

# **National Association for Court Management**

## **2006 Justice Achievement Award**

### **Projects Submitted for Consideration**

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#### **Superior Court of New Jersey, Essex Vicinage Historic Courthouse Renovation**

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The theme of this year's NACM Conference "Leadership of the Nation's Trial Courts" is a grand concept that will mean different things to different people. In one respect at the local trial court level it can mean one project or program at a time to improve court operations. The Historic Courthouse renovation project which is nominated for the Justice Achievement Award epitomizes court leadership – particularly in the context of the NACM Core Competency on Leadership to "Manage Interdependencies: Work Beyond the Boundaries". The court was integral in the leadership for this massive project in both direct and subtle ways. The court created coalitions with the county, the bar, and other agencies to get the job done and maintained steadfast in its defense of judicial independence. In New Jersey the court does not own the facilities. It is the responsibility of the county to provide court facilities. Yet it was the court that was the primary benefactor of the project but the credit for the achievement had to rest primarily with the funding agency. Essex County and the Bar which pushed for project initiation and completion. The court ensured that there were multiple "winners" in this endeavor. The Essex County Courthouse was designed by famed architect Cass Gilbert, was opened in 1907 and was intended to house all county offices and the court. County government grew and the courts expanded so this plan was abandoned and the building was devoted to court use only. In 1970 a new courts building was erected and the historic courthouse was occupied by only two court divisions. The building was steadily deteriorating due to its age and lack of maintenance. The Essex County Bar Association weighed in on the issue over space and safety concerns in the historic courthouse. Finally the New Jersey Supreme Court ordered the court to vacate the building for a major renovation. The courthouse reopened in April 2005 as a living monument to the majesty of our justice system and at the same time a functional modern court for the operations of New Jersey's largest Civil Division. The National Trust for Historic Preservation presented the National Preservation Honor Award to the Essex County Courthouse in September 2005.

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#### **Superior Court of California, County of San Bernardino Mechanized Processing of Mailed-In Traffic Payments**

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The program entitled "Money Mail" was developed with the goal of centralizing and mechanizing the processing of mailed in traffic payments originally sent to 12 district court facilities located throughout San Bernardino County. San Bernardino County is one of the largest counties in the United States.

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**Superior Court of California, County of San Bernardino  
Automated Records Management**

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The Court Records Center was established in 1992 when the Superior and Municipal Courts consolidated to provide records management support and services to all court districts county wide. Over 3 million files and records from 15 court locations are currently housed at this center. Approximately 70% of this inventory is active and requested for court hearings and customer requests. During the past twelve years, the file inventory has increased from 300,000 case files to over 3 million files and records, including court reporter notes. Today, approximately 100,000 case files a year are transferred to the Records Center to make space for current filings, staff, and new programs implemented in court districts and divisions. Automating the court's Records Management Program in June of 2003 was necessary for a more efficient method to maintain, locate, and track case files in the Records Center and in the outlying court districts. Our project goal was to improve file tracking procedures, reduce misplaced files, increase work productivity, eliminate manual procedures, and provide automated retention schedules.

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**Superior Court of California, County of San Bernardino  
Laser Jury Checks**

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Effective January 1, 2003, the San Bernardino County Superior Court installed and implemented Jury Laser Check technology to streamline our payment process for jurors. The Court uses this product to provide laser checks to pay jurors intermittently and/or at the end of their service at each court location. This project has improved efficiency and effectiveness in our court by providing improved jury payment services. The software allows the court to create checks from blank check stock. The Court was seeking a way to pay jurors immediately after the completion of their service with the court. Jury Administration found a system that would generate payments without going through the County Auditor Controller which was very inefficient, costly, and a significant drain on the Court's resources. The Court was able to use this system to provide laser checks to jurors immediately at the end of their service at each court location. The Court purchased, installed, and implemented Bottomline Laser Check System Webseries 32-bit PayBase Payment Serve 32. The solution includes the combination of software and hardware necessary to streamline our payment process.

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**Superior Court of California, County of Orange  
Model Program for the Unbefriended Elderly**

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This program is a multi-disciplinary collaboration to establish protective proceedings for seniors who are unable to handle their own financial and/or personal affairs and who have no relatives, friends or neighbors willing or available to act on their behalves. The program specifies that the matters must be uncontested, except by the senior if applicable, and that the senior must be of limited means with minimal assets. Referrals are accepted only from Adult Protective Services or the Ombudsman Program.

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## **Superior Court of the State of Arizona in and for Maricopa County Family Court—The Maricopa Model**

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In the fall of 2004, the Chief Justice of the Arizona Supreme Court identified the need for a uniform system of case management in the Maricopa County Family Court. Why? Because the Family Court department failed to resolve matters timely, there were many confusing processes for self-represented litigants and lawyers, and ancillary services were over utilized and not well coordinated. The largest and most pervasive problem in the department at that time was the lack of a uniform case management system. Twenty-five judicial officers were independently managing cases in different ways. It was difficult for judges to acclimate to a Family Court, and it was clear that attorneys and litigants were frustrated and confused by the myriad styles of management. This problem was corrected via the implementation "The Maricopa Model," a comprehensive plan to restructure Family Court.

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## **Superior Court of the State of Arizona in and for Maricopa County Spanish DUI Program**

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Spanish DUI Court Program is a response to the epidemic of drunk driving arrests nationally, and particularly in Maricopa County. This innovative program was one of the first in the United States and still today enjoys premier status as other counties have attempted to replicate the concept. Since its inception in 2001, the Spanish DUI Court has provided a vital link in the chain of accountability courts that the Superior Court now operates to preserve community safety. The Spanish DUI Court Program was initiated through a partnership between the Superior Court and the Adult Probation Department. The Program had its roots in 1998 with the creation of the DUI Court. Funded by a grant to the Adult Probation Department from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Spanish DUI Court was founded in December of 2001. The Program uses a team staffing approach, based on the increasingly proven pedigree of the Drug Court model. It includes the collaboration of multiple agencies including Adult Probation, the Superior Court, the County Attorney, the Public Defender, and various counseling treatment agencies. The program provides a continuum of care in order to assist defendants to, 1) acknowledge responsibility for their actions, 2) change their behavior by reducing alcohol and drug use, 3) reintegrate them into the community, and 4) thereby enhance community safety.

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## **Superior Court of the State of Arizona in and for Maricopa County Indigent Defense Reimbursement Unit**

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The Indigent Defense Reimbursement Unit (IDRU) was established to recoup some of the costs associated with the legal defense of persons charged with a felony offense. The IDRU functions as a financial assessor to assess a reasonable amount to be reimbursed by defendants appointed counsel. The team of court commissioners and staff work to screen and assess the charges to more than 21,000 persons each year. Enforcement of court ordered payments is then accomplished through a cooperative arrangement with the County's Finance Department. Revenues from the program have exceeded expected goals (\$367,000 assessed and \$96,000 collected in first 11 months) and have reduced the County and Court's costs and increased defendant compliance and accountability.

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**Superior Court of the State of Arizona in and for Maricopa County  
Maricopa County Superior Court Master Space Plan**

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Arizona is one of the fastest growing states in the nation; and Maricopa County is the engine of that growth. Maricopa County has 9,200 square miles within its borders with a widely dispersed population. During the decade of the 1990s, the population of Maricopa County grew by 45 percent. Projections suggest that it will grow at a comparable rate within the foreseeable future. The 2000 census showed that Maricopa County was home to just over 3 million people. By 2015, that number is projected to exceed 4.7 million. This growth has led to a substantial increase in the number of cases handled by the Superior Court. As a result of this growth, there is a significant strain on the current Superior Court facilities. With this consideration, the Superior Court in and for the State of Arizona developed a Master Space Plan which establishes the ten-year (2005 – 2015) space needs for the Superior Court, and recommends ways to meet those needs. The master plan is an opportunity for the court to balance the following goals:

- Better serve the residents of Maricopa County
  - Improve operational efficiency in the Trial Courts of Maricopa County
  - Make use of existing court facilities, where appropriate
  - Identify and recommend options for the development of new court facilities
  - Identify costs and schedules associated with the renovation and construction of new court
  - Meet projected growth requirements for court facilities to the year 2015.
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**Superior Court of the State of Arizona in and for Maricopa County  
Judicial Formation Program**

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In the fall of 2004 the Maricopa County Superior Court began a program of formation for new judges -- judges who served on the Bench 3 years or less. The formation program springs from an understanding that the mission of the judicial branch is unique in our society. The judge is entrusted with fulfilling the mission of justice for all – and such great responsibility should be supported by some ongoing formation. “Formation” simply means preparation for response to a call or mission. The term is used to express the journey from profession (job) to vocation (life calling). It means preparation for response to a call or mission. “Formation” is not training or even education – it is a method of immersion in values to inspire action consistent with mission. Judges in the formation program set aside one morning each month for new judges to get to know each other better, and to focus on matters typically not covered in department training sessions, such as The Judge as a Person, Fairness and Access to the Court, Stress and Dealing with Difficult People, Cultural Competency, A View from the Eyes of the Presiding Judge, Listening and Emotional Intelligence, How To Be Courteous and Professional with the Jury, Looking Back On a Judicial Career – the Court From the Eyes of Recently or Soon to Be Retired Judges. The New Judge Formation Program was continued in 2005 – 2006 and includes not only 13 new judges but also new commissioners. The court plans to continue the program in 2006 – 2007 and anticipates the participation of 20 new judges during that year.

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## **Superior Court of the State of Arizona in and for Maricopa County Court Training Program**

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Wanting to preserve its employee knowledgebase through an aggressive education program for succession planning and development of staff that were already on board, the Trial Courts in Maricopa County developed a classroom, and online Court Training Program. Trial Court Administration in Maricopa County were concerned about whether there would be enough skilled and knowledgeable staff to support and maintain its rapidly growing number of courts as workers approach retirement age. While many individuals are promoted into supervisory roles based on their technical abilities, these individuals often lack the ability to effectively manage larger scale processes, lead and develop individuals and teams, and negotiate the often complex array of policies, procedures, and administrative processes required of supervisors. The Court's Training Program provides a solution to employee training requirements and Court training needs by allowing employees to attend classes during the lunch hour and online. Classes are also available during evening hours.

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## **Superior Court of the State of Arizona in and for Maricopa County Court Emergency Preparedness Business Resumption and Continuity Plan**

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To ensure business continuity in the event of a natural or man-made disaster affecting the operation of our courts, an Emergency Preparedness Business Resumption and Continuity Plan was developed. The primary goal of the plan was to expedite and maximize the court's rehabilitative efforts to resume judicial services to both external and internal clients after a disruption or emergency situation affecting any of the Trial Courts in Maricopa County. This plan was initiated by the Court's Department of Judicial Security following an internal assessment of the Court's response capabilities to a court operation disruption or emergency situation. A committee of 10 individuals representing all court departments developed the disaster recovery plan over a period of seven months. The plan provides detailed functions and responsibilities for selected individuals and departments during temporary or long-term disruption of the courts primary business unit processes. It is designed for maximum flexibility, and can be modified for use in other courts or organizations with similar judicial and public service missions. Copies of the plan have been mailed to numerous other city, county, and state entities.

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## **Superior Court of the State of Arizona in and for Maricopa County New Employee Orientation Program**

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Most new employees make the decision to stay or leave an organization within the first few days or weeks on the job. To ensure new employees of the Trial Courts of Maricopa County maintain employment with the County for as long as possible, the Courts implemented a New Employee Orientation (NEO) program. All new employees of the Court attend this two-day, information-packed training session. The session provides essential information about the Court environment, policies, procedures, employee benefits, judicial and other information. Representatives from various areas of the court facilitate segments of the training so that new employees receive information about all Court departments prior to beginning their job duties. The NEO program has proved to be beneficial for the Courts as it helps new employees to become productive in a much shorter period of time. Since the inception of our New Employee Orientation program, employee retention at our Courts has increased by 25%.

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**Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida  
Criminal Mental Health Project**

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The Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida Criminal Mental Health Project (CMHP) serves individuals with serious mental illnesses, who become involved or are at risk of becoming involved with the criminal justice system. CMHP is a more effective and cost-efficient alternative than institutionalization for such individuals. The program has improved public safety, saved critical tax dollars, reduced police and civilian injuries, saved lives, reduced recidivism to jails, and improved access to mental health treatment for persons with mental illnesses. This is accomplished through cooperative linkages established among the judiciary, defense and prosecuting attorneys, local law enforcement agencies, community service providers, and other community representatives. CMHP offers the concept of hope and recovery for individuals with severe mental illnesses that have often been misunderstood and discriminated against. These individuals have the opportunity to achieve successful recovery, community integration, and reduce their recidivism to jail once engaged in treatment, services, and community support.

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**Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida  
Juvenile Court**

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Almost a decade ago, the Juvenile Court-University of Miami Special Projects Team in Miami, Florida mapped services available to the under six year old children who were victims of maltreatment or exposed to violence and discoursed with community focus groups to verify what services, if any, existed to respond to the needs of these children. Disappointingly, few services were available before school-age and those that were available were discreet "silos" of overlapping services that lacked cohesiveness, collaboration, and most of all, standardized research based models directed specifically to the needs of these vulnerable children. Over the course of almost a decade, the Special Projects Team utilized lessons learned from multiple research-based programs to serve the community's highest risk families and children in both past and current projects, as well as expanding capacity building, and contributing to program research in the intervention field. The Special Projects Team built a community system of care that has a sound structure, grounded in science and research and based on outcomes such as: very promising improvement in reduction of abuse reports, reunification or placement for dependent children, parent child relationship functioning, positive childrearing beliefs, empathy toward child's needs, decrease in use and value of corporal punishment, and, among many other positive outcomes—children engaged in more spontaneous smiling and laughing while interacting with caregivers. Based on the infrastructure, science and research of the original research based models, the Special Projects Team developed a system of care that more effectively meets the needs of these children and their families and has evolved in the Safe Start Coalition for Children in Crisis increasing the overall capacity for evidence-based services to families of children 0-6 years old who have been exposed to or witnesses of domestic violence and/or those who have been victims of maltreatment.

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**Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida  
Domestic Violence University  
“An In-House Training Program”**

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A collaborative effort between the justice system, its justice partners and the community is essential for providing an effective response to domestic violence. In February, 2003, Amy Karan, Administrative Judge of the Domestic Violence Division, conceived and created a new program designed to enhance the existing knowledge of court personnel and the justice partners on domestic violence, sexual assault and related issues. This in-house training program operating at no additional cost to the Circuit, received overwhelming support from the Circuit’s Chief Judge and Court Administrator. This program has been implemented by the Eleventh Judicial Circuit judiciary, court clerks, administrative staff, intake personnel, as well as members of Miami-Dade community-based agencies, who work together with the court. This group donated their time and expertise and is committed to best practices and providing current information on domestic violence issues. The ultimate goal, as public servants for the State of Florida, is to better serve the citizens of the community, by ensuring that the staff has the best available information. This has been accomplished by the nominated program known as “Domestic Violence University.”

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**Eighth Judicial District Court of Nevada  
The Nevada Short Trial program**

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The Nevada Short Trial Program (“STP”) alleviates trial gridlock while at the same time providing fair and complete justice, economically. The program achieves these objectives by eliminating from the regular trial docket those cases of lesser monetary value while at the same time fulfilling litigants’ expectations of a prompt, full and fair hearing before a judge and/or jury – that is giving litigants a meaningful “day in court” as soon as possible. The STP is designed to get cases to trial on a fast track (eight months or less), utilizes smaller juries, completes trials in one day or less, and essentially costs taxpayers nothing inasmuch as the parties pay for all costs associated with the trial, including jurors’ and presiding judge’s fees, and utilize courtrooms not otherwise in use. While designed to address the adjudication of civil cases with a probable value of \$50,000 or less, virtually any civil case can be placed into the STP. The program has saved Clark County and its taxpayers the costs of lengthy trials and is expected to save millions of dollars in trial costs and expenses in coming years.

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**The Washington State Supreme Court  
The Washington State Gender and Justice Commission**

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The Washington State Supreme Court Gender and Justice Commission has brought education and improvements to the state justice system and communities across the state since it was established by the court in 1994. The Commission has partnered with local governments, tribes, community groups, and bar associations to benefit the justice system to eliminate gender bias and, in particular, to improve the response to domestic violence. The Commission’s effectiveness in leveraging its dollars and its time for the maximum impact is clearly evident in its administration of the federal Office on Violence Against Women STOP Grant to the Courts. During the past five years, the Washington State Office of Community Trade and Economic Development (CTED) has passed more than \$100,000 in STOP Grant funds annually to the Gender and Justice Commission. Through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process, the Commission has made those funds available

for court-related projects to improve the response to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking and to provide enhanced judicial education. To date, 35 projects have been funded in municipal, district, and superior courts; in court clerk's offices, and for a multi-disciplinary statewide project. Projects ranged from creation of court information brochures for domestic violence victims that were translated into eleven languages to establishment of court-based Protection Order and Parenting Plan Clinics to implementation of the Washington State Protocol for Domestic Violence and Child Dependency Cases. The Commission used grant funds to send 110 judicial officers to the National Judicial Institute's two and a half day workshops *Enhancing Judicial Skills in Domestic Violence Cases* and provided training on Non-Stranger Rape and Sexual Assault, Immigrants, Domestic Violence, and Firearms, and from Gay Marriage to Domestic Violence to Hate Crimes at state judicial conferences. By distributing STOP Grant funds to courts across the state, the Commission has increased awareness of gender bias issues and raised the standard of practice in domestic violence cases.

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### **13th Judicial Circuit Court Neighborhood Accountability Board Program for Juvenile Offenders**

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A Neighborhood Accountability Board (NAB) was started in four neighborhoods in Hillsborough County in 2002 through the Juvenile Diversionary Program (JDP) of the Administrative Office of the Court (AOC). Last year, it expanded into the local school systems, and there are now nine community and six active school based NAB's throughout the County. Juvenile offenses that involve particular communities or school-based crimes are referred to the Neighborhood Accountability Board for resolution rather than to the Juvenile Delinquency Division judge or a more standard court diversion program. The 13th Circuit's NAB Program was one of the first Neighborhood Accountability Board programs and has served as a model for other circuits. The program has recently received a national focus – the school based program is being presented at the National Association of School Social Workers Conference; and it will be featured in an upcoming 100 city conference seminar hosted by the National Office of Drug Control Policy in 2006. The program leverages the services of various court and community agencies and draws from the wisdom of neighbors to develop specific community service projects, meaningful for juvenile offenders and victims. The program is cost effective through the involvement of volunteers and parents. The recidivism rate for the 143 youths that entered the 13th Circuit's NAB programs in 2004 and completed the program was 7 percent, which compares favorably to an approximate 11 percent state-wide recidivism rate for all non-residential juvenile delinquency prevention programs (2004 report).

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### **Clark County Municipal Court Court Records System**

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An automated Court Records system (including infrastructure) which integrates legacy Court Records management with an interactive web site and work flow. The solution includes an interface to a legacy case and records management application, an interactive web site for case inquiry, court information, fee/fine payment, case document review, and work flow system which routes documents and case information to designated court personnel.

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**Utah Administrative Office of the Courts  
Courts Agencies Records Exchange (C.A.R.E.)**

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Utah's Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS), in operation for over 20 years, was the major source of information for all entities across the state involved in the juvenile justice community. While the application served the State and its 1,300+ users well, it had limitations based on its technologies and was becoming increasingly burdensome to operate, to maintain, and to meet the needs of the users. The Administrative Office of the Courts embarked on a six-year mission to develop the Courts and Agencies Records Exchange (C.A.R.E.), a secure, Internet-based system that utilizes a windows architecture that relies on user intuition to navigate. The new system provides for improved availability of and access to information. Features like the assessment module, the minutes module and e-mail notification add many capabilities and functions never before available to juvenile justice workers. Other benefits noted have been an improved case management system, improved case related financial management, improved interfacing with outside agencies, more timely feeding of the court's data warehouse, and better management of data. The new C.A.R.E. system is cost effective, is estimated to improve worker efficiency by 15-25%, and is easy to update and support within existing resources.

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**Superior Court of the State of Arizona in and for Maricopa County  
Teen Court**

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Teen Court is a community diversion program which operates under the direction of the judge of a lower jurisdiction court and the community service division of the Maricopa County Juvenile Court. It works like a traditional adult court, except that the defendant, bailiff and lawyers are all teens. The program is open to juveniles 17 years of age or under who have acknowledged committing a misdemeanor offense, status offense, or traffic violation. After acknowledging responsibility for the offense(s), the defendant is directed to appear in Teen Court at a specific date and time for sentencing. The juvenile must stand before the peer court and accept the consequences given by the teen jury. At the sentencing hearing, the jury of teen peers (either a Teen Jury or a Teen Grand Jury) recommends constructive consequence(s) for the offense(s). The defendant must complete the assigned consequences within 60 days of the hearing. Parents are encouraged to attend the hearing. Penalties range from completing community service hours to writing essays and even serving Teen Court as a participant. If the defendant successfully completes the imposed punishment he or she walks away with no criminal record. If the defendant fails to meet the requirements of the constructive sentence in a timely manner, his/her case is referred back to the juvenile probation officer for appropriate action. Teen Court has been so successful in lowering the recidivism rate for teens re-offending, that many other states have implemented Teen Court in their juvenile corrections system.

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**Ontario County Court  
ComputerFest**

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ComputerFest is an annual technology conference. For over 20 years, employees of the Seventh Judicial District have not only coordinated demonstrations of new court applications, but for years the employees developed the applications that were shown. Employees in the Seventh Judicial District have always been encouraged to review their work processes and where appropriate make suggestions on automating their work. Prior to the establishment of the Automation Unit, which now has district wide responsibility for technology; a

group of employees (Chief Clerks, data entry clerks; representing all courts in the District) formed the Computer Policy Group (CPG). The CPG set the priorities for the District - what court would get the new computers, what applications would have employees dedicated to the development of software...The one priority the CPG made perfectly clear - technology was serious business in the Seventh Judicial District. ComputerFest is for employees. This is an opportunity for the data entry clerks to see what new applications will be utilized by them in the future and the Chief Clerks to see how the new applications will impact the staffing assignments. Attendance for ComputerFest has grown from approximately 35 employees from within the District, to over 300 employees from all Districts in New York State (NYS).

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### **Fulton County Juvenile Court Educational Advocacy Initiative**

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The Educational Advocacy Initiative is an interagency collaborative designed to address the educational needs of court-involved youth who have disabilities and other educational concerns. National data estimate that between 30% and 50% of youth in the corrections system has a special education disability (Rutherford, Bullies, Anderson & Griller-Clark, 2002). Estimates for court involved youth with disabilities in some states range as high as 70%. There has long been speculation that youth with disabilities have a propensity towards criminal behavior (Rutherford, et. al., 2002). The Fulton County Juvenile Court is helping to meet the needs of court involved youth with disabilities through the Educational Advocacy Initiative. The Educational Advocacy team intervenes with court involved youth by providing advocacy services for the youth and their families in relation to educational programming and placement at the local school level. The Educational Advocacy team has served nearly five hundred (500) students between August 2004 and April of 2006 and has resulted in remarkable outcomes for these children. As a result of the educational advocacy, many students with previously undiagnosed learning, emotional, and cognitive disabilities are, for the first time in their educational careers, receiving a free and appropriate public education -- nearly 70% of the youth referred to our program. The efficacy of the program was additionally verified through a logic model focused on performance against goals and objectives. At the last performance review, the Educational Advocacy Initiative had met or exceeded every benchmark. Several Juvenile court systems around the nation have contacted the Fulton County Juvenile Court in an effort to replicate this empirically validated program. The Educational Advocacy program has been awarded grants and has won awards. The work of the Educational Advocacy Initiative is relevant and expansive and is growing in prominence with each passing day.

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### **Delaware County Court of Common Pleas Juror Donation Program**

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The Delaware County Juror Donation program is a unique concept. Through it, jurors, in addition to discharging their civic obligation via the court system, are now able to voluntarily donate their compensation for jury duty to select, local charitable organizations or agencies devoted to providing services and support to at-risk and/or special needs children in Delaware County, Pennsylvania. This program allows jurors through their honorable service to now doubly benefit the County and its most vulnerable citizens.

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## **Superior Court of Arizona for Maricopa County Comprehensive Mental Health Court Program**

Honorable Karen L. O'Connor  
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Operating across three court departments, the Comprehensive Mental Health Court oversees specified cases and hearings involving SMI parties in criminal, probate and mental health court proceedings. System changes resulting in this comprehensive approach were precipitated by: (1) the recognized need to improve communication among the Court, mental health treatment providers and correctional services; (2) the desire to reduce the number of arrests, probation violations, and the amount of jail time involving persons with serious mental illnesses; (3) the need to improve the coordination of treatment and services to mental health consumers involved with the court system, and; (4) the necessity of improving successful completion of court ordered treatment to avoid repetitive civil commitments. Combining the administration of cases allows for greater effectiveness in sharing case history information, in achieving collaborative decision-making, and in improving case oversight. The Comprehensive Mental Health Court is configured to address (1) early identification of Seriously Mentally Ill parties in the Superior Court, (2) increased communication between the various court departments that interact with the same SMI parties, (3) reducing recidivism of SMI Defendants in the Criminal Justice System, and (4) reducing reoccurring civil commitments into the County's mental health hospitals. Through collaborative efforts, judicial officers, attorneys, mental health treatment providers, and correctional service personnel work together to overcome fragmentation in the continuity of care provided to mental health consumers who become involved with the justice system.

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## **Los Angeles Superior Court, California Juvenile Dependency Court Protocol**

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In 2005, the Juvenile Court developed and released a protocol to ensure that children under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Dependency Court have appropriate representation to address education issues that arise beyond the scope of Dependency proceedings. This protocol (also known as the 317 WIC Education Protocol) reflects a unique private/public partnership between the Juvenile Court, its many stakeholders and individual attorneys and organizations with education law experience and expertise. This partnership is designed to create a systematic process to enlist significant educational expertise on behalf of dependent children in education matters outside the scope of the Dependency Court. Pursuant to this protocol, the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court will refer all education issues brought to his or her attention to the trained and experienced education attorney or organization for representation and/or advocacy.

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**Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles  
Law Library and Self-Help Legal Access Center**

John A. Clarke  
Executive Officer/Clerk  
111 N. Hill Street, Room 105E  
Los Angeles, California 90012  
(213) 974-5401

The Long Beach Courthouse Law Library and Self-Help Legal Access pilot project is an innovative collaboration between the Los Angeles Superior Court, Los Angeles County Law Library, and Neighborhood Legal Services (NLS, a federally funded legal aid agency), which is the Self-Help Legal Access provider, in the Los Angeles County Law Library. This is the first such partnership wherein the Law Library agreed to share existing space with a Self-Help Legal Access Center in Los Angeles County. The two entities combined legal resources to increase assisted access to the court for unrepresented litigants, while also increasing the availability of library resources for attorneys. The Long Beach Courthouse had a critical need to improve self help services with a Self-Help Legal Access Center, but had no additional space to expand such services. The Law Library incurred severe budget cuts over the last several years.

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**Minnesota State Court Administrator's Office  
Transition and Transformation: The Minnesota State Funding Program**

Sue Dosal  
135 Minnesota Judicial Center  
25 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
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Over a 15-year period, Minnesota's judiciary systematically moved from a largely county funded and focused confederation of trial courts to a unified, co-equal branch of state government operating under a single umbrella of state funding and created a governance structure to match the new unitary enterprise. Completed in July 2005, this transition represents much more than just a change in who writes the checks for the Minnesota judiciary. It is also a fundamental transformation of the judiciary as an organization. Since a budget is a policy document expressed in fiscal terms, the achievement of a unified judicial branch budget has provided the Minnesota judiciary with the opportunity to articulate its policies in all aspects of its operation and to allocate its resources to achieve them. The implementation of a new streamlined, yet inclusive, governance structure is making that possibility a reality.

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**Fourth Judicial District Court  
Early Neutral Evaluation Project**

Mark S. Thompson  
Judicial District Administrator  
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(612) 348-7757

The Hennepin County Early Neutral Evaluation (ENE) program provides divorcing parents and their attorneys with an early opportunity to discuss custody and parenting time issues with a team of experienced custody evaluators. Although the program works equally well for self-represented litigants, the parents and their attorneys meet with their assigned judicial officer within three weeks after their case has been filed. This is called the Initial Case Management Conference (ICMC). The judicial officer offers the program from a menu of alternative dispute resolution techniques. If the parties choose to participate, the judicial officer prepares them by giving them a pep talk, which includes a healthy dose of childhood development needs. The first meeting with the ENE team usually occurs on the same day as the ICMC and lasts about three hours, during which both sides outline their positions. Additional meetings can be scheduled if the ENE team needs to obtain information from collateral sources such as schools and therapists. The ENE team uses mediation/facilitation techniques to develop trust and ensure that both sides are fully understood. After listening to both positions, the ENE team caucuses in private, and then returns to the room and provides a candid assessment, which focuses on childhood development needs and the likely outcome(s) if the case were to proceed to trial. The ENE team (always consisting of one male and one female in order to neutralize possible gender bias perceptions) then attempts to mediate a resolution. About 60-65% of the program referrals result in complete custody/parenting

time agreements within 45 days of filing, in contrast to the more traditional custody evaluation process that takes at least five months and produces settlements in only 25% of the cases. Another 20% of the referrals achieve partial settlements, thereby reducing the amount of work left for the courts and establishing cooperative, constructive tone for the remaining litigation.

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### **Texas Center for the Judiciary Beyond the Bench**

Mari Kay Bickett  
Texas Center for the Judiciary  
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As recently as the 2006 National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Juvenile Justice conference, panel members lamented the lack of practical training within both the social service and legal professions. While in school, individuals are not given the tools to properly prepare them to handle a child abuse and neglect case. There are no collaborative training efforts uniting the different disciplines that impact a particular case. Members of the judiciary and social service agencies agree they need to direct more efforts toward achieving interdisciplinary education and training. In order to best serve the interests of foster children, a dialogue must develop between the various agencies and organizations of family protective services system to allow interdisciplinary brainstorming and creative problem solving. The stakes are too high in child protection cases not to open the avenues for effective communication. Without this cross discipline exchange of information, it is impossible to develop an effective plan for reaching the best result. The Texas Center for the Judiciary rose to the occasion with its "Beyond the Bench" conference. Beyond the Bench was a first attempt to create this necessary cross discipline communication by inviting key stakeholders, including legislators, judges, prosecutors, attorneys, educators, foster care representatives, child advocates, mental health/substance abuse professionals, and public health professionals to participate in a two day facilitated conversation on what needs to be done to achieve safety, permanence, and well-being for foster children. This event, unprecedented in Texas, provided insight on best practices, enhanced communication between the various stakeholder groups, and enabled them to work together to more effectively meet the needs of Texas children.

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### **Cowlitz County District Court Electronic Form project**

Cowlitz County District Court  
Laurel M. Masse, Court Administrator  
312 SW First Ave  
Kelso, WA 98626

The Cowlitz County Jail is housed in the same building as the District Court courtrooms. When the building of a new jail a block away became a reality we were faced with the problem of the inability to get the paperwork signed by all parties and copies returned to the defendants' who were in custody. In April 2005 we began to look for solutions to the problem. The offices that would be affected by the jail move and the receipt of paperwork would be the courts, the jail, attorneys, prosecutors, and the offender program offices. Some of the processes that were considered in order to arraign in-custody defendants' and process their paperwork were building a walkway across and above the street to the new jail, building a courtroom for District Court at the new jail, or having jail staff physically bring paperwork back and forth. After thorough testing and finally going live on April 10, 2006 we have implemented a program that uses electronic forms that are filled out in the courtroom and signed electronically by the judge. The forms are then transmitted to the defendant in the jail for them to read and electronically sign. We also extended this process so that after the documents were completed they would automatically be imaged and stored permanently. Not only will this project save on employee time and financial resources, it will omit the possibility of lost paperwork and errors on forms. This is a project that could be used by any Court of Limited Jurisdiction and Superior Courts. In the existing process we do in-custody video arraignments on printed forms that the judge and clerk fill out by hand. The jail staff or a court runner picks up the paperwork from the courtroom on the 2nd floor and takes it to the jail law library on the 3rd floor. All the defendants being arraigned on that day are waiting to read and sign all their paperwork before they can be returned to their cells. Sometime later that day, when the jail staff has time, they bring the paperwork back to the court. The clerk then separates the paperwork, photocopies the citations for all attorneys involved, and distributes the paperwork to the parties. Some of the other offices that could receive paperwork are the Work Crew Office, Probation, and Offender Services.

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## **King County District Court Interpreter Web Program**

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The King County District Court Interpreter Web (KCIW) is a web based system that organizes the interpreter needs for all the Court's legal matters. This includes civil, criminal, and probation matters, as well as other District Court business requiring an interpreter. In the year 2005, the web system facilitated interpreter arrangements for a total of 8,908 cases. These cases resulted in 7,449 paid interpreter hours. The web system takes full advantage of economies of scale principles, often combining similar interpretive jobs and saving of court costs. The Interpreter Web is primarily self sufficient and has 1.5 (FTE) staff dedicated to its operational support. The District Court's interpreter needs are often quick paced and of a high volume. In the current year, King County District Court has processed approximately 210,000 cases, making it one of the larger limited jurisdiction courts in the country. The web based system allows for interpreters to self select jobs for which they are qualified, allows the public to view the system through a public access, and is very quick to utilize, allowing court staff to arrange an interpreter job in about two minutes. Besides the ease of its booking system, the KCIW has numerous reporting features built into a database module. These modules support efforts of the court to quantify its interpreter use for budget and strategic planning. It has an automated vouchering and payment system feature as well, which significantly cuts the time and associated costs with interpreter payment and auditing.

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## **Superior Court of the State of Arizona in and for Maricopa County Search Warrant Center**

Hon. Sheila Madden  
Presiding Initial Appearance Court Commissioner  
Maricopa County Superior Court  
125 W. Washington  
Phoenix, Arizona 85003  
(602) 506-3190

Maricopa County has been plagued with the problem of law enforcement officers approaching any one of over a hundred different judicial officers to obtain search warrants and tender returns on those warrants. Many judicial officers are difficult to locate after hours; some rarely handle search warrants and therefore often do not know proper procedures; trying to organize warrants and returns has been a nightmare. To solve this challenge, the Superior Court's Initial Appearance Court has opened a Search Warrant Center. The Center provides twenty-four hour a day— seven day a week judicial officer availability for immediate review and signature of search warrants and returns (as well as other time sensitive orders). Law enforcement officers now enjoy the benefit of knowing they can come to a central location any time of the day or night and find a commissioner versed in search warrant law and procedure. Staff track the warrant until they receive the return and compare the orders sealing the warrant upon issuance with the orders either sealing or unsealing the warrant when the return is received. The Clerk of the Superior Court files and tracks both the warrant and return and answers all questions from the media.

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**Parish Criminal District Court  
Hurricane Katrina Disaster Recovery for Orleans**

Carla Smith  
Chief Deputy Judicial Administrator  
Orleans Parish Criminal District Court  
U.S. Federal Courthouse  
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New Orleans, LA 70130  
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The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court is comprised of twelve judicial sections and one elected magistrate with four appointed commissioners. The average annual caseload is approximately 8000 filings with 25,000 arrestees yearly. On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina devastated the City of New Orleans and crippled the entire criminal justice system. As Judges and Staff scattered for refuge from the storm, the building sustained almost ten feet of floodwaters damaging evidence, property, and court reporting records and tapes as well as the building's mechanical system. The jail, clerk's office, indigent defender's office and district attorney's office were inoperable. Immediately, the Chief Judge and the executive staff of the court administrator's office began to reassemble the broken system. Meetings were held with all criminal justice agencies. A web site and '1-800' number were launched to locate employees and defendants. The Magistrate began operating at Hunt Correctional Facility in St. Gabriel, LA and within weeks, began setting bonds at a bus and train terminal in New Orleans once booking resumed at the prison. In addition, judges rotated to conduct proceedings at Hunt Correctional. By the end of the year, Magistrate was and is operating in a makeshift courtroom in the jail. The other twelve judges are rotating (four per day) hearing pre trial cases, motions and judge trials four days per week in the federal courthouse. Court case managers located defendants through the evacuee lists published on the Internet and by contacting shelters. They facilitated drug treatment and testing in the areas of evacuation. Those close to New Orleans began appearing before Drug Court and Domestic Violence Judges bi monthly. Essential lessons for the court and other jurisdictions in time of a disaster include development of a Disaster Recovery Plan, collaboration of agencies and information technology linkage of all agencies in order retrieve vital information.