

Court2Court Showcase

July 18, 2012

10:00 AM – Noon

Exhibit Hall in Floridian Ballroom

Join your court colleagues for this year's Court2Court Showcase, where you can review innovative projects from courts across the country, including those by recipients of the 2012 Justice Achievement Award and honorable mention.

JAA Winner

Centralizing Payables Processing in Minnesota – Minnesota Judicial Branch

JAA Honorable Mention

Implementation of a Jail Alternative Program – Scottsdale City Court, Arizona

Civil Division Reengineering Project – Superior Court of New Jersey, Essex Vicinage

Court Reports and Statistical Publication – Scottsdale City Court, Arizona

Remote Interpreting Program – 9th Judicial Circuit Court, Orlando, Florida

Adult Drug Court Technical Assistance Program – Justice Programs Office, American University, Washington, DC

Mandatory E-filing Program – Las Vegas Justice Court, Nevada

Measuring to Manage: CourTools Implementation – Scottsdale City Court, Arizona

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Justice Achievement Award Winner

Minnesota Court Payment Center Centralizing Payables Processing (CPC) Minnesota Judicial Branch

In 2008, Minnesota Judicial Branch leadership recognized that the serious budget challenges facing the state would not be a short-term problem and would necessitate a new way of thinking and significant business reengineering to provide effective service with fewer resources in the decades to come. Budget reductions had resulted in a vacancy rate of more than 10 percent. A study committee recommended thinking beyond traditional county borders to how the branch could deliver services by centralizing functions and using specialized staff to process work more efficiently and with higher quality. The Minnesota Court Payment Center (CPC) was the most ambitious initiative launched initially to address the challenges facing Minnesota. Centralization¹ of payables² processing would enable the branch to leverage technology as well as economies of scale to reduce labor costs and improve service to the public. This concept envisioned a total reengineering effort by moving work which had been handled since statehood from the courthouses in the 87 counties around the state to a new, centralized, virtual center using fewer, lower paid staff working from their home offices. Under the new centralized operation, cases would be initiated more quickly, payment receipted and deposited on the same day received, and citizens would receive the same messaging and service levels regardless of which part of the state their citation was issued. The public would benefit by having the convenient option to dispose of a single or multiple citations from differing counties 24/7 using a telephone or the Internet, and to pay with a credit card, both firsts for Minnesota as a state.

For more information, contact:

Kay Pedretti, Director, Minnesota Judicial Branch Court Services Division, (651) 284-2084;

kay.pedretti@courts.state.mn.us

¹ Centralization does not necessarily mean that such services will be located in St. Paul, Minnesota. In an "e-everything" future, centralized service delivery, where applicable, may well be located in other part of the state.

² Payable citations are lower level offenses (traffic, Department of Natural Resources, ordinance violations) which by statute or branch policy may be disposed without a court hearing upon entry of a guilty plea and payment.

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JAA HONORABLE MENTION Implementing a Jail Alternative Program Scottsdale City Court, Arizona

Summary Overview

The Scottsdale City Court (“Court”) successfully implemented a jail alternative program for post-adjudicated, non-violent DUI offenders in October 2010. The Home Detention Electronic Monitoring (HDEM) Program saved the City of Scottsdale’s budget \$1,436,081 in the first nine months. The program continues to be in operation at the time of this report and is saving the City an estimated \$160,000 per month. The successful implementation strategies for the program included the following:

- ❖ Judicial and City leadership support
- ❖ Capitalizing on current conditions in the community that included:
 - Increased mandatory jail days due to new legislation
 - Increased jail housing rates and DUI filed charges
 - Decreased city budgets and intense scrutiny of expenditures
- ❖ Clear, measurable objectives that meet the needs of stakeholders
- ❖ Effective program planning

Two previous attempts at implementing a similar program were unsuccessful. The 2001 pilot program enjoyed only marginal success and ultimately ended and in 2007 court staff developed a program proposal that was rejected. The factors missing from the previous program attempts and successfully used in the 2010 program were: judicial and city leadership support; capitalizing on current conditions in the community; and clear, measurable objectives that meet the needs of the stakeholders.

The Problem

The number of Driving under the Influence (DUI) charges filed in the Court increased 81.7% from FY 2001 to 2010 at the same time jail housing costs more than doubled and legislative mandated jail time increased 159%. As a result, rising jail costs were a focused area of concern for City leadership due to the economic downturn and overall City budget deficit. The City simply could not continue to pay the jail costs without cutting other vital services to the citizens or laying off employees.

Target Group

Non-violent defendants sentenced in the Court for driving under the influence (DUI), a misdemeanor violation, with the exception of first offense regular DUI was the target group. Although defendants in the target group were all sentenced for a DUI offense (except first offense regular DUI), they were not all citizens of Scottsdale (approximately 33% live in Scottsdale). The defendants reside in various cities within the state and some reside out of state. However, only Arizona residents were eligible for the program.

Replication

This specific program can be replicated in other jurisdictions. Jail alternative programs and specifically home detention and electronic monitoring programs are currently used in many courts nationwide.

For more information, contact:

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Janet G. Cornell, Court Administrator, (480) 312-2775; jcornell@scottsdaleaz.gov

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Adult Drug Court Technical Assistance Project American University

Effective January 1, 2010, American University has been providing technical assistance and training services to adult drug courts under a cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). The BJA-funded Adult Drug Court Technical Assistance Project (DCTAP) offers a wide range of free and cost-share services to drug court and other problem solving court programs that focus on services to substance abusing offenders to promote improved program effectiveness and long term participant success. Available BJA DCTAP services include:

- Conduct of on-site program assessments and other site services to address issues relating to program policies and practices and assist with strategic planning, program design, data collection and analysis, and other operational issues;
- Developing tools for BJA grantees and other drug courts to assess progress in achieving program goals and implementing the “Key Components” ;
- Provision of a wide range of office-based assistance, including facilitation of topic specific conference calls and webinars; compilation/dissemination of operational resources relating to drug court policies and operations; and off-site consultation on planning and implementation issues which, for various reasons, do not warrant on-site services;
- Promotion of peer-to-peer interchange and net-working on common implementation issues and promising practices through the project’s “FAQ” series, listserv and other activities; and
- A project website (www.american.edu/justice) on which is posted over 15,000 downloadable documents relating to drug court issues, including compilations of relevant case law, statutes, and court rules updated annually; program manuals; research reports, participant handbooks; forms and orders; and law journal and other reference materials.

Office-based technical assistance services can be requested by email or telephone. On-site technical assistance services can be requested by letter from the drug court judge. The letter should describe the services requested, the needs generating the technical assistance request, and the results the requested assistance is intended to accomplish. Summary background information relevant to the technical assistance requested, including any prior studies undertaken, should also be included if available.

Within five days of receipt of the request, project staff will contact the requestor to discuss the request in more detail, obtain additional information, if needed, and plan for service delivery. If on-site services are indicated, they will be designed and scheduled in collaboration with the requesting official. All recipients of the project’s on-site technical assistance services are required to participate in the project’s evaluation and follow-up activities conducted following provision of TA services to document their utility and impact.

For more information contact:

Tim Jeffries, Bureau of Justice Assistance/U.S. Department of Justice, (202) 616-7385;
Timothy.Jeffries@usdoj.gov

Caroline Cooper, Stephen Welker, or Joseph Trotter at American University, (202) 885-2875;
Justice@american.edu; www.american.edu/justice

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Technical Assistance Projects Serving State and Local Courts and Judicial System Agencies

Improving The Criminal Case Management, Processes And Related Services

The School of Public Affairs at American University provides a wide range of technical assistance, training, and related services to criminal courts and related judicial system agencies. For many years, these services were provided through the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Criminal Courts Technical Assistance Project (CCTAP). Starting July 1, 2012, these and other services can be accessed through BJA's National Training and Technical Assistance Center <https://www.bjatrainning.org/request-form>. Representative subject areas for technical assistance include responses to jail overcrowding; caseload management, including criminal DCM (Differentiated Case Management) planning/implementation; indigent defense services delivery; court security/emergency preparedness and COB (continuity of business plans) development; pretrial services review/planning; handling juveniles in adult courts; and management reviews of courts and justice system agencies.

Drug Courts: Current Issues, Practices, And Applications To Veterans, DUI And Other Cases And Services Available Through BJA Drug Court Technical Assistance Project

This on-going BJA-funded provides a wide range of technical assistance services to support drug court programs (see attached description), on-site and office-based services. The project also compiles and continually updates information on national drug court activity and emerging issues, including adaptation to Veterans, DUI, Mental Health, and Reentry Court models, and maintains an extensive reference collection of drug court materials, selections from which are posted on a rotating basis on the Clearinghouse website.

For more information contact:

Caroline S. Cooper or Joseph A. Trotter Jr., (202) 885-2875, justice@american.edu; www.american.edu/justice

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Civil Division Re-Engineering Project Superior Court of New Jersey, Essex Vicinage

Recent trends including funding challenges, increasingly complex cases and aging infrastructures, make it necessary for courts to dramatically alter how they do business.¹ For instance, court leaders must revolutionize work processes and caseload management practices and use evidence-based practices and tools to achieve better outcomes.

In 2009, the Superior Court of New Jersey, Essex Vicinage, began to revolutionize its own work processes and practices through its civil division re-engineering project. This project focused on increasing accuracy and efficiency when processing court documents. The court began by forming a Quality Assurance Task Force (“task force”), composed of court managers and staff.

The task force reviewed existing practices in detail to develop a comprehensive strategy to improve document processing procedures. By analyzing current work flow, studying best practices in other counties, determining bottlenecks and their causes, creating a means to determine workload in real time and to account for incomplete and completed work, the court utilized existing resources and innovation to remove delays in document processing. The project resulted in systemic change and established a greater sense of urgency and accountability among staff members.

The timeliness of data entry was contrasted to the results prior to the re-engineering project and revealed remarkable improvement. Perhaps the best illustration of the re-engineering project’s success is the following table, which is a comparison of Essex Vicinage’s document processing times before the re-engineering project, September 30, 2010 and after, September 30, 2011:

Document Type	Average number of days between filing and entry of document into ACMS		
	Sept. 30, 2010	Sept. 30, 2011	% Improvement
Motions	2.6 Days	0.9 Days	65%
Complaints	4.9 Days	2.0 Days	59%
Answers	6.2 Days	4.7 Days	24%
Orders	2.2 Days	1.6 Days	27%
Judgments	3.5 Days	2.2 Days	37%
Proofs	10.9 Days	3.9 Days	64%
Summons	3.5 Days	2.9 Days	17%
Other Documents	5.3 Days	3.7 Days	30%

The re-engineering process described above may be utilized in other jurisdictions, particularly those with paper-based filing. It would be of particular benefit to those jurisdictions that will automate processes since it includes mapping out the current process and identifying opportunities for improvement.

For more information, contact:

Joe Fazari, Superior Court of New Jersey – Essex Vicinage, (973) 693-5706; giuseppe.fazari@judiciary.state.nj.us

¹ See Martin, John A. and Wagenknecht-Ivey, Brenda, J., National Center for State Courts, *It’s a New Day: Future Trends Require Revolutionary Changes in Courts* (2011).

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Mandatory E-Filing Program Las Vegas Justice Court, Nevada

The Las Vegas Justice Court is the first and only court of limited jurisdiction in the country that requires mandatory E-filing of all documents in all civil cases types (general civil, small claims, protection orders and eviction cases). This is in contrast to other courts of limited jurisdiction in the country that allow for voluntary E-filing primarily by attorneys for some types of civil cases or mandatory E-filing of only small claims cases or other limited case types.

The Court has provided a simple E-filing process, and has provided support for pro se litigants and first-time e-filers. The support provided by the Court includes online instructional guides, hands-on assistance by clerks in the Self-Help Center and training classes provided free of charge conducted by faculty jointly provided by the Court and vendor. The Las Vegas Justice Court's mandatory E-filing was implemented with minimal IT support, using an in-house implementation team, and without the need for additional personnel. It can be replicated in courts across the country.

Many states and local jurisdictions have implemented mandatory E-filing, primarily in the court of general jurisdiction. Courts of limited jurisdictions that have adopted E-filing have done so either on a voluntary basis, only for limited civil case types such as Small Claims cases or other limited case types, or only for attorneys in limited civil or family case types. In those jurisdictions, the fees assessed for E-filing are typically higher than those assessed in Las Vegas. For example, earlier this year the Kansas Supreme Court's Blue Ribbon Commission Report for Improving the Kansas Judicial System (January 3, 2012) recommended statewide E-filing be mandatory for all civil cases except those involving pro se litigants, small claims cases, and indigent litigants. All E-filers will be required to pay civil E-filing fees anticipated to be as high as \$5.00 or \$6.00 per document. Other courts (Delaware, Arizona, and Connecticut) routinely permit self-represented parties to avoid E-filing and to manually file pleadings and documents; it appears their decision is based on a belief that the E-filing process is too difficult for unrepresented members of the public. The Las Vegas Justice Court recognized that self-represented parties comprised the bulk of all civil filers in this court and designed the process to be user-friendly for first time and/or one-time users.

E-filing in the Las Vegas Justice Court consists of mandatory E-filing of all documents in all general civil, small claims and landlord/tenant cases; protective orders except workplace harassment. E-filers choosing to E-file from within the Regional Justice Center facility may use court-supplied scanners and pay no E-filing transaction fee, and pay only the Court filing fee. Those choosing to E-file remotely pay the Court filing fee and a \$3.00 per document transaction fee to the E-filing vendor. Justice Court clerks review all documents submitted and either accept or reject the documents, based on completeness. If a document is rejected, an explanation to the filing party is included with the rejected document so the deficiency may be remedied. Payment is made by credit/debit card or by use of a draw down account.

For more information, contact:

Art Bernardino, Civil Division Administrator, Las Vegas Justice Court, (702) 671-0616; berna@clarkcountycourts.us

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Remote Interpreting Program 9th Judicial Circuit Court, Orlando, Florida

In an effort to meet the growing demand of Central Florida for interpreters despite the circuit's limited resources, in 2007, the Ninth Judicial Circuit Court created and implemented a first-of-its-kind remote interpreting system that allows interpreting services to be conducted remotely between the Orange and Osceola County courthouses, the branch courthouses, the Juvenile Justice Center, and the Orange County Jail Booking and Release Center. This remote system maximizes the number of cases that any given interpreter can cover which results in considerable savings to the state budget for interpreters. In fact, the implementation and expansion of this system has resulted in a net savings of \$110,000 out of the interpreter budget allotment over the last fiscal years. Additionally, the system has reduced contractual expenditures by 38 percent. Currently, the Ninth Circuit is working toward expanding the use of the centralized remote interpreting program to cover a statewide network solution.

For more information, contact:

Ody Arias, Interpreter Program Manager, Orange and Osceola Counties, (407) 836-2399; www.ninthcircuit.org

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Court Reports and Statistical Publication Scottsdale City Court, Arizona

Project Summary/Overview

This project demonstrates that a mid size municipal court can publish high quality, informative and professional reports, with current staff and minimal formal cost. This project has been operational since 2008. The published reports allow the City Court to do the following: inform City leaders and residents about the court and its work volumes; demonstrate transparency in operation and practices; and, advises readers about operational functions. Published reports also document specific focus areas of court operations and innovation. Examples of the special focus reports include a photo enforcement program summary and the implementation results for a home detention and electronic monitoring program.

The Challenge

Prior to 2008, the City Court had no reports published. Monthly statistics were kept, but nothing publicly disseminated. When the court was faced with budget cuts and realized the limited understanding of the work of the court, court management faced a challenge on how to better 'tell its story.'

The Solution

Court management determined that benefits could occur from publicizing and sharing information, and it would help provide information about the court role and court work volumes. Senior court management formed a small work group consisting of the Court Administrator, Deputy Court Administrators and court business analyst, to begin the process of formatting an annual report, and implementing a publication cycle. Work was completed by existing court staff, with data drawn from the case management system, and final publication using MS Publisher.

The Results

A variety of operational and statistical reports have been published on the City Court web site. To date, there are four annual statistical reports, and five special focus publications.

Additional Observations

Among the additional benefits of publication of this information: the reports became a location to whom the media, other courts and the general public could be referred; clear and overt documentation of court information; and, a method to provide information about the role of the court.

Transfer or Replication Characteristics

Several characteristics make this project easy to transfer and replicate. Among them: the process and format is easy to replicate, the use of court management is easy to accomplish, and the nature and type of information can be used for other courts.

For more information, contact:

Janet G. Cornell, Court Administrator, jcornell@scottsdaleaz.gov, (480) 312-2775;
http://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/courts/Court_Publications

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Measuring to Manage: CourTools Implementation Scottsdale City Court, Arizona

Courts respect their community by being accountable to the citizens and ensuring their leadership is able to manage court operations in an increasingly complex world. Scottsdale City Court utilizes CourTools, National Center for State Court's (NCSC) statistical measurement system, for quantifying and evaluating court operations. CourTools allows the Court to measure its performance in a systematic manner that has numerous benefits: it can be replicated by other courts, which allows courts to compare each other in a meaningful way; it allows the Court to manage through measurement instead of anecdote; it is un-biased against a particular court type; and it was developed by an outside, expert entity and has been fully evaluated and vetted.

The Problem

For years the only way to measure the Court against another court was to use the annual Arizona Administrative Office of the Court (AOC) Limited Jurisdiction Case Activity Report. This report has limitations as it is published annually and not monthly, and much latitude exists as to how charges are collected, categorized, etc. The case activity report focuses on charges while courts move cases through the system, not charges. Scottsdale City Court keeps monthly statistics on case and charge filings, financial information and court proceedings/events. Ad-hoc reports would be produced from these statistics depending upon management interests at the time. These ad hoc reports tended toward trending analysis rather than a systematic reporting mechanism to measure and evaluate court performance.

The Solution

The work team reviewed what case management system (CMS) data elements could be built into queries that would be gathered for the remaining measures. The Court Automation Manager created and ran queries that matched the specifications in the requirements. The Court Services Supervisor performed quality assurance checks on random cases in the report to make sure the collected data was accurate. The process of fine-tuning queries and documentation was repeated until it was felt that the data was accurate. Once the measure was accepted the work team moved on to the next measure. All ten measures were implemented by April 2011. No direct costs were incurred to implement CourTools other than staff time and no ongoing costs were created as a result of the project. Now that all ten measures are in place, the Court Services Supervisor is tasked with gathering and collating the statistics into a spreadsheet that allows viewers to compare both months in a fiscal year and across fiscal years. Once the data is gathered, the spreadsheet is populated, and quality assurance is performed, and a link to the spreadsheet is sent to all court management including the Presiding Judge, Court Administrator, Deputy Court Administrators, and Supervisors.

Replication at Other Courts

Implementing CourTools is possible for other courts. The most important item is strong project sponsorship from court management. The desire to manage court operations through data and not "anecdote" is a must. The CourTools website (www.courttools.org) explains standard methodologies for each measure. Court management should review and discuss each data point, its definition for the court and how it will be collected. Discussion and documentation prior to implementation ensures a smoother implementation. Courts should have available and suitably trained staff that has the interest, skill and time to make CourTools a part of monthly duties.

For more information, contact:

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