. In consideration of its final report, the Commission will:**

- Evaluate existing court-sponsored ADR programs and make recommendations for changes
- Identify and recommend model standards for the delivery of court-sponsored ADR programs
- Identify and recommend methods to select and train effective ADR providers
- Identify and recommend effective evaluation processes for court-sponsored ADR programs

## **Automated Telephone Systems (ATS) Committee**

The charge of the [Automated Telephone Systems \(ATS\) Committee](#) is to determine if automated systems serve the needs of the Judicial Branch and its stakeholders, in terms of service, efficiency and cost, compared to non-automated systems. The committee will research and analyze performance, cost, and effectiveness of existing ATS within the Branch, and will recommend the design and use of automated and non-automated systems, including a Branchwide call center with extended hours.

The Committee members are:

- Hon. Patrick L. Carroll III, Deputy Chief Court Administrator, Chair
- Atty. Ann-Margaret Archer, Chief Clerk, Stamford Judicial District
- Robert L. Brennan, Supervising Support Enforcement Officer (Call Center), Rockville
- Alejandra Donath, Court Operations, Interpreter and Transcript Services Unit
- Ann Foley, Program Manager, Superior Court Operations Division
- Esther Harris, Jury Manager, Jury/E-filing Services Call Center
- Cynthia Jacobs-Fernandez, Secretary, Middletown Judicial District
- Atty. Louis A. Pace, Jr., Chief Clerk, Danbury Judicial District
- Carlos Rivera, Adult Probation, Court Support Services Division
- Atty. William Sadek, Chief Clerk, New Haven Judicial District
- Gail Vernali, Central Administration, Court Support Services Division
- Atty. Cortez White, Director, Materials Management, Administrative Services Division

The members of the committee represent Judicial Branch administrative and field staff and those existing call centers which rely heavily on automated telephone systems. The members are included both for their technical abilities and experiences as well as their knowledge of how existing systems perform and are perceived by staff and the public.

**The Committee will define the necessary steps to meet the identified activities in its charge and will define new activities as may be necessary. It is anticipated that the following activities will be addressed:**

- Collect and analyze existing research on automated telephone systems
- Collect and analyze usage of automated telephone systems in state and federal courts
- Analyze and test the cost and effectiveness of existing Branch phone systems
- Recommend changes to the existing phone systems including the use of scripts, functions, and use of non-automated systems
- Research, analyze and make recommendations concerning cost and effectiveness of a Branchwide call center with extended hours

## **Case Management/Civil Commission**

The [Civil Commission](#) is charged with reviewing the civil docket and the development of practices that will improve the administering of judicial services to litigants, the bar and the public, and will promote the resolution of cases in a fair, timely and cost-effective manner.

### **The Commission will continue its work on the following activities between July 2011 and June 2012:**

- Submit proposed revision to [Practice Book](#) §13-4, entitled “Experts”, to the [Judges Advisory Committee on E-Filing](#)
- Consider proposed Practice Book rule changes by commission members as they arise, to submit to the [Rules Committee of the Superior Court](#)
- Review proposals as they arise for revisions to forms; caseflow practices; clerks’ office procedures; and trial management practices and procedures

### **As time and resources permit, the Commission will begin work on the following activities:**

- Consideration of proposal to substitute “Request for Extension of Time” for a “Motion for Extension of Time to Plead or Respond to Discovery” (working group established to address)
- Consider issue of bench/bar training; how best to disseminate information to the bar

### **The following activities were completed between July 2010 and June 2011:**

- Restructured Civil Commission: existing members and new members (two judges and bar organization presidents/designees added from the Connecticut Bar Association, Connecticut Defense Lawyers Association, Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association); three-year term limits implemented; appointment letters with term limits sent to members
- Civil Commission quarterly meetings scheduled in advance for four quarters; members notified of meeting dates
- [Request for Adjudication of Discovery or Deposition Dispute Under Statewide Standing Order](#), form JD-CV-119, was implemented
- The following rules changes were submitted to and approved by the Rules Committee of the Superior Court and subsequently approved by the Judges of the Superior Court at their [Annual Meeting](#) in June 2011:
  - Revision of [Practice Book](#) § 11-1, entitled “Form of Motion and Request,” to eliminate the requirement of attaching an order page to a motion
  - Revisions to Practice Book §§ 13-1, 13-2, 13-5, 13-9, 13-14, 13-33 and 13-30(j), regarding the electronic discovery rules, to encompass future technological changes and developments
  - Revisions to Practice Book § 11-18, entitled “Oral Arguments of Motions in Civil Matters,” to make language consistent with instructions on non-arguable short calendar

## **Complex Litigation Committee**

The Complex Litigation Committee was charged with reviewing and evaluating the Complex Litigation Docket Program, including the program's criteria and standards, and to identify possible areas for improvement. The Committee developed a report and list of recommendations and in September 2009, a small workgroup, consisting of the Chief Administrative Judge for Civil Matters and the Deputy Director of Civil began the process of prioritizing and implementing the recommendations.

### **The following activities were completed between July 2010 and June 2011:**

- Both the Chief Administrative Judge of Civil and the Civil Presiding Judge in all judicial districts are notified when a complex litigation application has been filed, thereby facilitating consideration of potential alternatives to the referral to the Complex Litigation docket in cases where the referral is sought based upon length of trial
- The scheduling of complex litigation events is entered into the Branch's internal Edison system and the next scheduled event is available for viewing on the Branch's website when reviewing individual cases

## **Committee on Court Recording Monitors and Court Reporters**

The [Committee on Court Recording Monitors and Court Reporters](#) was established to recommend ways in which to improve access to the court record, including court transcripts, and to develop recommendations, after examination of the issues, to improve the quality of the court record.

Between November 2009 and January 2011 the Committee, which was chaired by then-Associate Justice Joette Katz, met ten times. In late 2010, the Committee developed a draft report containing fourteen recommendations and presented it to the Chief Justice. The Committee held its final meeting in January 2011 and its members unanimously approved the final report. The Chief Justice accepted and endorsed [the report and its recommendations](#), and directed that implementation be completed, as time and resources allow, under the oversight of the Office of the Chief Court Administrator.

### **The designees under the Office of the Chief Court Administrator will continue to work on the following activities between July 2011 and June 2012:**

- The continuing development of a pilot program in the Child Protection Session in the Middlesex Judicial District that will allow attorneys of record and parties to cases to obtain copies of the audio record of proceedings. This project was recommended by the original [Committee to Expedite Child Protection Appeals](#) to help effectuate speedier appeals in the Child Protection Session by allowing appellate attorneys to immediately review the audio record, rather than wait for costly transcripts. As of June 2011, the Branch's Superior Court Operations Division and the Information Technology Division were developing the protocol that will allow for the audio to be accessible to attorneys and parties to child protection cases.
- Completion of an Internet-based Digital Records website that will allow users to download audio and courtroom log notes, which are brief notations of the proceedings. The protocol will allow users to simultaneously listen to the audio recording while manually scrolling the log notes, and for the user to listen to specific portions of audio by clicking on the note to advance the recording to that point in the proceeding.

### **As time and resources permit, work will begin on the following activities:**

- Analog tape recording systems, currently in use in about twenty-five percent of Branch courtrooms, will be replaced with digital audio recording equipment and software
- The Transcript Services Unit will review training that is currently provided to court recording monitors and court reporters
- The Transcript Services Unit will develop training for court recording monitors and court reporters on the creation of log notes to ensure quality, uniformity and consistency
- An examination of statutes, policies, procedures and Practice Book rules governing electronic access to the court record and, if necessary, the development of recommendations to ensure maximum access to the electronic record, in compliance with applicable disclosure law
- The development of technological infrastructure that will allow access, via the Internet, to audio recordings of certain court proceedings, such as certain civil cases, subject to applicable disclosure law, Practice Book rules and statutes

### **The following activities were completed between July 2010 and June 2011:**

- The Committee chair, Justice Joette Katz, along with Deputy Chief Court Administrator Judge Patrick L. Carroll III, Judge Marshall K. Berger, Jr., Superior Court Operations Executive Director Atty. Joseph D. D'Alesio, Court Operations Director Atty. James Maher and Legal Services Atty.

Martin Libbin conducted three regional outreach sessions for the members of the Bench, discussing the Committee's work, the final report and recommendations.

- Per the Committee's recommendation, the Judges of the Superior Court at their [Annual Meeting](#) in June voted to eliminate the practice of allowing Official Court Reporters and Court Reporters to take uncharged, paid time off to conduct private deposition work. The policy, which took effect July 1, 2011, is estimated to save the Branch tens of thousands of dollars annually. Further, it will ensure that judges, attorneys and parties to cases are able to proceed without delay due to the unavailability of court reporters to record proceedings.
- The Branch completed the installation of digital audio recording equipment with *For The Record* software in fifty-eight locations, replacing analog tape recording systems. As of July 1, 2011, approximately seventy-five percent of courtrooms and hearing rooms are outfitted with digital audio capability.
- The initial development of technological protocol that will allow the Branch, going forward, to store audio recordings of proceedings that will be accessible, subject to applicable disclosure law, to judges, attorneys, parties to cases and the public.

## **Criminal Practice Commission**

The charge of the [Criminal Practice Commission](#) is to improve the criminal justice system. Through combined efforts of judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys and court staff, information will be exchanged, issues will be identified and resolutions will be proposed that will enhance efficiency, professionalism and civility in the criminal courts and will improve the delivery of services to litigants, the bar, victims and the public.

### **The Commission will continue its work on the following activities between July 2011 and June 2012:**

- The [Habeas Reform Committee](#) will meet to identify issues and make recommendations regarding habeas proceedings
- Finalize the recommendations made by the [Immigration Committee](#)
- Although not a committee under the Commission, the [Connecticut Sentencing Commission](#), as it relates to the Criminal Practice Commission, will be scheduling a focus group

### **As time and resources permit, the Commission will begin work on the following activities:**

- Address the need for uniformity among the judicial districts in such areas as: continuance requests, discovery issues, appearance requirements at the dismissal of diversionary programs, and the role of the Court Service Centers
- Explore designating a statewide judge for domestic violence cases
- Explore having a domestic violence docket in each court
- Explore having separate dockets for self-represented individuals
- Explore staggering the times scheduled on promises to appear and other dockets
- Explore ways to decrease the number of court appearances (i.e., do paperwork for diversionary programs prior to court date)
- Explore the possibility of evening and/or weekend court
- Determine the best allocation of courthouse space, including the need for a confidential area in the courthouse for defense counsel to speak with clients
- Examine the criminal canvass and get defendants to sign criminal canvass
- Explore the online/electronic adjudications that allow for the payment of fines in appropriate cases
- Increase cooperation between the bench and the bar
- Explore ways to separate the victim advocates from prosecutors' offices

### **The following activities were completed between July 2010 and June 2011:**

- The Immigration Committee has made the following recommendations to the Commission:
  - Adoption of policies relating to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activity within Branch courthouses
  - Change in Court Support Services Division policy regarding the elimination of the requirement of probation officers to inquire about a probationer's immigration status
  - Recommended changes to Practice Book §§ 37-3(2), 39-19, 39-27(2) based on the March 31, 2010 United States Supreme Court decision in [Padilla v. Kentucky](#)

## **Committee to Expedite Child Protection Appeals**

The Committee to expedite Child Protection Appeals, which replaced an earlier version of a committee with the same name, was charged with continuing to reduce the time the court process takes so that children can achieve permanency as soon as possible. Specifically, the committee was charged with identifying areas at the appellate level where delays occur, assessing the need for increased training of court personnel and attorneys on the urgency of child protection matters, and proposing rules and new procedures to expedite child protection appeals. The committee was also charged with developing performance measures to gauge the success of the changes implemented in fulfillment of this charge.

### **The following activities were completed between July 2010 and June 2011:**

- Drafted a revised Chapter 79a of the Rules of Appellate Procedure which reduces the time between filing an appeal and disposition
- The implementation of internal procedures that reduce the time that child protection appeals remain pending in the Supreme and Appellate courts

### **Recommendations:**

- The creation of a committee to assess and make recommendations regarding child protection proceedings in the superior court
- The continued monitoring for compliance of the enhanced internal operating procedures at the Supreme and Appellate courts

## **Jury Committee: Jury Communications Review Committee (JCRC)**

The [Jury/Communications Review Committee](#) is charged with determining whether the Judicial Branch uses best practices for summoning, notification, management and utilization of jurors and to recommend new approaches and initiatives.

### **The Jury Committee / JCRC will continue work on the following activities between July 2011 and June 2012:**

- The development of a new juror orientation video; resources for in-house production of the video will be identified and a project plan completed by October
- Continuous outreach to courts will focus on improved initial juror utilization or yield
- The reporting juror utilization study will continue with data from eighteen court locations being compiled and analyzed through the end of the calendar year (December 2011)
- The JCRC will continue to hold regular meetings to review and revise publications and other materials provided to jurors and potential jurors
- [On-line services](#) for jurors will be expanded to allow jurors to confirm or postpone their service via the jury website
- Development of a jury clerks' manual and training for all jury personnel

### **As time and resources permit, the Jury Committee / JCRC will begin work on the following activities:**

- Material describing accommodations for blind and visually impaired jurors will be developed and provided to members of the bar
- A plan for assessing and recommending improvements to amenities and services in state jury rooms and facilities will be developed and a jury accommodations team will be formed

### **The following activities were completed between July 2010 and June 2011:**

- Between September 2009 and August 2010, approximately 552,400 potential jurors were summoned, a reduction of nearly 5,200 from the previous court year. Of those summoned jurors, 102,528 served at least one day, an increase of 7,633 over the 2009 court year
- A report with recommendations concerning counseling for jurors in stressful cases was submitted to the Chief Court Administrator
- A pilot program of post-verdict mental health debriefing was held in November of 2010
- A [general education video](#) about the Connecticut jury system was created and shared with the civil presiding judges. The educational video explains the statutes that govern the Jury system, the policies that the Branch follows with regard to jury management, and the voir dire and selection process. The video was written, scripted and produced by Jury Administration staff and Court Operations Technology Support Unit staff and posted online
- A pre-screening pilot program was completed and a report with findings was submitted to the Committee co-chairs
- A training video for judges was completed and presented at the spring 2011 meeting of the civil presiding judges

- Locations that adopted the recommendations for improved initial utilization or yield demonstrated increases in the percentage of jurors that served at least one day
- Meetings with administrative judges took place in the fall of 2010, during which recommendations were made to adjust the numbers of individuals summoned for jury service
- The Jury Handbook, [“Your Guide to Jury Service, an Obligation and an Honor.”](#) was revised and the new version has been posted on the Branch website; it explains to potential jurors what they can expect during the process, answers an extensive list of frequently asked questions, provides contact information for people who would rather speak with a person and for those with disabilities who need an accommodation to serve as a juror
- Enhanced measures to improve security of personal identifying data including the expanded use of secure File Transfer Protocol (FTP) to safeguard the passage of juror data between state agencies

## **Self-represented Parties Workgroup**

The Committee on Self-represented Parties was charged with helping to improve the delivery of services by examining ways to assist self-represented parties in effectively participating in the court process by enhancing the guidance and assistance provided by the Branch to those who interact with the court without representation either by choice or by necessity. In 2009, the formal Committee was disbanded and a [Workgroup](#), headed by the Committee's chair, was established to implement the Committee's recommendations and, when necessary, identify new areas of need along with recommendations to address those needs.

### **The Workgroup will continue its work on the following activities between July 2011 and June 2012:**

- Permit the [Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut](#) network to link to the Branch website, and in turn, the Branch shall be permitted to link to the Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut website
- Develop a proposal for limited-scope representation (LSR)
- Re-start in September 2011 the Volunteer Attorney Days program in the Hartford and Waterbury judicial districts, with lawyers from the Family Section of the Hartford and Waterbury County Bar Associations providing pro bono services to self-represented parties with Family Matters cases
- Convert most commonly used Branch forms and publications to plain language and expand access to these publications to include non-judicial facilities
- Create additional [“how-to” videos](#) for self-represented parties to [guide them](#) through some of the basic procedures in civil and family court
- Recommend that the Branch continue its support for legal aid services across the state

### **As time and resources permit, the Workgroup will begin work on the following activities:**

- Establish a [Court Service Center](#) and/or [Public Information Desk](#) in every court
- Provide ongoing training for judges and staff in delivering the highest quality service to the public, especially in the area of dealing with self-represented parties
- Create a dedicated docket for self-represented parties, a pilot project to be implemented only under optimal staffing conditions
- Apply plain language and readability principles to the Connecticut Practice Book so it is more easily understood by self-represented parties
- Make wireless access readily available in courthouses and upgrade infrastructure and equipment for all Court Service Center and Public Information Desk locations
- The Branch should establish an ongoing collaborative relationship with [Probate Court](#) administration to discuss ways that both entities can continue to improve resources and services available for self-represented parties
- Form a Probate Court workgroup with representatives from the Judicial Branch and the Probate Court administration to create long-term plans and improvements to new and existing Branch and Probate services

- Group all materials, including relevant forms, publications, and available audio visual resources, and display them together online to make it easier for the public to locate and access these materials; consideration should be given to including a link to the [Law Libraries “Pathfinder” series](#)

**The following activities were completed between July 2010 and June 2011:**

- Organized with the Family Law Sections of the Hartford County Bar Association and the Waterbury Bar Association Volunteer Attorney Days, in which self-represented parties met with attorneys to discuss their family law cases; the volunteers served a combined 799 people who otherwise may not have had the opportunity to consult with a lawyer
- Conducted outreach and recruiting sessions for members of the New Haven County Bar Association to provide free legal advice for self-represented parties to foreclosure cases in the Volunteer Attorney Day program in the New Haven Judicial District; the program commenced in May 2011 and will conclude in January 2012
- Organized [forms by subject matter](#) in all clerk’s office and court service center locations, as well as on the Judicial Branch website
- Expanded the Volunteer Courthouse Information Officer program to four courthouses, helping to alleviate congestion in clerk’s offices and provide assistance to stakeholders
- Organized a June 2011 “Thank the Volunteers” reception with the Chief Justice to extend the Judicial Branch’s gratitude to the attorneys who have provided invaluable pro bono service in the Volunteer Attorney Day programs

**The following activities were referred from the Self-represented Parties Workgroup to the [Commission on Civil Court Alternate Dispute Resolution](#):**

- Create, where applicable, plain language publications about new and existing mediation programs to be displayed in all Court Service Centers, clerks’ offices, Law Libraries, and non-judicial locations
- Create an effective marketing plan to better promote [existing mediation programs](#) so that self-represented parties are aware of available mediation options at the earliest possible stage
- Expand the mediation services administered by the Community Mediation, Inc., Hartford Area Mediation and the Dispute Settlement Center to include an increased number of Geographical Area and juvenile courts, along with a pamphlet wall where possible

**The following activity was referred from the Self-represented Parties Workgroup to the [Committee on Limited English Proficiency](#):**

- Create a video-taped family support magistrate advisement of rights in English and Spanish

## **Bench/Bar Centralized Small Claims Committee**

The Bench/Bar Centralized Small Claims Committee was charged with reviewing Practice Book Rules, recommending uniform practices throughout the state, considering legislative proposals, and examining whether any changes should be made in the small claims process. The Committee was further charged with developing recommendations to make the best use of technology, to improve the small claims process and ensure that all disputes are resolved in a just, inexpensive and expeditious manner. Upon completion of the Committee's work and final report in September 2009, implementation of the [Small Claims](#) recommendations were assigned to a small group of designees from the Superior Court Operations unit.

### **The designees will continue their work on the following activities between July 2011 and June 2012:**

- Developing e-filing protocol for self-represented parties
- Expansion of documents available for e-filing
- Paperless files

### **As time and resources permit, the designees will begin work on the following activities:**

- Develop protocol for a pilot program that would allow the option for small claims cases to be mediated on a pro bono basis utilizing the services of retired judges, a mediation panel, or small claims mediators
- Scanning older cases and/or specific documents for ease of retrieval

### **The following activities were completed between July 2010 and June 2011:**

- Practice Book revisions were effective January 1, 2011 and included among other things: change in service of process from clerk's office to plaintiff; authority for e-filing; additional direction for chain of title requirements for consumer credit cases; enhanced processing for default cases
- [Electronic filing](#) became mandatory for attorneys through e-services effective March 1, 2011; through July 15, attorneys e-filed 13,732 small claims cases
- Developed an online tutorial, [How to e-file a Small Claims Case](#)
- Updated and published "[How Small Claims Court Works,](#)" (JDP-CV-45), a comprehensive overview, written in plain language, that explains the small claims process for plaintiffs and defendants, and includes links to services, examples of forms, and contact information

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PLAN

The Information Technology Division is charged with developing and implementing a three-year technology plan to address infrastructure requirements to ensure that the technical infrastructure needed to support on-going Branch operations, as well as any new initiatives anticipated over the next three to five years, would be in place.

**As time and resources permit, the Information Technology Division will continue its work on the following activities between June 2011 and June 2012:**

- Data Center Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity
  - Defined as an event occurring in or to the data center that significantly damages equipment and/or cripples the ability of the center to host one or more mission critical applications\* for one or more days. Such events include fire, flood, earthquake, tornado or major building, telecommunication, and/or power infrastructure failure.
  - Recovery Goals:
    - Restore full access to mission critical applications as soon as possible but not more than 4 hours following disaster declaration.
    - Restore partial or timeshare access to all other applications within 48 hours.
    - Preserve 100% of Judicial Branch electronically stored data.
    - Automate recovery procedures as much as possible to minimize the probability of human error under potentially stressful conditions.
  - Progress toward goals:
    - The Criminal Motor Vehicle System, CIB and Payroll have been tested and are currently capable of being hosted at our Alternate Processing Center (APC) in Waterbury.
    - Web servers hosting the Judicial Branch web site are currently operating at both the data center and APC and are capable of hosting the website from either location.
    - Database servers at the APC capture all transaction logs throughout the day and are available to host the e-filing databases in the event of a data center disaster. Some manual effort is required to restore databases in the APC at this time. Future technological advances promise to make database recovery at the APC automatic and instantaneous as well.
    - All courthouses and offices are capable of accessing applications directly from the data center or APC.
    - Internet access is available to all courthouses and offices through the data center or APC.
    - Data backup systems are installed at both the data center and APC and contain six weeks worth of daily backup data at both locations.
  - Activities currently in progress:
    - Information storage systems, virtual servers and network equipment to host other mission critical applications from either the data center or APC and

- Future Activities:
  - Test the recovery of other mission critical applications at the APC following completion of the above activity.
  - Test capabilities to instantaneously recover databases in the APC.
- \*Mission Critical Applications based on most current COOP Plan:
  - Internet & VPN Services
  - Civil/Family (E-filing)
  - CRMVS
  - Juvenile
  - Child Protection
  - CIB
  - CMIS
  - SAVIN/Victim Notification
  - Jury
  - JASMIN/Payroll
  - Electronic Mail
  - Protective Order Registry
  - PRAWN

**For the Record (FTR) Statewide Deployment and Enhanced Capabilities: Project Goals:**

- Purchase and installation statewide of new and replacement hardware and software is on-going and will continue to occur over the next two to three years.
- Public access to the digital court record; this project running concurrently with the hardware and software upgrade is to create the ability to make the digital court record available to the public through the Branch website.
- A proof-of-concept project involving the Child Protection Court in Middletown has been developed and is ready for demonstration; expanded capabilities for FTR in the future including the ability to monitor multiple courtrooms from a single site will be explored in the coming year.

**Applications Upgrades: Replace CRMVS and CIB**

**Projected Completion: Beyond 2013**

The goal of this project is to modernize the technology and improve the business processes for both CRMVS and CIB through incremental upgrade and enhancement of these applications. This approach is the same one used successfully in the e-filing project to replace the old CV/Family system. The projects currently active include:

- E-Citations – This project is working with state and local police to issue infraction tickets electronically, including sending all data paperlessly to CIB. Once at CIB the infraction ticket is processed electronically to update both images and data with minimal human effort. All of the foundational work is currently in production but it will take additional ITD effort as each new police department is added. If the police department is using a Records Management System (RMS) that is different from one previously implemented then there will need to be design and

testing assistance to bring the police department on board. If the police department is using an already implemented RMS, then just testing is required.

- Electronic payments: Allows the public to use the Internet to pay or plead not guilty on infraction tickets. The data paperlessly updates both CIB and Revenue. This is currently in production and is expected to only need minor enhancements.
- CIDRIS – This CJIS project is the first step in the creation of true on-line booking for all criminal cases. CIDRIS is starting with OUI offenses for the state police, electronically feeding data to CRMVS where the case can be processed immediately with minimal human effort. Eventually this will expand to OUIs for local police and the next step would be other non-OUI offenses. This project is in the final stages of testing for the first state police troop. It will take minor ITD testing involvement to add more state police troops, but will require design, coding and testing effort to add other local police departments for OUIs or to expand the scope by adding non-OUIs for already participating agencies.
- PERKS/CAPS – These projects are being run together with dual focuses to guarantee consistency. Currently active is Z-Court processing for CIB not guilty pleas and Continuance/Information Sheet processing for CRMVS (both are in design/coding, but production dates have not been set). Some of the early deliverables include ticket printing directly from the clerk's office (already in production) and electronic scheduling of criminal cases (this has been defined, but coding has not started).

**Upgrade to hardware platform for CRMVS, CIB, JASMIN, etc.: Projected Completion: Mid-2013: Project Goals:**

- Replace 10-year-old Alpha/OpenVMS platform approaching its end of service life. This platform hosts CRMVS, CIB, JASMIN, Jury, Juvenile, Barmaster among its approximately 20 applications.
- Combine storage and backup requirements of the replacement platform onto existing infrastructure to streamline system management processes and save money by eliminating the need for a platform-specific infrastructure.
  - Progress toward goals:
    - Integrity test system acquired in March 2011 to begin application testing.
  - Activities currently in progress:
    - Test system is currently being configured.
    - Proof of concept test is underway to save the data backups of our current system to the consolidated backup infrastructure. This will test the ability to combine the backup requirements of the Integrity platform onto the common backup infrastructure.
  - Future activities:
    - Test applications on the Integrity platform and make necessary modifications and configuration adjustments.
    - Acquire and install full Integrity production platform.

**Applications: Accelerate Retiring Civil/Family Application: Projected Completion: June, 2012**

The goal of this project is to remove the last remaining functionality of the old Civil/Family application still operating at the Executive Branch Data Center into Judicial's e-filing system. Once accomplished, this makes future enhancements to e-filing much more streamlined and less

complex because the constraints and requirements of the old technology will no longer have to be accommodated.

### **Process Improvement: Automated Regression Test Tool: Projected Completion: Beyond 2013**

The goal of this project is to find an automated application testing tool that will ease the burden of complete application re-testing at each production release of enhancements; thus allowing us to deliver stable, fully tested application releases faster. The step that is currently active, using staff assigned to other priority projects as they have time, is to evaluate various available software products (both free and paid) to find the best match for our needs and staff skills. Once a product is selected and funded (if a paid version) we will choose a pilot application to use as a proof-of-concept and for training our staff. Once the pilot is completed and we document results including “lessons learned”, we would need to plan for integration of the product and testing approach into other applications – this will include the ability support the product and train staff.

### **As time and resources permit, the Information Technology Division will begin work on the following activities:**

- Desktop: Migrate to *Windows 7* on all Branch PCs: Projected Completion: April 2014
- Business Continuity – APC Phase II: Projected Completion: January, 2013: This phase addresses the non-mission critical applications. A copy of the data for these applications is stored on the backup system at the APC, but unlike the mission critical applications, these applications do not have a dedicated platform on which to run. It is proposed to have a shared platform to run these applications on a time-share basis until dedicated hardware can be acquired and installed. The proof-of-concept test for this will be done following completion of phase 1. This phase also includes proof-of-concept testing of synchronized copies of databases that are updated in real time at both the data center and APC. This would allow databases to be immediately available to “take over” at the APC in the event of a data center disaster.
- Desktop: Upgrade to Microsoft Office 2010 on all Branch PCs: Projected Completion: April, 2014: Purchases of licenses, testing and training plans all in initial stages.
- Software : Upgrade to Exchange 2010 for E-Mail: Projected Completion: July, 2012: Currently preparing to upgrade our current Exchange 2003 e-mail infrastructure to Exchange 2010 starting in the fall 2011. Our E-Mail administrator has established an Exchange 2010 sandbox environment to test out integration with the Outlook 2003 client. Work has also begun with Microsoft and EMC on the backend mail storage system design. Microsoft will be onsite in August to help us put together the configuration.

### **The following activities were completed between July 2010 and June 2011:**

- Hardware – Video Conferencing
- Network – Wide Area Network Upgrade
- Becoming Our Own Internet Service Provider (ISP)
- Desktop – PC Refresh has replaced 2,300 PCs

## **Uniformity of Court Procedures**

The Committee on the Uniformity of Court Procedures was charged with examining practices and procedures in civil, housing, family and juvenile courts to facilitate the uniformity of practice statewide. Since 2010, implementation of the Committee's recommendations has been carried out by designees of the Office of the Chief Court Administrator.

### **The designees under the Office of the Chief Court Administrator will continue to work on the following activities between July 2011 and June 2012:**

- Establish procedures for the monitoring and posting of changes to standing orders to ensure accurate and current information is provided on the website and made available to the public at all times

# 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.

## **Chief Court Administrator/Attorneys General**

This initiative was developed in response to a focus group conducted with attorneys from all departments within the Office of the Attorney General, who frequently interact with the Judicial Branch. The information from that focus group highlighted the need for the creation of a mechanism to facilitate ongoing communication between the Judicial Branch and the Office of the Attorney General.

### **Representatives from the Office of the Chief Court Administrator and the Office of the Attorney General will continue to work on the following activities between July 2011 and June 2012:**

- Continue meeting in the spring and fall to follow up on ongoing projects and discuss any new issues or concerns
- Drafting revisions to the Practice Book rules on the filing of administrative appeals to streamline the process, reduce the size of the record, facilitate electronic filing and reduce costs and delays
- Developing and implementing a process for the civil enforcement of jury summonses under C.G.S. Section 51-237, including ways to reduce the numbers of delinquent jurors by eliminating deceased or disqualified jurors from the list and suggesting revisions to the currently mandated statutory process
- Working with the Attorneys General to permit centralized handling of claims against home improvement contractors under C.G.S. Section 20-427(b)
- Continuing discussions on ways to handle the service of process of restraining orders to ensure reasonable costs of service and adequate notice
- Finalizing a draft amendment to Practice Book Section 4-7, requiring the use of a personal identifying information form, to permit attorneys general appropriate access to the form
- Providing information to the Office of the Attorney General regarding electronic access to the Child Protection Docket calendars

### **The following activities were completed between July 2010 and June 2011:**

- Developed and implemented a process to allow the Department of Labor to electronically file wage executions for the overpayment of unemployment compensation benefits under C.G.S. Section 31-273
- Worked with the Office of the Attorney General to ensure that appropriate locations were identified and provided for that office to install computers in Rockville, New Britain and Middletown
- Developed and implemented a process for handling civil actions brought by individuals under C.G.S. Section 17b-301d, the state False Claims Act, to ensure compliance with the statutorily required initial sealed phase of the case

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

This Workgroup was charged with improving communication and enhancing the relationship between and among the clerks' offices, local bar associations and members of the bar as a whole. Specifically, the Workgroup was charged with developing a program to be followed in all judicial districts for periodic meetings between judges, court staff, bar associations, members of the bar and legal support staff. This initiative, which is known as [The Legal Exchange Program](#), provides a forum for the discussion of local issues, new statutes, and rules or policies as they arise.

### **The Workgroup will continue its work on the following activities between July 2011 and June 2012:**

- Conduct survey/focus groups of the bar and legal support staff to assess needs/wants and identify problems in advance of meetings
- A specific agenda should be created for each judicial district and include topics submitted from the bar/legal support staff and from judges and Branch staff
- Prepare a list of available technology to assist the chief clerks when developing future programs
- These programs should be held twice a year, in the fall after the October Practice Book and statutory changes go into effect, and in the spring
- Invite the various divisions and units of the Branch to participate in the Legal Exchange Program
- Coordinate with other committees in order to use the Legal Exchange Program as a forum for educating various stakeholders as to new initiatives
- Consider scheduling programs based on needs/requests of the bar on a specific topic(s) within civil, criminal, family, juvenile or housing to allow for detailed presentations to smaller groups

### **As time and resources permit, the Workgroup will begin work on the following activities:**

- As a follow-up to the Legal Exchange Program, information culled from these sessions should be posted on the Branch website

### **The following activities were completed between September 2010 and June 2011:**

- Legal Exchange programs were held in all judicial districts
- A separate event was held for criminal matters in each judicial district

# 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.

## Civility and Decorum in the Courts

- *Through greater interaction between the Branch and the Standing Committee on Professionalism of the Connecticut Bar Association, and through ongoing discussions with Branch committees and commissions, civility and courtroom decorum will be improved.*

Technological advances contribute enormously to improving the delivery of services in the practice of law in Connecticut. With the implementation of the Branch's electronic filing system, attorneys can now initiate all civil cases and file briefs or motions from the comfort of their offices or homes at virtually any time of the day. Indeed, attorneys to cases can read their opposing counsel's briefs and motions and respond electronically without the need for so much as a phone call to the other side. And because many motions are to be determined "on the papers," that is, the judge is asked to rule on a request solely on the written argument rather than an in-court argument, there are fewer opportunities for attorneys to engage one another, or the court, in person.

Few would question that practicing law today has become tougher; there are many more attorneys competing for fewer clients who can afford their skills. Zealous advocacy, which is precisely what attorneys are trained to do, is expected by people who hire lawyers in pursuit of justice. But as members of a profession that is by nature adversarial there remains the need — indeed, an obligation to the effective administration of justice — by the members of the bar to strike a balance between vigorous advocacy on behalf of clients and professional courtesy and civility with one another and the bench.

As United States Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor told the members of the Washington University (Mo.) School of Law in 1997, *"When the lawyers themselves generate conflict, rather than focusing on the dispute between the parties they represent, it distorts our adversarial system. More civility and greater professionalism can only enhance the pleasure lawyers find in practice, increase the effectiveness of our system of justice, and improve the public's perception of lawyers."*

Under the Branch's Strategic Plan, Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers approved the Civility and Decorum initiative, cementing what had been a rather informal if ongoing exchange on professionalism and civility between the bench and the bar. Chief Appellate Judge Alexandra D. DiPentima, Judge Salvatore C. Agati, Judge Arthur C. Hadden, and Judge Kenneth L. Shluger accepted the invitation of the Connecticut Bar Association (CBA) to be members of the Association's Standing Committee on Professionalism to help foster the relationship between judges and lawyers. The Judges' involvement has included outreach to the deans of area law schools and to their fellow members on the Bench. For example, more than three dozen judges have volunteered to take part in civility and professionalism outreach programs aimed at law school students organized by the CBA's Law School Liaison Subcommittee. In particular, Quinnipiac University has embraced the Bench's civility and decorum efforts, inviting Chief Justice Rogers in [2010](#) and Justice Flemming L. Norcott Jr. in [2011](#) to address the Law School's graduating classes.

The Chief Justice also spoke at the annual Bench-Bar Symposium on Professionalism, held in November 2010 in the Fairfield Judicial District and co-sponsored by the Branch, the CBA and the Fairfield County Bar Association. The annual event draws dozens of state and federal judges and attorneys and affords them the opportunity to have frank discussions in breakout sessions on the state of professionalism, civility and decorum within the courts and the legal profession. At the 2010 event, the Chief Justice offered attorneys a "professionalism punch list" of appropriate behavior when appearing before the Appellate and Supreme courts, such as showing patience and respect for opposing counsel and the bench.

New attorneys may never know the type of practice that was the rule of thumb two or more decades ago when cellular telephones, the Internet, texting and e-mail were still somewhat rare and lawyers who wanted to be heard on behalf of their clients had to appear before a judge in a courthouse. Today, an attorney starting out as a solo practitioner does not, necessarily, even need an office: armed with a laptop and a cellphone, one can almost practice law from a coffee shop that offers free WiFi. Discussing a case over a cup of coffee with a potential client, while researching decisions and filing motions online, may be convenient but it will not teach a member of the bar the art of lawyering: mastering the role of advocacy through civility, respect, fairness and comity towards fellow attorneys and the bench. When lawyers make rare appearances in court, or are hurrying from one courthouse to another with no time to observe how other lawyers interact with each other and the court, they may be less likely to develop an appreciation for probity and its usefulness in expeditiously resolving legal conflicts.

Of course, as former United States Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren E. Burger said in his 1971 remarks at the opening session of the American Law Institute, *“Every judge must remember that no matter what the provocation, the judicial response must be (a) judicious response, and that no one more surely sets the tone and the pattern for courtroom conduct than the presider.”*

To be sure, Connecticut’s jurists are among the nation’s best. In 2008, the Chief Justice appointed a five-member [Committee on Judicial Ethics](#), which meets regularly to consider ethics questions posed by judges. The Committee offers formal and informal opinions on questions of the rules of court and statutes that govern the ethical and professional conduct of judges. Also, to help ensure the continuation of the high levels of integrity endemic to the bench, the Judges of the Superior Court and the members of the Supreme and Appellate courts approved substantial changes to the Code of Judicial Conduct that became effective on January 1, 2011. The Code is based on the 2007 American Bar Association’s Model Code, and represents the first substantial change to the Code of Conduct since 1972. In addition to the four Canons, which delineate the “overarching principles of judicial ethics,” the members of the Bench may now be disciplined for violating thirty-seven binding and enforceable rules, much like members of the bar are subject to discipline for violating the Attorneys’ Rules of Professional Conduct.

It is noteworthy that in response to declining levels of civility and decorum, many other state and federal courts are requiring pledges and oaths of civility and decorum for members of the bench and the bar. For example, the South Carolina Supreme Court in April 2011 [issued a Letter of Caution](#) to an anonymous member of the bar who had appealed a disciplinary hearing panel’s finding of misconduct for, in part, violating that state’s lawyer’s oath which includes a pledge of “fairness, integrity, and civility...” The high court rejected the respondent attorney’s argument that such language is “unconstitutionally vague and overbroad,” noting, in part, “a person of common intelligence does not have to guess at the meaning of the civility oath.”

Connecticut has no such civility pledge, although the word “integrity” appears twenty-five times in the Code of Judicial Conduct and nine times in the Attorneys Rules of Professional Conduct. As defined, in part, in the Merriam-Webster dictionary, integrity is “firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values: incorruptibility.” Going forward, it remains imperative that the bench and bar continue their joint efforts to not only maintain professionalism, but to ensure that civility inherent to the learned profession of the law is not further diminished.

## **Courthouse Observation and Simulation Team**

The Courthouse Observation and Simulation Team (COST) was formed to ensure consistency in the quality of the delivery of services from one courthouse to another, through discrete, anonymous on-site observations of staff and procedures in Judicial Branch facilities, as well as telephone interactions with Branch staff. COST members come from all ranks of staff. To ensure a level of quality control and uniformity in how these observations are completed, the members are provided prepared checklists specific to the function of the office or process being observed. Observers have visited in person or contacted by telephone courthouses and Support Enforcement Services offices.

### **COST will continue its work on the following activities between July 2011 and June 2012:**

- Conduct observations at the following judicial districts and track improvements through corrective action planning: New Haven, New Britain, Hartford, Windham, New London, Danbury, Ansonia-Milford and Litchfield
- Launch first e-filing telephone interaction
- Add Superior Court Operations Division's Administration Unit to the list of units formally briefed after each observation

### **As time and resources permit, COST will begin work on the following activities:**

- Development of a COST database in collaboration with the Computer Systems Support Unit of Superior Court Operations Division

### **The following activities were completed between July 2010 and June 2011:**

- Observations, including debriefing of observers, briefing of executive management and Superior Court Operations Division directors, and establishment of corrective action plans where necessary were conducted for these districts: Stamford-Norwalk, Fairfield, Tolland and Waterbury
- Observation areas were expanded to include Law Libraries; the Office of Victim Services (telephone interactions); Language Line interpretation service referrals by clerks; and posting of Language Line information materials
- A focused observation (or spot check) of judicial marshals at metal detector posts in all courthouses was conducted; approximately fifty-four observations were conducted statewide and the results were provided to Judicial Marshal Services Administration
- A follow-up observation of the Law Library in the Tolland Judicial District was conducted and the results forwarded to Judge Support Services

## **Court Security**

[The Court Security Committee](#) was established as a permanent committee charged with providing recommendations on security within Judicial Branch facilities and emergency preparedness planning.

### **The Committee will continue its work on the following activities between July 2011 and June 2012:**

- Work with the Jury Administrator to address issues related to juror security
- Work with External Affairs to develop procedures on how to best notify the public when communication systems within a courthouse are not functioning
- Review the Judicial Branch's Security Manual to ensure that it meets the current needs of the Branch

### **The following activities were completed between July 2010 and June 2011:**

- Recommended that the Judicial Branch's Security Manual be revised to address procedures when visitors enter non-public areas
- Recommended that the Judicial Branch propose legislation making it a misdemeanor for an individual to violate the Chief Court Administrator's guidelines concerning the "Use and Possession of Electronic Devices in Superior Court Facilities"
- Recommended that the Judicial Branch adopt a policy prohibiting Branch employees from using their identification card when in a Branch facility on personal business

## **Expectations of the Public: Division Web Board**

This initiative was implemented under the charge of the Committee on Expectations of the Public to ensure that clear and consistent information is provided to those who interact with the Branch. Providing such information to the public begins with ensuring that Branch staff has access to current and accurate information. The Superior Court Operations Division Web Board coordinates and oversees the posting and updating of all of the information and material provided by the Superior Court Operation Division on the intranet for court staff and on the Internet for the public.

### **The Division Web Board will continue its work on the following activities between July 2011 and June 2012:**

- Reviewing materials posted on the intranet site, including manuals, procedural memoranda, quick cards, notices and publications
- Updating home pages and information for units within the Superior Court Operations Division
- Updating organizational charts and functions and responsibilities for each unit
- Developing procedures and schedules to ensure regular updating of materials and publications posted on intranet and Internet sites
- Checking links on all pages and within documents posted on the intranet for accuracy and viability
- Identifying staff responsible for posting and updating information
- Meeting at least quarterly to ensure coordination and collaboration between units within the Division

### **As time and resources permit, the Board will begin work on the following activities:**

- Review materials posted by the Court Operations Unit on the Internet
- Redesign the intranet site to improve usability and utility

### **The following activities were completed between July 2010 and June 2011:**

- Reorganized the Division Web Board and reassigned duties
- Revised the Division intranet home page to provide direct access to the information for each unit within the Superior Court Operations Division
- Reviewed and removed outdated information displayed under Special Projects
- Reviewed and removed outdated manuals from the intranet
- Updated links to manuals so most current version is available everywhere on the intranet
- Surveyed units regarding events calendar

## External Affairs Advisory Board

The [External Affairs Advisory Board](#) is charged with developing a comprehensive plan with specific action steps to educate the public, senior citizens, members of community organizations, and students about the role and function of the Connecticut Judicial Branch.

### **The Advisory Board will continue its work on the following activities between July 2011 and June 2012:**

- Invite senior citizens to go to their local courthouse to observe proceedings and to meet with a judge
- As part of the [Speakers Bureau](#), ask senior citizen centers if they would like to [have a judge come and address their group](#)
- Publicize the availability of the *Speakers Bureau* to community organizations
- Develop a bank of resources, such as statistics, that are readily available for judges who are part of the *Speakers Bureau*
- Encourage judges to inform the *Speakers Bureau* whenever they speak to a community group and provide an e-mail form for them to do so
- Provide [evaluation](#) forms to the judges and to the community organizations each time that a judge addresses an organization
- Expand the *Speakers Bureau* to include family support magistrates and Branch employees
- Ensure that there are accurate Branchwide statistics available about the number of judges and employees who speak to community organizations, and require the administrative divisions to inform the *Speakers Bureau* when employees speak to community groups
- E-mail a letter to public libraries advising them of Branch publications that are available on the website
- Attend social studies teachers' conferences and consider doing a workshop
- Develop a program for judges to use when either teachers visit courts or judges visit schools as part of a professional development day
- The Branch's [high school curriculum](#) should be revised to include the sentencing DVD that was prepared for the Law School for Journalists seminar
- Distribute notices in late July/early August to the designated school liaisons about resources that the Branch can provide
- Contact Sunday morning talk shows and radio stations about Branch-sponsored programs (such as the [Foreclosure Mediation Program](#))
- Explore the feasibility of developing a DVD with judges discussing how these types of programs work
- In an era of diminishing resources for the media, provide ways to educate the press about the courts, absent the day-to-day court beat reporter, such as using the Branch's website to its full potential (i.e. statistics) and providing opportunities for judges to educate the media about the courts (i.e. having judges visit media organizations to assist them in learning about the courts)
- Continue encouraging judges to take advantage of opportunities to educate the public about the courts and the judiciary through the media

**As time and resources permit, the Advisory Board will begin work on the following activities:**

- Develop a plan, in conjunction with the [Committee on Limited English Proficiency](#), to cultivate minority news organizations including predominantly non-English speaking media organizations
- Continue outreach efforts with minority bar associations and community groups

**The following activities were completed between July 2010 and June 2011:**

- Marketed the *Speakers Bureau* to the judges
- Sent an e-mail to all judges asking them to provide External Affairs with information about the number of groups they have addressed, the topics discussed, where the engagement occurred and their comments on how the event went
- Urged the Chief Justice and the Chief Court Administrator to continue their efforts to remind judges that speaking to the community is one of the most important ways to educate the public about what we do and who we are
- Recommended to the members of the Pre-Bench Orientation Committee that they inform new judges about the importance of the *Speakers Bureau* and in going out into the community
- Cultivated relationships with educational organizations, particularly those involving [social studies](#) teachers
- Sent out notices to judges in March of each year asking if they would be willing to speak to high school students in conjunction with [Law Day](#)
- Made arrangements for judges to speak to the schools identified
- Incorporated into every speaking engagement a request, if approved by both the judge and the organization, to contact the local media about the event
- Encouraged judges to let the External Affairs Division know when they are engaged in an activity that could educate the public about the courts and its programs
- Asked Chief Administrative Judges if they would be willing to write a column for the *Connecticut Law Tribune*; also continue encouraging judges to take advantage of opportunities to educate the public about the courts and the judiciary through the media
- Continue co-sponsoring yearly events with judges and members of the media to educate each other about our respective roles with the assistance of the [Judicial-Media Committee](#)
- Continued to monitor inquiries from the news media and stories about the Branch
- Continued to market positive stories about the judiciary and the Branch to news organizations
- Continued to contact editorial boards when necessary to present the Branch's position on an issue

## **Judicial Performance Evaluation Program Advisory Panel**

The [Judicial Performance Evaluation Program Advisory Panel](#) is charged with reviewing and implementing the recommendations of the Judicial Performance Evaluation Program Committee. Some recommendations include: expanding the pool of judges to be evaluated, retaining an expert to reconfirm that the questionnaires are statistically valid, amending attorney questionnaires to allow for comments, studying “attitude toward” questions in the judicial performance evaluation process, educating the bar on the Judicial Performance Evaluation Program, including policies on anonymity and confidentiality, employing technology to allow for the electronic distribution and submission of evaluation questionnaires and instituting a peer review process as a supplement to the evaluation program.

### **The Advisory Panel will continue its work on the following activities between July 2011 and June 2012:**

- Expand the Judicial Performance Evaluation Program by increasing opportunities for the evaluation of judges serving in geographical area (GA) court assignments; the High Volume Pilot Project tests an entirely new electronic system designed for the electronic identification of attorneys who meet certain eligibility criteria as well as the electronic distribution and completion of evaluation questionnaires
- Transition the computer program used for the pilot project from the Superior Court Operations Division to the Information Technology Division in order to ensure adequate support for the large number of outside users who will be able to access the electronic questionnaire this year
- Expand the pilot project to all GA courts, compile and analyze the results once complete, and refine, as required, the electronic system
- Modify the present evaluation questionnaires to expand opportunities for the fair, proper and comprehensive evaluation of judges
- The Judicial Performance Evaluation Program Advisory Panel’s newly formed [Subcommittee on Bias](#) will conduct a study of “attitude toward”/bias questions in the judicial performance evaluation process
- Expand the Judicial Performance Evaluation Program to include judge trial referees and develop protocol
- Reintroduce legislation to ensure that the performance evaluations of judge trial referees are kept confidential in the same manner as the performance evaluations of judges
- Retain an expert to examine the pilot project and to reexamine the evaluation questionnaires in use
- Develop an informational website regarding the Judicial Performance Evaluation Program
- Develop a mechanism for the automated distribution of attorney questionnaires
- Consider issues pertaining to appellate level evaluations

### **As time and resources permit, the Advisory Panel will begin work on the following activities:**

- Expand education and outreach to the bar through the development of a comprehensive marketing plan
- Expand the program to include family support magistrates

- Examine the content of the questionnaire provided to jurors and consider possibilities for electronic distribution and completion

**The following activities were completed between September 2010 and June 2011:**

- As part of the effort to expand opportunities for the evaluation of judges serving in GA courts, new eligibility criteria were developed for high volume court locations
- A new system was successfully developed for the electronic identification of eligible participants and the electronic distribution and completion of evaluation questionnaires
- An informational letter was drafted and sent to the bar regarding the statewide pilot project
- The first phase of the pilot was completed in GA-2 (Bridgeport) and GA-12 (Manchester) and based upon the results, the Advisory Panel approved expanding the pilot to all GA courts
- The JPEP program manager attended statewide Legal Exchange sessions to meet the members of the bar, provide information on the pilot project and encourage participation in the pilot and with the Judicial Performance Evaluation Program currently in place
- A peer development program for judges was established and implemented as an independent program separate from the Judicial Performance Evaluation Program

## **Public Service Excellence Workgroup**

The Public Service Excellence workgroup is charged with developing methods to advance and foster a service excellence culture throughout the entire Judicial Branch.

### **The Workgroup will continue its work on the following activities between July 2011 and June 2012:**

- Develop and offer an introductory program to Branch staff that describes how an employee's development in the Judicial Branch's core values promotes both public trust and a culture of service excellence
- Develop and offer training workshops for managers, supervisors, and staff that reinforce the Branch's core values of fairness, integrity, professionalism, and respect
- Complete the certification of additional facilitators for the FranklinCovey *7-Habits of Highly Effective People* program and offer additional workshops

### **As time and resources permit, the Workgroup will begin work on the following activities:**

- Develop a second phase of training that reinforces the skills learned in the *7-Habits* program and helps managers and supervisors apply them in the workplace
- Draft a Service Excellence Promise
- Identify unit-specific *Pillars of Service Excellence* workshops

### **The following activities were completed between July 2010 and June 2011:**

- Developed a comprehensive service excellence program for the Superior Court Operations Division titled *Pillars of Service Excellence*; the program is a service-oriented training program based on the Branch's core values
- Developed and conducted an introductory training program, *Leading the Way*, for managers and supervisors; over 400 managers and supervisors attended one of four sessions, which provided a framework for leadership and reinforced the important role managers and supervisors have in creating a culture of service excellence
- Recruited individuals from various Superior Court Operations Division units to develop curriculum or facilitate anticipated workshops; these employees will assist in offering the workshops
- Conducted additional workshops for supervisors and managers on *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*
- Secured a State Justice Institute grant to certify Judicial Branch employees as trained facilitators for the *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* program

## **Committee on the Utilization of Judge Trial Referees**

The [Committee on the Utilization of Judge Trial Referees](#) was charged with addressing and making policy recommendations for the effective use of Judge Trial Referees, who bring long experience at the bar and bench to their work and are often asked to take on some of the more nettlesome and difficult cases, in a manner that will serve the needs of the Judicial Branch and enhance the services provided to the public by Connecticut's courts.

### **The Committee has completed its work and submitted the following recommendations to the Chief Justice:**

- Adopt a policy requiring the Office of the Chief Court Administrator, an Administrative Judge or a Presiding Judge to inform a judge trial referee upon receipt of a substantiated adverse complaint regarding the judge trial referee
- Create a Judge Trial Referee Advisory Committee for the purpose of having a uniform and fair process regarding the annual redesignation process and specifically to provide a procedure when an Administrative Judge is unable to recommend a judge trial referee for redesignation or declines to recommend a judge trial referee for redesignation
- Amend the "Policy Concerning the Service of Judge Trial Referees," dated March 29, 2007 and effective June 1, 2007, to provide for input from the judge trial referees regarding availability for work and preferences regarding type of work and work location, to provide that the Chief Court Administrator consult with the Administrative Judges regarding the needs of each judicial district, and for the Chief Court Administrator to assign judge trial referees on an annual basis
- The Office of the Chief Court Administrator should develop a questionnaire to be sent annually to each judge trial referee to permit the judge trial referees to indicate: availability to work; preference as to location or locations; and preference for the type or types of work
- The Chief Court Administrator should amend the "Request for Designation as a Judge Trial Referee" form
- Judge trial referees should be evaluated similarly to judges doing the same work
- A "planning meeting" should be held prior to the time an individual judge becomes a judge trial referee with the judge, a designee of the Chief Court Administrator, and the relevant Administrative Judge to discuss the training and educational interests and expectations of these participants, as well as any other relevant issues regarding assignments as a judge trial referee
- Judge trial referees should receive adequate and timely training and education

### **The following activities were completed by the Office of the Chief Court Administrator between July 2010 and June 2011:**

- The "Policy Concerning the Service of Judge Trial Referees" was revised effective April 1, 2011, distributed to the Superior Court bench, and posted on the judges' intranet site
- Judge Trial Referees will be assigned to a judicial district or districts based on the needs of the Branch, after consideration of the assignment requests of each Judge Trial Referee
- The Judge Trial Referee Advisory Committee was created to ensure a uniform and fair process regarding the annual redesignation process. The members will be appointed in the near future

- Developed a process to permit a judge prior to attaining the age of seventy to request a planning meeting with the Chief Court Administrator or a designee and the relevant Administrative Judge to discuss the expectations of the participants
- Adopted a policy that upon receiving a complaint about a judge trial referee, the Office of the Chief Court Administrator will inform the judge trial referee of the nature of the complaint and take appropriate action
- Judge trial referees are eligible to partake in all educational opportunities available to judges
- The “Request for Designation as a Judge Trial Referee” form was revised to solicit preferences regarding locations and types of assignments and to expand input from the Administrative Judge

## Judicial Branch Web Board

The Judicial Branch Web Board, a pre-existing operational committee, is 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 will continue its work on the following activities between July 2011 and June 2012:

- **Juror services:** Efforts are underway to allow jurors to confirm or postpone their juror service via the [Jury Administration's webpage](#). This will provide members of the public with greater flexibility in responding to their summons, while decreasing the number of calls that Jury Administration must answer. Now that the new Jury Administration Management Information System (JAMIS) has been implemented, the Web Unit has begun the necessary programming to provide web-based transactions for jurors. The first enhancement will be juror confirmations, followed by postponements and then cancellations.
- **E-filing:** In 2012, a new, fully integrated Civil / Family case management system is scheduled to be completed, replacing a dated mainframe case management system. The new system will allow for e-filing of family matters and will allow self-represented parties to use [the e-filing system](#). The most immediate change in e-filing will allow self-represented parties to e-file small claims cases.
- **Website redesign:** The Web Board will continue to look for ways to feature its [Self-Help areas](#) more prominently, make forms easily accessible, improve performance of online court services, enhance [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) compliance and offer more guidance to those not familiar with the website or court business in general. To reach this goal, the Redesign Subcommittee of the Web Board meets regularly to develop recommendations as to how best to redesign the website.
- **Collaboration with the legal aid community:** In an effort to effectively use resources, the Web Board has invited representatives of [legal aid organizations](#) to attend its meetings. In addition, the organizations have invited a member of the Web Board to attend their meetings on website development. This collaboration has proven to be beneficial in prioritizing projects for self-represented parties, while avoiding a duplication of efforts. By linking to each other's websites, self-represented parties are able to access the resources available through both organizations.

### The Web Board recognizes the following activities as ongoing. These are the areas of the website that are particularly valuable and to which enhancements are made on a periodic basis:

- **Streaming videos:** A number of streaming [videos](#) that explain various court processes such as [child custody](#), [first steps as a defendant](#) and [representing yourself](#) in family matters have been added to the website. Additional videos and Self-Help features will be added to the website over time.
- **Plain language readability:** The Web Board will continue to revise the text in the [Self-Help](#) sections of the website for plain language and readability compliance. The goal is to increase the understanding of the content on these pages. The self-help sections of the website are designed to assist self-represented parties as they navigate their way through our judicial system, answering [frequently asked questions](#) and providing instructional materials.

- **Court forms:** The [appearance form](#), one of the most commonly used forms in the court system, has been put into an interactive format to assist parties in completing the form. The [Law Libraries](#) created this interactive feature with the assistance of Legal Services, legal aid organizations and the [Court Service Centers](#). Other [forms](#) will be put into this interactive format.
- **Spanish section of the website:** A number of sections of the website have been translated into [Spanish](#) and efforts are underway to translate additional sections.

**The following activities were completed between July 2010 and June 2011:**

- **Supreme and Appellate Court case look-up:** The [Supreme and Appellate Court case look-up](#) function went live in June 2011, providing access to appellate case information including such items as: case status, trial court case information, names of the attorneys and parties, transcript and exhibit information, the due date of briefs, as well as information about motion, order and transfer activity.
- **Paying tickets online/Pleading not guilty:** Traffic tickets and infractions are now [payable online](#). Additionally, individuals may plead not guilty to their tickets online. Although individuals may still plead not guilty or mail in payments to the Centralized Infractions Bureau, the online bill pay and online not guilty pleading is available through our website for those who wish to use it.
- **Attorney grievances:** The [attorney inquiry section](#) of the website has been expanded to include more comprehensive disciplinary information about attorneys, including action taken by the Superior Court and past [Statewide Grievance Committee](#) decisions.
- **Statistics webpage:** A webpage was developed that provides [statistics](#) that are updated on a periodic basis. The page contains statistics on topics such as: adult probation, arrest warrants, bar examination, cell phone violations, caseflow information, jury statistics, protection orders and the Foreclosure Mediation Program.

## **Small Claims/Motor Vehicle Magistrates Workgroup**

Small Claims and Motor Vehicle Magistrates are attorneys and members of the bar appointed by the Chief Court Administrator pursuant to [C.G.S. § 51-193l](#) to hear and decide small claims cases, certain infractions, motor vehicle, and other violation cases. In order to be considered for appointment as a magistrate, these attorneys must be in good standing and complete an application process. Appointments are for three years and magistrates are limited to serving no more than ninety days per year with daily compensation set at \$150.

The Workgroup, an internal Judicial Branch workgroup, is charged with overseeing the appointment, reappointment, and evaluation process of the magistrates. The Workgroup will also oversee the development and implementation of a comprehensive orientation and resource support program for magistrates.

The Workgroup includes:

- Hon. Barbara M. Quinn, Chief Court Administrator
- Hon. Patrick L. Carroll III, Deputy Chief Court Administrator
- Hon. Aaron Ment, former Chief Court Administrator
- Atty. Joseph D. D'Alesio, Executive Director of Superior Court Operations
- Atty. Nancy L. Kierstead, Court Operations Director
- Atty. Stacey B. Manware, Deputy Director, Court Operations
- Atty. Mary B. O'Connor, Deputy Director, Court Operations.

### **The Workgroup was charged with implementing the following initiatives of the Office of the Chief Court Administrator:**

- Revising the appointment and reappointment process for Small Claims and Motor Vehicle magistrates
- Providing orientation for new magistrates
- Providing resources for magistrates
- Conducting on-site evaluation and assessments of magistrates
- Investigating and responding to complaints made against magistrates

### **Since January 1, 2011, the Workgroup has:**

- Completed the development of [guidelines](#) for the appointment and reappointment process for magistrates
- Developed an Internet [webpage](#) delineating the guidelines and process for appointment
- Developed an [application](#) for appointment, along with a [release of information form](#) for use by the Branch
- Developed an internal website for magistrates that provides logistical, legal and education resources
- Received and reviewed complaints
- Overseen the appointment of ninety-three magistrates and five Small Claims Commissioners
- Developed an orientation program for all new magistrates

**The Workgroup will continue to work on the following activities:**

- Providing orientation to new magistrates
- Updating and expanding resources for magistrates via the internal website
- Evaluating magistrates and responding to complaints

# MULTIPLE GOALS

The following initiatives support more than one of the Strategic Plan's outcome goals of increasing access to justice, responding to changing demographics, improving the delivery of services, collaboration and accountability.

## **Child Support Workgroup**

The September 2010 Phase Three Implementation Plan of the Strategic Plan report created this internal workgroup to recommend changes to simplify and streamline the process of obtaining, enforcing, and/or modifying child support orders. The Child Support Workgroup's efforts will include recommendations and strategies that minimize the need for self-represented parties to contact numerous departments or offices for child support services. The Workgroup was created in February 2011 and the members include:

- Atty. Nancy L. Kierstead, Director of Court Operations Unit
- Atty. Charisse E. Hutton, Director, Support Enforcement Services
- David Iaccarino, Deputy Director, Court Operations Unit
- Debra Kulak, Regional Manager, Court Support Services Division
- Krista Hess, Manager, Court Operations Unit
- Atty. Johanna Greenfield, Caseflow Management Specialist, Court Operations Unit
- Joel C. Riley, Manager, Court Operations Unit
- Atty. Paul Bourdoulous, Manager, Superior Court Operations Division

### **The following activities were completed between September 2010 and June 2011:**

- The Workgroup polled Judicial Branch staff from Court Support Services' Family Services, clerks' offices, [Support Enforcement Services](#) (SES), and Court Service Centers across the state on the types of questions or issues raised by [self-represented parties](#), and in which those parties were directed to another Judicial Branch department or office for services
- Concurrent with the workgroup meetings, SES and the Court Operations Unit collaborated and proposed changes to the Branch's [Motion For Modification](#) form. The proposed changes will [assist self-represented parties](#) in directing specific child support requests to the court, as well as ensure consistency in the type of motions used in child support proceedings before the Superior Court and Family Support Magistrate Division

### **The Workgroup will continue between July 2011 and June 2012 to:**

- Review and analyze information obtained through the polls conducted
- Identify areas to streamline and avoid the unnecessary redirection of self-represented parties across numerous departments or offices
- Assess the value of creating additional instructional materials to assist self-represented parties

## **Advisory Committee on Cultural Competency**

The [Advisory Committee on Cultural Competency](#) is charged with assessing the training needs of the Branch and developing an ongoing, comprehensive training program addressing cultural competency for all Judicial Branch staff. It is also charged with prioritizing and implementing the recommendations developed by the Committee on Diversity in the Branch Workforce, a phase one initiative of the Strategic Plan, which was created to recommend an action plan to promote and ensure diversity in the hiring and retention of Branch employees and ensure a culturally competent workforce.

### **The Committee will continue its work on the following activities between July 2011 and June 2012:**

- Conduct internal focus group meetings with Branch employees to assess their level of cultural competency and training needs
- Develop a cultural competency training program for all Branch staff
- Develop a Branch policy on cultural competency
- Develop an internal cultural competency webpage

### **As time and resources permit, the Committee will begin work on the following activities:**

- Develop a system to collect and determine distribution of Branch workforce data and data on the population served by the Branch; determine how that data can be effectively utilized to support the goal of developing and retaining a diverse and culturally competent staff
- Update the existing “*Guidelines to Effective Interviews*” booklet to include cultural competency as a criteria for assessment of applicants
- Ensure all Branch staff involved in the interviewing process receive training regarding the inclusion of cultural competency as part of the hiring criteria and the importance it has as part of the required criteria for hiring and promotion
- Develop questions to include on the interview form that will measure the cultural competency of an applicant, or the ability for an applicant to become culturally competent
- Track the number of issues reported by Compliance Coordinators
- Develop and implement a system for Compliance Coordinators to report any concerns regarding appropriateness of the interview processes as they occur. Also, a system should be developed to ensure that any such concerns are investigated and acted upon prior to any action being taken on the recruitment in question
- Assess Compliance Coordinators on levels of competency through periodic self-assessments and/or post-training testing
- Develop a centralized, mandated training program for Compliance Coordinators to ensure that the interview process is conducted in an appropriate and consistent manner at all times. Refresher courses should be offered biannually, and the rate of attendance tracked

### **The following activities were completed between September 2010 and June 2011:**

- Replaced the title ‘Affirmative Action Coordinator’ in all Branch policies with ‘Compliance Coordinator’
- Created two new subcommittees, [Survey/Focus Group Subcommittee](#) and the [website Subcommittee](#)

- Survey/Focus Group Subcommittee drafted focus group questions, recruited and paired facilitators, and developed a plan which outlines the process to conduct focus group meetings and collect, report, analyze, and share the results
- Website Subcommittee created a development site

## **Volunteer Advocates in Juvenile Matters Advisory Board**

The charge of the [Volunteer Advocates in Juvenile Matters Advisory Board](#) is to engage in dialogue with current groups providing volunteer advocates to increase and enhance services provided to children involved in juvenile court. In addition, the Advisory Board will look at expanding the use of volunteers in delinquency proceedings.

### **The members of the Board are:**

- Hon. Barbara M. Quinn, Chair, Chief Court Administrator
- Atty. Jill Bicks, Child Advocates of Connecticut
- Atty. Elisabeth Borrino
- Hon. Peter L. Brown
- Atty. Barbara Claire, Department of Children and Families
- Atty. Cynthia Cunningham, Court Operations
- Joan B. Jenkins, Children In Placement
- Hon. Christine E. Keller, Chief Administrative Judge, Juvenile Matters
- Atty. Michael Miller
- Jeanne Milstein, Office of the Child Advocate
- Atty. Susan Pearlman, Office of the Attorney General
- Atty. Christine Rapillo, Public Defender
- Atty. Carolyn Signorelli, Chief Child Protection Attorney
- Hon. Mary E. Sommer
- Atty. Martha Stone, Center for Children's Advocacy, Executive Director

### **Since 2010, The Advisory Board has:**

- Met four times
- Surveyed the juvenile court judges on the use of volunteer advocates in their court locations
- Surveyed contract attorneys regarding their interaction with volunteer advocates
- Heard presentations about the use of volunteer advocates in other states and court jurisdictions
- Heard presentations about the training provided to volunteers by both volunteer advocate groups, Children in Placement and Child Advocates of Connecticut
- Identified the Zero to Three Pilot Program at New Haven Juvenile Court as a possible area to expand the use of the volunteer advocates in connection with Children in Placement
- Identified a pilot program using volunteer advocates from Child Advocates of Connecticut as case monitors in the Danbury and Stamford Juvenile Courts
- Identified that ensuring that the educational needs of children and youth are met as an additional area where volunteer advocates may be of use

### **The Advisory Board makes the following recommendations:**

- To continue the Advisory Board for an additional period of time
- To continue to explore possible areas for the expanded use of volunteer advocates in Juvenile Court

**The Advisory Board will continue between July 2011 and June 2012 to:**

- Monitor the progress of the pilot program in the Danbury and Stamford juvenile courts
- Investigate the areas for expanding the use of volunteer advocates
- Explore how other states and jurisdictions are using volunteer advocates

## INITIATIVES COMPLETED

### **Access**

Information/Privacy

### **Changing Demographics**

Diversity in the Branch Workforce

### **Delivery of Services**

Family Support Magistrate Rules

Problem Solving in Family Matters

## **INITIATIVES NOT ADDRESSED**

### **Access**

Facilities (Administration)

Utilization of Facilities

### **Collaboration**

Chief Court Administrator/Information Sharing

### **Accountability**

Assignments/Allocation (Judges)

Career Paths

Judges' New Assignment Assessment/Orientation

### **All Goals**

Training



*State of Connecticut  
Judicial Branch  
September 2011*