

# NACM

## 2002 Justice Achievement Award

### *Projects Submitted for Consideration*

#### **Milwaukee County Circuit Court**

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#### **“SMALL CLAIMS PROCEDURES FOR THE PRO SE LITIGANT”**

It wasn't long ago when the Statutes were the only information available to direct anyone on how to use small claims court. There has been a paradigm shift within the court system, however, toward a more customer service-oriented approach. Court personnel must provide a new and more user-friendly way for citizens to access the court system. With this new way of looking at the responsibility of giving help to unrepresented people, a new problem surfaced. How could court personnel provide this level of service with no increase in personnel at a time when small claims use was increasing and the increases were in the area of pro se litigants? It was determined that a video presentation could offer the proper visual information litigants were currently lacking. The belief was that a video would be more effective than just the written brochure "Milwaukee County Small Claims Procedure In Brief" or verbal explanation by court staff. It was determined that the primary object of the video was to show a complete processing of a small claims case by a pro se litigant with a video running time of about 10 minutes. Through the use of the visual medium, viewers could see the actual places in the Courthouse they would have contact with, as well as some of the staff they would meet. The video is shown in the Legal Research Center in the Courthouse. Now, when pro se litigants come to use the system, they have ability to view a 10-minute instructional video that provides them with visual instruction as to how the system works and what they can expect.

#### **Wisconsin Supreme Court**

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#### **“THE WISCONSIN COURTHOUSE SECURITY TRAINING PROGRAM”**

The Wisconsin Courthouse Security Training Program was designed to increase awareness of courthouse security issues and improve the level of safety at all courthouses in Wisconsin. This training program brings together the judicial, executive, and legislative branches of county government, as well as the sheriff's office and a technical college. By adopting a collaborative approach, this program has resulted in a new level of cooperation and increased attention to the issue of courthouse security. Our major innovation: improving court security by training law enforcement, judges, court staff, and county government officials together. We are pleased to note that the National Center for State Courts has selected the Wisconsin training program as a national model to be presented at an upcoming conference. We and the NCSC hope that other states and jurisdictions will find our program helpful as they work to improve safety for jurors, witnesses, victims, court staff, and the public.

## **Superior Court of Fulton County**

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## **“CITY OF ATLANTA/FULTON COUNTY AUTOMATED CASE DISPOSITION PROJECT”**

The City of Atlanta and Fulton County recognized a problem that had existed for several years. Specifically, only 23% of cases being disposed of in the various courts in these jurisdictions, were actually being reported to the Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC). To remedy this problem, the Chief Judge of the Fulton County Superior Court, the Hon. Thelma Wyatt Cummings Moore, later succeeded by the Hon. Elizabeth Long, and the Hon. Barbara Harris, Chief Judge of the Atlanta Municipal Court, initiated discussions with other agencies and departments who were involved. Following attendance at a Search Symposium in Washington, D.C. by 19 representatives of the City of Atlanta and Fulton County, a plan was developed to seek funding assistance through the Edward Byrne Memorial Grant Program to partially fund an intergovernmental and interdepartmental effort to create an Automated Case Disposition System. Funding was made available for 2 of the proposed 4 annual phases of the project. During Phase I, a computer server was purchased and connectivity was established to connect the Clerks of the Municipal and Superior Courts. During Phase II, the Fulton County D.A., Solicitors-General of the State, City, and Municipal Courts and the Clerks of the City and State Courts were added to the system. Additional functionality was also completed which gave all participants browse capability and it automated the Offender Based Tracking Form, originating with the State of Georgia. The final two phases, if funded, will add other municipalities and case disposing agencies in Fulton County to the system. The system was completed and went live in late February, 2002. It is estimated that about 80% of disposed cases are now reported to GCIC. This new system saves considerable manpower in manual reporting of dispositions and it minimizes human error in the reporting process. The system now in operation is the first such successful intergovernmental project of its type in the State of Georgia.

## **Thurston County (Washington) Superior Court Family and Juvenile Courts**

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## **“FAMILY TREATMENT COURT”**

Thurston County Family Treatment Court is a program to assist parents in dependency cases to attain sobriety and learn skills in order to protect and parent their children safely and effectively.

The program is for families who have come to the Court's attention in Dependency Court proceedings due to abuse, neglect or a parent's unwillingness or inability to parent because of substance abuse.

Upon screening and agreement to participate in Family Treatment Court, a parent must immediately begin substance abuse treatment. Initially, weekly court appointments will be scheduled for the parent in order for the Court and Family Treatment Team to monitor compliance with the substance abuse treatment program, case plan requirements, and urinalysis testing.

The Court has the authority at every hearing to reward treatment and case plan successes and to sanction the parent for non-compliance. As treatment progresses, Court appearances decrease in frequency to every two weeks and later to once a month. Cases are reviewed in a supportive and informal Court environment. Cases are reviewed every six months in regular Dependency Court or more often if needed.

## **Fourteenth Court of Appeals**

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### **“ACCELERATED APPELLATE CASEFLOW MANAGEMENT”**

Recognizing the need to further refine the caseload management process then in place, the Fourteenth Court of Appeals sought assistance in the design of a more efficient caseload process and resolved to implement and support the procedures crucial to timely processing of appeals. The Justice Management Institute, in a two-day workshop led by Doug Somerlot and John Greacen, provided assistance to the Court. The focus of the workshop was identification of the following: the existing process, causes of delay, critical data and methods of controlling or reducing unnecessary delay. The Court charted the appellate caseload process and applied delay reduction techniques used in the trial courts to the appellate process. The persons responsible for decision-making, action and monitoring were identified for each step in the process. Critical data necessary to monitor progress was identified along with methods of obtaining the data from the existing information system. The process that has evolved from the project is more demanding on the Court's resources, but serves the public with faster disposition of cases. The pending caseload of the court has been reduced to nearly one half of the previous year's number and the average time to disposition has been reduced by three months. The Court continues to look for ways to encourage timely filing of records and briefs by trial clerks and attorneys and closely scrutinizes the time from submission of a case to issuance of the opinion. The program has been very successful and the Court will continue to improve upon it.

## **District Court of Maryland**

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### **“IMPROVING COURT SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE”**

In the State of Maryland, as in other states, the number of domestic violence cases brought to the court is continually increasing. The judicial system is methodical and thorough. However, courts often lack the speed and responsiveness needed to deal with the emergency nature of cases of domestic violence. The District Court of Maryland, a court of lower jurisdiction handling over 2 million cases per year, identified “improvement of court services for victims of domestic violence” as a priority objective in 1998. Over the past four years, the District Court, in concert with the Circuit Courts, the Administrative Office of the Courts, and the Judicial Information Systems have initiated several ambitious projects, which together help us address the unique needs of this population in a more organized, efficient and effective manner. The activities that enhanced our ability to deliver responsive, timely and effective service to victims of domestic violence are:

1. Provided training for judges, commissioners and clerks on the unique issues related to domestic violence cases.
2. Increased specialized personnel to handle the increasing number domestic violence cases.
3. Developed informational materials for domestic violence victims, and space to house DV-related ancillary support services in courthouses.
4. Made forms and information available on-line, to enhance the ability of individuals to complete paperwork at home, or with assistance from advocates and family members. (Visit the Judiciary website (currently undergoing major revisions) at <http://www.courts.state.md.us/district/index.html>)
5. Increased privacy by designating areas for clerks to meet with applicants for protective orders away from public counters.
6. Integrated PC data entry with the mainframe database, in order to develop the capacity to create computerized judicial orders. This greatly enhances communication with all parties, and provides law enforcement agencies with clear descriptions of the defendant to whom they are to serve orders.
7. Developed information exchange between District Court and Circuit Court, to increase communication and efficiency while decreasing chance of dual filings from both parties, one in each court, which created the potential for countermanding orders. Now, cases are consolidated in one court to allow all issues to be addressed in a comprehensive manner.
8. Initiated legislation to place a constitutional amendment on the ballot to allow for 7-day a week, 24-hour a day assistance by authorizing District Court commissioners to issue temporary protective orders, pending judicial review.

## **Tenth Judicial Circuit of Florida**

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### **“PRE-TRIAL SERVICES DEFENDANT TRACKER PROGRAM”**

This program was implemented in 1997 with the primary goal of tracking criminal defendants who had failed to appear for a court hearing and for whom an arrest warrant had been issued. When defendants are notified that they missed a court hearing, and that an arrest warrant has been issued, they are usually eager to schedule a new court hearing. This program has been extremely beneficial in averting numerous arrests and book-ins at the county jail. As a result, a significant amount of cost avoidance has been realized by the courts and the county.

**Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County**

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**Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County**

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**Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County**

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**“FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION CENTER”**

Domestic violence – a term that invokes fear, loss of control and intimidation in the hearts and minds of the people impacted by it. In October of 2001, the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County opened the Family Violence Prevention Center (FVPC) to provide assistance to people involved in domestic violence actions in this Court. This is achieved by offering the necessary paperwork, information on relevant court processes, listings of related community resources, and even contact with a domestic violence lay advocate, all in one place within the primary trial court complex in the heart of downtown Phoenix.

**“COURT SELF-SERVICE CENTER REACHES OUT TO HISPANIC COMMUNITY”**

In an ongoing effort to provide the community with improved access to the Court and its services, the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County is now providing hundreds of self-help legal documents in Spanish through the Court’s popular Self-Service Center. Maricopa County’s Hispanic population, 25 percent of the Valley’s residents, is among the largest in the Southwest. The Self-Service Center opened in 1995 in response to a growing need to provide assistance to approximate 75,000 self-represented litigants who come through the Court yearly, particularly in family law and probate. The availability of more than 900 court forms, documents and instructions in Spanish helps the Court better serve the county’s growing Hispanic community. The documents – both in English and Spanish -- are available at the Court’s two Self-Service Center locations, as well as on the Court’s web site [www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov](http://www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov). The documents that have been translated provide Self-Service Center customers with the means to more effectively represent themselves in a number of Superior Court matters. Materials that are available include instructions and forms for family law matters, including divorce, child support and domestic violence; probate matters, including estate settlement, guardianship and conservatorship, civil name changes, juvenile dependency and small claims appeal of property valuation. Any new Self-Service Center products created in the future will also be made available in Spanish.

**“CELEBRATE ADOPTION”**

Celebrate Adoption is a collaboration of the Superior Court, Maricopa County, adoption attorneys, and adoption agencies to provide information about adoption and to assist with the recruitment of prospective adoptive families in November, 2000 and 2001, during National Adoption Awareness Month. Changes in Arizona statute required an expedited finding of dependency for children that have been abused, neglected, or abandoned. The statutes also require an expedited finding for a permanent plan for these children. Permanent plans may be re-unification with family, guardianship, or termination of parental rights/adoption. Approximately 300 children are in the care of the state of Arizona awaiting a permanent placement through adoption. The recruitment of prospective adoptive families has not kept pace with the expedited findings of the court, leading to an opportunity such as the Celebrate Adoption program.

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**“E-COURTROOMS IN SUPERIOR COURT”**

Opened in May 2001, the E-Courtrooms of the Superior Court in Maricopa County integrate evidence presentation technology with digital video recording, videoconferencing and real-time court reporting to create a state-of-the-art trial environment. The technologies available in the E-Courtrooms enhance the way lawyers present evidence, allowing facts, concepts and ideas to be more readily understood by jurors, litigants, spectators and the Court. It is believed that the E-Courtrooms are the first attempt ever to integrate such a variety of technologies in an operational court setting. The E-Courtrooms represent a profound and fundamental change in the way court proceedings are conducted.

**“FAMILY COURT SERVICES ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM”**

The Family Court Services Enhancement Program was developed to provide several services to those individuals who have cases in the Family Court Department of the Superior Court in Maricopa County. The program consists of three components: (1) a judicial hearing officer and staff dedicated to provision of domestic violence services and improving the processing of Orders of Protection; (2) a “navigator” system within the Family Court, which provides an expedited response to inquiries, concerns, and complaints expressed by customers regarding Family Court matters; and (3) an advisory counsel/citizens assistance forum, the purpose of which is to advise the Court in ways to continuously improve its services to families and the community. Working in conjunction with other court areas, the Family Court Enhancement Program demystifies court processes, removing some of the fundamental barriers to accessing justice.

**“JURY MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM”**

Brought about by a need to improve citizen interaction with the court, the Jury Commission in Maricopa County, Arizona, designed a Jury Management Improvement Program in 2001 that gives summoned jurors court access 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Members of the community who receive a summons for jury service at courts located in Maricopa County may choose to respond through either an interactive web site ([www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov/jury](http://www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov/jury)) or an interactive voice response telephone system (602.372.JURY). Access to the Court’s Jury Office through technology makes it possible for summoned jurors to acknowledge that they are available to serve as summoned, and it makes it possible for them to postpone service to a date of their own choosing. The web site even goes so far as to give jurors qualification criteria. Jurors who do not meet the qualifications as set out in the law may enter their disqualification rationale directly into the jury database. The Jury Management Improvement Program has brought about an improved experience for jurors, improved results for the court, and expanded community outreach. A combination of technologies, the automation system supporting the Jury Management Improvement Program cost approximately \$750,000, with savings realized from maintenance on old technology that are significant enough to pay for the program in its first year of operation. Making government accessible to citizens is an achievable goal as it relates to jury service in Maricopa County.

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**“REGIONAL COURT CENTERS FOR FELONY CASE PROCESSING”**  
Since February 2001, the criminal justice system agencies in Maricopa County have partnered to dramatically improve case processing. Early case processing once handled in 23 justice courts is now conducted in three Regional Court Centers for Felony Processing (RCC). Front-end case processing which traditionally took a minimum of 50–70 days from the time of arrest has been reduced to 20–40 days. The adoption of the RCC concept is a paradigm shift that offers numerous benefits. Some of these benefits are intangible such as improved public trust and confidence, minimizing unnecessary delay, saving attorney, judicial officer and staff time, and meeting time standards for case disposition. Other benefits represent tangible cost savings, such as jail housing and transportation costs. Components of the RCC concept, preliminary hearings, arraignments, and changes of plea, formerly conducted over a three-week period are now held on a single day. Changes of plea are significantly increased since there is no lapse of time between the preliminary hearing and the arraignment. In most felony matters, sentencings are scheduled within 7 to 10 days rather than automatically scheduled 30 days out. Attorneys are no longer required to travel daily to 19 different justice court locations or make jail visits to review plea agreements. The Sheriff’s Department saves significant jail housing costs [over \$3.8 million annually] as a result of reduced jail days. Sheriff’s Department transport is now only required to transport felony inmates to three different locations.

**“TRIAL COURT LEADERSHIP CENTER”**

The Trial Court Leadership Center (TCLC) began as a training site for judges and court professionals in 1996. Operated by the Superior Court in Phoenix, the Training Center serves as a "living lab" in the midst of a progressive metropolitan general jurisdiction court. All the modern attributes of an adult learning environment are provided through the Center including a contemporary classroom for 50 participants and numerous breakout discussion rooms. The Center, in the heart of downtown Phoenix, is located in the Superior Court’s Law Library, a three-floor complex housed within the newly remodeled East Court Building. The Center’s educational programming is structured around two objectives:

- To create new innovative seminars and workshops for trial courts and the attorney community that traditional, national-based educational institutes and various judicial or court management associations do not offer.
- To establish seminars and workshops presented by leading judicial educators.

Courses are normally limited to 30-50 participants, run three to four days, and address real world, common place needs and problems in trial courts. Tuition costs may vary, but usually run about \$300 to \$450 per participant. Both TCLC-created programs, and those sponsored by national organizations and educators, are open to judges, court managers, lawyers and other court professionals throughout the nation.

**“STATISTICS AND GRAPHICAL PRESENTATIONS IN CASEFLOW MANAGEMENT”**

Judicial behavior can be positively influenced by peer comparisons published in monthly statistical operational reports.

**City of Lakewood Municipal Court**

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**“SUSPENSION INTERVENTION SERVICE”**

What happens when students are suspended from school for 1-10 days for things like bullying, fighting, drinking or doing drugs? During this time period, the suspended student is often completely unsupervised, as their parents may be working and the school has no responsibility for them during this time. The purpose of out of school suspension is to remove the student from the school environment so as to maintain safety and order for the rest of the school community. However, suspended students who are at risk of criminal activity, drug and alcohol abuse, and a variety of other inappropriate behaviors, receive no intervention services to identify and eliminate these behaviors and prevent future offenses. The City of Lakewood Probation Department started a new and innovative program designed to not only keep suspended teens “off the streets” but also to also help them receive free professional counseling for anger management, drug and alcohol issues, art therapy and tutoring. Students are also offered follow up services after they return to school. They also receive 80 to 90 percent credits for the school assignments completed while attending the program. Jefferson County R-1 Schools, Lakewood Police Department, Lakewood Municipal Court Probation Department and Passage Way’s Counseling Inc. have collaborated to provide an alternative to the problems that studies show are related to school suspensions. These problems would include, higher drop out risk due to the students falling behind in their studies, higher number of police contact and tickets written to juveniles in the daytime hours due to lack of supervision and higher rate of recidivism due to lack of counseling and therapy for the behaviors that got them into trouble in the first place.

**Skagit County Courts of Limited Jurisdiction**

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**“CREATING EASIER ACCESS TO THE COURTS”**

In an effort to increase public awareness and easy access to the courts anywhere in Skagit County, a bi-monthly Court Administrators Meeting for Skagit County Courts was established through the efforts of Sedro-Woolley and Burlington Municipal Courts in 1999. As a result, the five Skagit Courts of Limited Jurisdiction have established numerous joint programs such as Residential Mitigation Hearings; Warrant Amnesty; Collection Amnesty; Cross-Court Payments; Re-Licensing Programs; Judicial Services Sharing; One Location for Jail Arraignments for all offenders; Personnel exchanges during staff shortages; procedures and policy manuals, brochures and created a local talent pool for resources, writing, computer tips and many other programs. Now, access to the courts is easily available for over 200,000 residents in Skagit County. Residents in Skagit County can now pay fines and penalties at any Court of Limited Jurisdiction in Skagit County; find a night court session; quash a warrant, pay the warrant fees, set a court date; pick up general information about procedures and policies for small claims, do community service work in any jurisdiction; find a public access terminal and occasionally have court in their hometown for citations issued by any law enforcement agency in Skagit County.



### **Supreme Court of Mississippi**

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### **“ACCESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN MISSISSIPPI COURTS”**

The Mississippi Supreme Court under the leadership of Chief Justice Edwin Lloyd Pittman has during the past year undertaken a far-reaching program of administrative and technical changes, all aimed at improving judicial accountability and public access to the courts. The Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice Pittman, has used its rule-making authority to create time standards for judges, revise the Code of Judicial Conduct and adopt rules that improve access to the courts and improve accountability of members of the bar. The court has broadened the membership of its judicial watchdog agency. The court implemented ethics training that addressed unique needs, such as those of appellate court judges. The court has tapped the advice and creative energies of dedicated members of the bench and bar to examine problems such as money and influence in campaigning, to propose solutions and to implement some of those solutions into law. The Supreme Court has reached out to the public with efforts to educate the citizens about court operations and programs. The court has invited public scrutiny and utilized technology as well as staff. The Mississippi Supreme Court put its oral arguments on the Internet, then followed by placing the oral arguments of the Court of Appeals on the Internet. The Supreme Court hired a public information officer to serve the entire state judicial system. The Supreme Court is in the midst of building a new facility to house the appellate courts.

### **Superior Court of California**

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### **“FIND ARBITRATOR MEDIATOR ELECTRONICALLY (FAME)”**

The Find Arbitrator Mediator Electronically (FAME) project evolved as a solution for providing Alternative Dispute Resolution mediators and arbitrators, also known as “neutrals”, to the public in an efficient, fair and technologically advanced manner. Through an automated selection process, individuals may randomly select neutrals, and may also review the neutrals’ profiles. The Court continues to process official assignment of cases. The previous method for neutral selection presented systemic difficulties for the public, neutrals and court staff involved. As a result of FAME, it is no longer necessary for Court clientele or staff to rely upon paper documentation for the selection of neutrals.

### **Superior Court of California**

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### **“GUARDIAN VOLUNTEER PROJECT (GVP)”**

The Guardianship Volunteer Project (GVP) assists proposed pro se guardians in the preparation and filing of forms required to initiate guardianship and conservatorship within the Los Angeles Superior Court. The Clinic operates from the Court’s central courthouse and provides attorney and paralegal guidance and self-help resources at no cost to the public. In 2001, the GVP provided aid to 1528 clients utilizing 70 attorneys, 20 law school students and 20 paralegal volunteers. The program will soon be expanding to assist pro se litigants with conservatorships.

### **Superior Court of California**

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### **“PROBATE VOLUNTEER PANEL (PVP)”**

The method for appointing attorneys to unrepresented entities was expensive and difficult to monitor prior to the Probate Volunteer Panel (PVP). PVP has developed electronically in order to best address the needs of minors and proposed conservatees involved in probate hearings. Through technological upgrading it is possible for the Court to regularly maintain a database of attorney qualifications and availability. The addition of the electronic database allows instant access to volunteer representation on a random and equitable basis.

### **Superior Court of California**

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### **“COURT CERTIFICATE PROGRAM”**

In an effort to enhance our staff’s work skills and performance through continuing professional education and development, the Riverside Superior Court created a Court Certificate Program in August 1999. The Program embodies Tenet Nine of the court’s Code of Ethics: *Improve personal work skills and performance through continuing professional education and development*. The program provides an opportunity for full-time, permanent employees to enhance their professional and personal skills and build self-esteem, which enhances the overall quality of their work and maximizes customer service. Eligible employees agree to a minimum two-year commitment to attend internal court training courses (held during work hours), and classes at a community college (on their own personal time.) Tuition and books are reimbursable with a grade of “C” or better. Used books are then used to stock our “library” for future students. Courses in court-specific and other core program topics are approved at four community colleges throughout Riverside County. The curriculum includes classes in ethics, business, technology, communications, law, and customer service. Upon completion of course requirements, a certificate is awarded at a graduation ceremony attended by administration, bench officers, family and friends. Staff who have completed this program are given special consideration when applying for promotions and advancement. We believe court employees are held to a higher standard and that it important the court supports them. By enhancing their personal communication skills and knowledge of the system in which they work, the administration of justice is enhanced and the public reaps the benefits of this investment in our staff.

### **San Diego Superior Court**

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### **“THE SUBSTANCE ABUSE RECOVERY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (SARMS)”**

Since July 1997, the San Diego Superior Court and the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) have formed a unique collaboration between the judicial system, child protection and alcohol and drug treatment agencies to fundamentally shift local government’s approach to child endangerment. The implementation of the Substance Abuse Recovery Management System (SARMS) is a systemic reform to the County’s approach to addressing one of the root causes of child abuse and neglect, parental substance abuse. SARMS is an extensive case management system that makes alcohol and drug treatment immediately available for parents upon entering the dependency system and monitors for compliance. The implementation of SARMS is assisting in achieving the primary goal of the dependency process, which is to achieve a timely and appropriate permanent placement for every child who enters the dependency system.

### **Seattle Municipal Court**

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### **“DRIVING WHILE LICENSE SUSPENDED PROGRAM”**

In 1999, The Municipal Court of Seattle adopted a Relicensing Initiative in response to a rapidly increasing crisis in our state. In 1998, Washington State suspended 290,655 driver’s license in the third degree because they failed to meet their financial obligations. The Seattle Municipal Court Driving While License Suspended Program reaches out to those individuals who have a suspended license because they failed to pay outstanding citations and are not financially able to make a lump sum payment to get their license reinstated. The Court has established a time payment plan that enables suspended drivers to regain their driving privilege, avoid vehicle impoundment, and improve their likelihood for employment opportunities. The Driving While License Suspended Program in cooperation with Seattle Jobs Initiative developed a program to assist individuals involved in a work training or apprenticeship program, through a variety of agencies, to set up payment arrangements and have the hold on their driver’s license removed. The Court removes any Department of Licensing holds resulting from Seattle Municipal Court citations and individuals are placed on a payment plan for monies to the Court. The Driving While License Suspended Program has expanded to include services throughout our geographic area and is acknowledged as a leader in Washington State in its innovative programming and customer service advocacy.

### **Superior Court of California County of Shasta**

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### **“SHASTA COUNTY INTEGRATED JUSTICE SYSTEM”**

Shasta County Superior Court and all other law and justice agencies in Shasta County have implemented a fully-integrated justice computer system. In 1991, it was clear that the court and other justice agencies had to make a long-range plan to automate their records. Although slightly more than a dream, the stakeholders never gave up seeking funding and approval for such a project from the local Board of Supervisors. It has proven to be highly successful in delivering services to the public and allowing exchange of vital information between the justice agencies.

### **Superior Court of California County of Orange**

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### **“INTERACTIVE COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE NETWORK (I-CAN!)”**

In 2000, the Orange County Superior Court, in partnership with the Legal Aid Society of Orange County, implemented the Interactive Community Assistance Network (*I-CAN!*) project. *I-CAN!* is a network of web-based, interactive kiosks and computer workstations designed to provide self-represented litigants convenient and effective access to vital legal services. Using a touchscreen interface and audiovisual presentations, *I-CAN!* answers frequently asked questions, provides court tours, and educates users on the law, filing procedures and steps needed to pursue or defend their matter. Its multilingual, interactive and tutorial modules enable self-represented litigants to create properly formatted pleadings and complete legal forms. Internet phone technology has been integrated into *I-CAN!* to enable users to obtain immediate technical assistance from Help Center staff at Legal Aid Society of Orange County. *I-CAN!* has also helped to demystify the court process and procedures. The project has been funded through model project grants from the Legal Services Corporation, the State Bar of California, the Judicial Council of California, the Orange County Superior Court Family Law Facilitator’s Program, the Orange County District Attorney’s Office-Family Support Division, and from various cities through Community Development Block Grants.

**Pierce County District**

Contact: Linda J. Bell  
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Phone: (253) 798-6314  
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**“ACCESS TO JUSTICE HEARINGS BY MAIL”**

Pierce County District Court No. one has implemented a program to conduct infraction hearings by mail. The program was tested in November 2000 and implemented in January 2001. Rather than require a defendant to personally appear in a courtroom to present testimony for a infraction hearing that typically takes five minutes, the court has provided a process for the defendant to submit a written statement for consideration. This program reflects important aspects of the Court’s mission, vision, and values by providing an open, accessible and effective forum for dispute resolution as well as a variety of dispute resolution forums to meet the diverse community needs.

**Superior Court of California  
County of Santa Clara**

Contact: Jean Pennypacker  
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**“JUVENILE DELINQUENCY DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE COURT”**

In April 1999, the Superior Court in Santa Clara County began the Domestic Violence/Family Violence Court (DV/FV) in Juvenile Dependency Court. This is the first such court in the nation to reach into the juvenile arena to deal with young abusers who are charged with acts of domestic violence and family violence. Judge Eugene Hyman has spearheaded this program working with representatives from Juvenile Probation, the District Attorney’s Office, the Public Defender’s Office, law enforcement, local victim advocate agencies and court personnel to jointly develop a coordinated intensive community response to these problems. The focus of DV/FV Court is to address the behavior of the minor who is abusing and to provide support for the victim. Once identified by Juvenile Probation, the minor is referred to the DV/FV Court at the beginning of the case and progress is monitored by frequent reviews. To support this Court, Juvenile Probation established a specialized unit to investigate and intensely supervise minors charged with these acts, which include providing specialized classes on domestic and family violence and assessing offenders for mental health issue, which had not been done prior to the implementation of the DV/FV Court. Victims are referred to domestic violence advocacy agencies for services and help in obtaining restraining orders and if the victim has a child, help in establishing paternity, child support and visitation/custody.

**Superior Court of California  
County of Ventura**

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Ventura, CA 93009  
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**“HOMELESS COURT”**

The Ventura Homeless Court functions as a collaborative court/community program that provides an alternative sentencing mechanism for homeless individuals to resolve outstanding minor offenses through community service in lieu of fines. Most of these violations result from the condition of homelessness, such as sleeping or drinking in public, or various traffic-related infractions. The Ventura Homeless Court program is unique in that it works in collaboration with a large number of social service agencies instead of only one or two agencies that provide advocacy and/or assistance to the homeless. The homeless are made aware of this program by social workers working at the ten different homeless advocacy agencies that currently refer cases. The social workers screen the cases for eligibility, provide information on community service options, refer the cases to the public defender’s office for scheduling an appearance in Homeless Court, and supervise the community service work. Special court sessions are scheduled at various homeless advocacy locations geographically distributed throughout the areas of the county most impacted by homelessness. This effectively brings the court to a segment of the population that often fails to appear to resolve minor citations due to their current status and condition. Mental health professionals assist the Homeless Court in providing special housing referrals and access to medication for those with mental health needs.

**Clerk for Recorder's Court  
Gwinnett County**

Contact: Elizabeth P. Blackwell  
Clerk of Recorder's Court  
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Lawrenceville, GA 30045  
Phone: (770) 822-8290  
Fax: (770) 822-8392

**Administrative Office of the  
Nineteenth Judicial Circuit**

Contact: Louise Loud  
Depke Juvenile Justice Center  
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Vernon Hills, Illinois 60061  
Phone: (847) 377-7800  
Fax: (847) 634-3833

**Unified Courts of New York**

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Unified Courts of New York  
25 Beaver Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Phone: (212) 428-2990

**“RECORDER’S COURT AND SHERIFF’S OFFICE JOINT BENCH  
WARRANT PROGRAM”**

The purpose of this program was to streamline the internal processes for recalling bench warrants and reduce the number of warrants being forwarded to the Sheriff’s Office for service. Since Recorder’s Court issues the largest volume of bench warrants, it was natural for the Sheriff’s Office to contact the Court for help. This program represents a collaborative effort between Recorder’s Court, the Sheriff’s Office, the Law Department, and the ITS Department. In the final analysis, the program’s success lies in its role of accountability by decreasing operating costs, increasing efficiency, and providing the defendant more opportunities to become compliant rather than face the alternative of incarceration.

**“FACE-IT PROGRAM”**

The **FACE-IT (Family and Community Engaged in Treatment)** Program is a residential treatment program for juvenile probationers operated by the 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court of Lake County, Illinois. The program has been in operation since October of 1999. The FACE-IT facility has 12 beds to house and treat juveniles for 9-12 months in the Depke Juvenile Justice Complex. FACE-IT accepts delinquent males ages 14-16 that are referred by Juvenile Probation and/or the Juvenile Judges. The minors are kept safe and secure under 24-hour supervision and audio/video monitoring system similar to that of the adjacent Lake County Hulse Detention Center. FACE-IT treatment includes family, individual and group therapy, public service, recreational outings, physical fitness, and formal education. The program is family-focused and community-based with the primary goal of ending delinquent behavior through the treatment of issues such as substance abuse, social skills, sexuality, and family matters. FACE-IT was designed and implemented under the recognition that that Juvenile Justice System should provide balanced attention to the protection of the community, the accountability of juveniles for the offenses committed, and the development of competencies that enable juveniles to become responsible and productive members of the community. To date, FACE-IT has served over 39 juveniles and their families and has saved the County over \$300,000 in dollars spent on outside contracts.

**“JURY SUMMIT, 2001”**

For three days in 2001, over 400 judges, court administrators, attorneys, academics and citizens attended the first national Jury Summit. Representatives from 45 states, many Federal district courts, and several countries heard of the progress made by courts and states in improving their jury systems. Topics discussed included improving communication with jurors in the courtroom, special problems of mass tort, notorious or death penalty juries, programs to follow-up on those who do not respond to the summons, and community outreach programs. Speakers, such as former jurors Mayor Guiliani and Dan Rather, brought home the message – everyone should be and can be a juror. What was unique about this national gathering were, the funding sources, the source of the idea and the energy transferred to the participants. It was a model for other states to consider.

**Superior Court of California  
County of Fresno**

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**“SELMA REGIONAL CENTER”**

The rural poor in Fresno County have traditionally been underrepresented in access to resources including the legal system. A partnership has been established between the Fresno Superior Court and other governmental agencies that, through focused assessment, provides one stop service provision. The Selma Regional Center in a predominately lower socioeconomic area has become a model of access for citizens that face barriers for services due to distance, economics and a lack of process knowledge. The Fresno Superior Court, through funding under the auspices of Judicial Council of California provides facilitator, family law information services and mediation services, through the Court's Help Center, to rural residents of Fresno County. In addition, substance abuse services, mental health services, domestic violence counseling, public health nursing, and both child and adult protective services are offered by the Department of Health. A wide-ranging array of other services including day care, interpreter services, and facility security are offered at no cost to either the client or the agency user.

**“ACTION (AFTER CRIMINAL TRAFFIC INFRACTION ONE-STOP NETWORK) CENTER”**

The ACTION Center assists defendants in the processing of their court orders including the establishment and payment of fines, restitution and fees, referral to other agencies as needed, and acts as a central referral/information point in the main courthouse. At the time of disposition, defendants are ordered to report to a number of different locations, including the following: Probation Department, Revenue & Reimbursement Division, Traffic Department, Consumer Fraud Division, Insufficient Funds Unit, and Volunteer Bureau. These places are located in different county locations and buildings, which causes a great deal of confusion. Prior to the creation of the ACTION Center, defendants got lost in the process. They mostly received limited instructions as to how to get to these areas and take care of business. As a result, these defendants often gave up on and in the system. Failure to comply charges were then filed and, as a result, the defendants had to come back to obtain additional information. A vicious cycle began. The purpose of the ACTION Center is to stop this negative cycle and create an atmosphere of collaborative assistance and the sharing of information with the end-user.