

National Association for Court Management
2005 Justice Achievement Award
Projects Submitted for Consideration

New York State Unified Court System

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This project provides for the automated collection and sending of data between upstate New York State City Courts, New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), New York State Police, New York State Department of Criminal Justice Service, and software vendors supporting Town and Village Courts. With the implementation of this program, initial case creation for the police agency, the Department of Motor Vehicles, and the Court commences at the point of the issuance of a traffic ticket (felony, misdemeanour, or infraction). Data is then electronically transmitted to other agencies. The project eliminates duplicate data entry and dramatically decreases all reporting times through the electronic exchange of data with all relevant state agencies.

The Eighth Judicial District Court

**A Continuum of Service
(A Therapeutic Approach to Justice in Clark County)**

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The Eighth Judicial District Court and its Clark County justice partners have institutionalized a therapeutic approach to justice by providing a continuum of treatment alternatives based on judicial supervision in lieu of incarceration. This approach has allowed the court to intervene and break the cycle of substance abuse, addiction, and crime so prevalent in today's society. Research shows that treatment is the most effective way to combat drug abuse and its impact on families and communities. Drug courts, through judicial oversight, are effective in keeping participants accountable for their day-to-day behavior and in providing the external motivation necessary for them to succeed in treatment. The drug court program consists of treatment to detoxify participants from all

substances, regular monitoring and supervision including frequent drug testing and appearances in court, educational and vocational assessment and assistance, intensive counseling and support services, and aftercare support and assistance. Positive reinforcement, sanctions and judicial oversight are tools used to motivate changes in negative behaviors. The Eighth Judicial District Court has uniquely implemented a continuum of drug courts to reach a range of Court customers including juveniles, families, misdemeanor and felony adult offenders, and prison inmates. This comprehensive approach to therapeutic justice provides an effective solution to the overwhelming caseloads of drug-addicted offenders.

On Trial: Air India Trial

Law Courts Education Society of BC
www.airindiatrial.ca

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On Trial: Air India Trial was the first Canadian website to offer information about a high-profile trial alongside educational content. The website included educational information on the justice system, and specific information on the Air India case such as trial background, media stories and judgments. As a result of this website, over 70,000 people were able to learn more about the international and historical case, and thus learn about the function of the Canadian justice system. The website is available at www.airindiatrial.ca.

“Dropped Filings”

Las Vegas Justice Court

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Las Vegas Justice Court is focused on working with the community on identifying and addressing their needs for access to the court in the administration of justice. The “Dropped Filing’s” Program which centers on the reduction of time required to file documents, has allowed the court to provide an increase in the efficiency and accuracy of court filings while providing our customers with quick and simple alternative avenues for access to the Civil Division of the Las Vegas Justice Court.

**JusticeCorps Project
Superior Court of California, Los Angeles**

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Justice Corps is a collaborative project with the Superior Court of California, Los Angeles County, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), the Los Angeles County Department of Consumer Affairs, university partners, and non-profit organization partners. JusticeCorps' members provide in-depth and individualized services to self-represented litigants at ten facilities located throughout Los Angeles County. Approximately 100 highly motivated college students were recruited and trained as JusticeCorps' members to improve the accuracy of self-represented litigants' paperwork and the thoroughness of their case preparation, to assist litigants in understanding court orders and to provide a better overview of the unfamiliar court system. This project is an innovative approach to solve one of the most pressing issues faced by the Court and around the country today – equal access to justice.

**Parents and Children Together (PACT)
Superior Court of California, Los Angeles**

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The Parents and Children Together (PACT) program is designed to help separating and divorcing parents work together more cooperatively and effectively. The goal of the program is to help parents focus their efforts on their children's best interests. Parents are taught how to communicate more positively and how to parent more effectively in special seminars taught through the Court. The PACT program also provides valuable information regarding Family Court Services, mediation, and child custody evaluations.

Queens Family Court & Family Agency Facility

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The design for the Queens Family Court and Family Agency Facility directly responds to the inherent sensitivities of family court proceedings. We were able to diminish the stressful emotional experience of participating in family court procedures and create a court facility that provides both children and adults with an amiable, sunlit environment. The new facility houses 16 family courtrooms and judges' chambers, seven hearing rooms, support spaces, and other family court related agencies in a five-story brick and glass structure. The adjoining wing consolidates multiple City State and non-profit family court supporting agencies, including probation and victim services. The close proximity of the two facilities allows for a focused delivery of services. A sky-lit, five-story atrium, located at the center of the courthouse, brings daylight into the building's central circulation zone and unifies all vertical circulation patterns. Courtrooms are intimately scaled and many include large windows.

Superior Court of the State of Arizona Maricopa County Superior Court Maricopa County Default on Demand

<http://www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov>

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When a husband or wife decides their marriage cannot be saved, they deliver a court document called a "Petition" to their partner. Their partner (who is then known as the "Respondent") then usually has twenty days to send a "Response" that tells the court and the first party ("Petitioner") that the Respondent wants to participate in the case and describes what the Respondent wants that is different from the Petitioner. If the Respondent does not file a Response, and the Petitioner wants to move forward with their life, the Petitioner asks the court to give him or her what their Petition asked for because the Respondent has not asked for anything different. The judgment or order that results is said to have been entered by "default."

The Default on Demand Program of the Maricopa County Superior Court is a radical change in the way Family Court default judgments and orders are processed that has reduced the amount of time a Petitioner must wait to get a divorce after they ask the court for one. Instead of having to wait 90 days, applicants can now get their judgment the very next day.

Implementation of the Court Interactive Forms Application (eCourt)

Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County
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In December 2004 Maricopa County launched the new, web based, interactive, forms generating version of our Self-Service Center. In creating this system, our goal was to make the process of being a pro-per litigant less overwhelming, while insuring that proper forms were completed correctly for filing with the Clerk of the Court. This new system is specifically designed to allow our pro-per litigants the ability to populate Family Court forms, suitable for filing with the Clerk of the Court, by answering a set of questions via a web browser from anywhere via the Internet. Some of the available forms are:

- Petition for dissolution of marriage
- Child support worksheet
- Affidavit of service
- Decree of dissolution

The questions that are asked are grouped by category and are determined by answers to previous questions. Pro-Per litigants can complete the forms generating process over multiple sessions and from different computers simply by signing in again. This allows the user to gather the information needed while saving the information already entered. Child support calculations are done online eliminating errors and conform to state guidelines. To further assist our pro-per litigants we have designed an interactive help system that allows our support team to assist users by phone or email.

Criminal Jury Trial Readiness Hearing Program Pierce County District Court

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In an attempt to attain more certainty and efficiency over criminal jury trial case scheduling, increase case disposition and decrease jury panel fees, the court changed the judicial calendar to a consistent trial scheduling format that includes the addition of a criminal jury trial readiness docket for each courtroom conducting criminal jury trials. In order to provide trial date certainty, a readiness hearing is scheduled during the week prior to the scheduled criminal jury trial date. The defendant, defense attorney and prosecuting attorney must attend the readiness hearing. This process permits preliminary

motions to be heard, witnesses to be confirmed, and cases to be re-scheduled or removed from the following week's trial docket. All parties prepared to proceed to jury trial the following week are required to sign a Declaration of Readiness to Appear and begin the trial on the scheduled date. Continuances on trial day or once the case is declared "ready for trial" are only granted for good cause or in the event of extraordinary and unforeseeable circumstance. Judicial officers, prosecuting attorneys and defense counsel work together to ensure cases are brought to trial within mandated timeframes in accordance with court rules and policies of the District Court. Implementation of readiness hearings has improved the court's case flow and saved thousands of dollars a year in jury panel fees.

**The Integrated Arraignment Court Facility
Second Judicial District
State of Minnesota**

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The judicial district wanted to improve the timeliness, accuracy, and accessibility of the Criminal Division court case information that is entered into the various case management systems. The court took major steps toward these objectives by integrating criminal justice information in the computer systems of several agencies. The goal was to improve the total court process from arrest through court disposition using technology, integration, and real time entry. The goal became a reality when Ramsey County's new Law Enforcement Center was built. The Center was designed and built with the integrated information-sharing systems. This step has led to the sharing of criminal justice information among the agencies. In-court updating spans the District Court system and the jail's information system. The result is a positive affect on the agencies involved, and on other users of the court system.

**Rites of Passage: Graduating to Safety
Licensing Project
Seattle Municipal Court**

Yolande E. Williams
Court Administrator
Seattle Municipal Court

The leading cause of death for Washington State citizens ages 15-20 is vehicular collisions. According to the Washington State Department of Licensing (DOL), fatal traffic collisions involving teens more than doubles the rate than those of other drivers combined. The Washington State Legislature has recently implemented strict laws aimed

at enforcing responsibility and awareness in teen drivers by using Intermediate (or Graduated) Driver's Licenses. The Municipal Court of Seattle has developed a very successful program to educate teen's specific to the new law. The Court has spearheaded a coalition outreach program that involves; teens, parents, school officials and community groups with the single-minded mission of reducing traffic related fatalities for the teens of Washington State.