

# Court Governance

## Key concepts

Governance Principles

Governance Models in Courts

Effective Court Governance Structure

Evaluating Governance Effectiveness

## Executive Summary

Court governance is the framework by which courts operate, manage day to day operations, and develop long term strategies. Effective court governance provides consistency and predictability of operations, increases transparency and accountability, and provides meaningful input into the decision making process.

## Learning Objectives

As a result of this education, participants will be able to:

- Define court governance principles and structure;
- Describe the role and importance of court governance for the rule of law, judicial independence, procedural justice, and developing and maintaining a high-performance court;
- Identify organization and governance models, explore the court organization, and list the inherent complexities of courts as public organizations;
- Conduct an organizational readiness assessment and identify areas and issues that require attention and resolution before adopting a governance structure; and Curriculum Design Court Governance; and
- Develop and implement a comprehensive governance structure evaluation process that will enhance effectiveness and encourage improved planning.

## Activities

There are corresponding activities for each learning objective, including:

- Applying governance principles
- Court governance models
- Organizational readiness assessment

## Curricular Resources

The full curriculum has a detailed listing of relevant resources and a bibliography.

- Procedural justice
- Federal court structure
- Sample state court organization

## Court Governance Curriculum

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### Section 1 | Governance History and Principles

- History of court governance
- Court governance defined
- Principles of court governance
- Governance and the NACM CORE<sup>®</sup>

### Section 2 | Governance in Today's Courts

- Why is court governance important
- Rule of law
- Procedural justice
- Judicial independence
- The intersection of governance and high performing courts

### Section 3 |

#### Organization and Governance Models

- Governance in court organizations
- Types of organizations
- Federal, state, and local court organization
- Relationship between state supreme courts and local courts
- Court governance models
- Courts as loosely coupled organizations
- Effective court governance and the productive pair relationship

### Section 4 | Building an Effective Court Governance Structure

- Change management principles
- It starts with commitment
- Assess your readiness
- Identify key participants
- Define the governance model
- Design the governance model
- Implement and communicate the governance model

### Section 5 | Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Governance Structure

- Purpose
- Internal and external evaluation
- Planning and managing the evaluation
- Evaluation methods
- Evaluation tools

#### General Resources:

[Court Governance – NACM CORE<sup>®</sup> Curriculum](https://nacmnet.org/competency/court-governance)  
[nacmnet.org/competency/court-governance](https://nacmnet.org/competency/court-governance)

[NACM CORE<sup>®</sup>: What Court Professionals Need to Know](https://nacmnet.org/nacm-core)  
[nacmnet.org/nacm-core](https://nacmnet.org/nacm-core)

[The CORE<sup>®</sup> in Practice – a Guide to Strengthen Court Professionals through Application, Use, and Implementation](https://nacmnet.org/wp-content/uploads/THE-CORE-IN-PRACTICE-Guide-2023.pdf)  
[nacmnet.org/wp-content/uploads/THE-CORE-IN-PRACTICE-Guide-2023.pdf](https://nacmnet.org/wp-content/uploads/THE-CORE-IN-PRACTICE-Guide-2023.pdf)