



CORE[®]

National Association
for Court Management

THE CORE[®] IN PRACTICE

A Guide to Strengthen
Court Professionals
through Application,
Use, and Implementation



CORE

National Association
for Court Management

THE CORE® IN PRACTICE

A Guide to Strengthen Court Professionals and Courts

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PURPOSE

Effective court professionals carry out responsibilities in an efficient manner that instills public trust and confidence. They are able to successfully and appropriately communicate and work with internal and external stakeholders to fulfill the court's goals and mission. The NACM CORE® fosters a dedication to lifelong learning and continuous self-development. This Guide is a primer on the content of the CORE® and the many ways court professionals and courts can apply and implement it. It provides a tool for new and experienced professionals to engage with the CORE® in this effort through the development and strengthening of individuals and teams, organizational governance, and improvements to business practices.

HISTORY OF NACM'S CORE® COMPETENCIES

The CORE® is based on a foundation of NACM member input, the desire for professional development, and the education relevant to daily practices of court management. It reflects the wide range of court professionals' responsibilities.

Through research and work, NACM designed and developed a set of competencies to

NACM's competencies have been in use and practice for over twenty-five years, setting a standard of proficiency that further defined the court management profession and contribute to local, state, and national educational and certification programming.

provide information on the knowledge, skills, and abilities that court professionals should possess for effective individual and courtwide performance.

The CORE® competencies have been in use and practice for over twenty-five years, setting a

standard that further defines the court management profession and contributes to local, state, and national educational and certification programming. Based on a field of court

administration that has become increasingly professionalized and diverse, NACM reviewed and revised an earlier version of competencies over a three-year period from 2012–2015, through the financial support of the State Justice Institute (SJI). Accordingly, the CORE®, represents the variety of changes that have occurred in the profession in recent decades and encourages use of the competencies for professionals working in the field of court administration and to promote excellence in the broader administration of justice throughout the system.

Subject matter experts who are NACM members – court professionals committed to excellence in public service in courts – regularly review and update the CORE® to include current and evolving strategies to continually enhance public trust and confidence in the justice system, to lead the public sector in emerging approaches to service delivery and efficiency, and to administer justice in a manner that consistently increases access and is fair and equitable in both reality and perception.

AUDIENCE

The intended audience for this Guide is comprehensive and wide-ranging. It includes leadership engaged in visioning or strategic planning; managers at all levels seeking targeted or broad improvements; public information officers or others engaged in communicating with the media, the public at-large, or court-users; and court employees at all levels (including new employees in the process of orienting to the court environment, culture, and profession). Just as the CORE® is intended for all who work in the justice system, so, too, is this Guide. The CORE® is valuable to public servants at every stage of their career and

supplements the value of active membership in organizations of court professionals, such as NACM.

The CORE® is designed to provide a framework of the critical competencies needed to be an effective professional regardless of the type or size of court in which a person serves.

The CORE® is designed to provide a framework of the critical competencies needed to be an effective court professional regardless of the type or size of court in which a person serves.

CORE® OVERVIEW

This Guide provides an overview of several other tools that have been developed to strengthen court professionals through the application, use, and implementation of the CORE®. These include the NACM CORE® Curriculum, the CORE® website,¹ and its related content.

Curricula

The CORE®² declares and defines what an effective court leader does to achieve excellence. Excellence in a court starts with those at the top, but it is everyone's responsibility. Court leaders are professionals throughout the organization who establish, uphold, and advance the purpose and philosophy of the court internally and externally, while being aware of a specific process, structure, or policy that might need to be modified to be aligned. The National Judicial College notes that a leader is the person who identifies the need for change and takes the steps needed to initiate change. The CORE® is a map for reaching these goals and a lens through which to view the profession. It is comprised of immutable principles that serve as a foundation for and establish the leadership priorities of the present-day justice system. As a result, the CORE® is valuable for court professionals, for courts as organizations, and for the collective profession.

Most importantly, the CORE® is valuable to the public because it enhances individual and organizational understanding of the fundamental nature of justice and the rule of law in society. CORE® materials can facilitate information sharing about courts and can be used by court leaders at all levels to "tell the story" about what courts do and the functions performed by court staff at all levels. The CORE® can also empower court professionals to be knowledgeable so they can educate the public about courts and the court system.

Core Structure



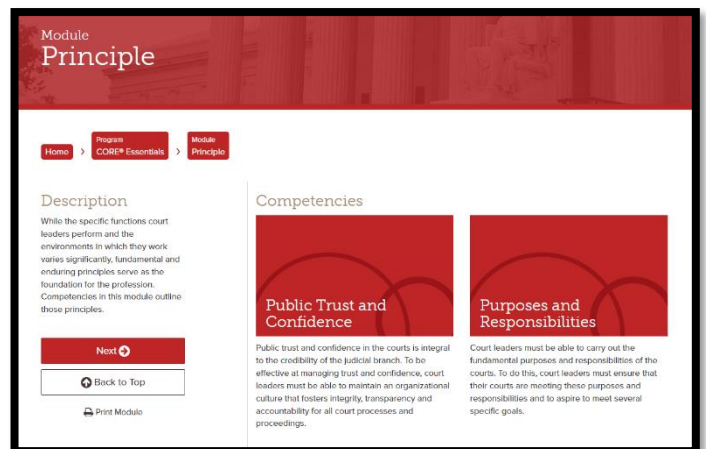
Users develop a greater understanding of court roles and functions through understanding of the competencies as they are defined within the three CORE® modules – **Principle**, **Practice**, and **Vision**.

The **Principle** module focuses on the fundamental and enduring principles in which every person working in the courts should demonstrate competency, regardless of their position. There are two competencies within this module:

- **Purposes and Responsibilities of Courts:** The primary responsibility of the judicial branch is to provide an impartial forum for the resolution of disputes. The longstanding and widely-accepted “purposes of courts” are to promote justice in individual cases, to ensure the public perceptions of justice in individual cases, to provide an impartial forum for the resolution of legal disputes, to protect individuals against the arbitrary use of governmental power, to provide for a formal record of legal status, to deter criminal behavior, to rehabilitate individuals convicted of crimes, and to provide for the separation of convicted individuals from society where necessary.
- **Public Trust and Confidence:** Guided by the principles of procedural fairness, courts can enhance public trust and confidence by treating every stakeholder with dignity and respect and explaining the court process and court rulings in a timely manner. Court leaders help promote and maintain public trust and confidence by creating organizational cultures that foster integrity, transparency, and accountability for court processes and operations.

The **Practice** module defines the competencies for court leaders to effectively perform their day-to-day and long-term functions. There are eight competencies within this module:

- **Caseflow and Workflow:** Caseflow Management is the process by which courts conduct their function of processing cases from initiation to disposition (and post-disposition activities as appropriate). It involves the organization and coordination of personnel and other resources to promote the fair and timely resolution of all cases filed. Workflow Management involves the coordination and support of all tasks, procedures, and resources (human and other) necessary to guarantee that the work of the court is conducted efficiently and consistently with the court’s purposes and responsibilities.



The screenshot displays the 'Module Practice' page for 'Operations Management' on the CORE in Practice website. The page is organized into several sections:

- Navigation:** Includes 'Home', 'Program', 'CORE Essentials', and 'Module Practice' tabs. Below these are 'Back', 'Next', 'Back to Top', and 'View Module' buttons.
- Description:** States that these competencies relate to both daily and long-term functions that court leaders must perform, either individually or in collaboration with others. It notes that court leaders will individually perform all of the functions associated with these competencies but they should be aware of their relevance, the way each they relate and their application, as appropriate, to their specific roles in the courts.
- Competencies:** A grid of eight competency cards:
 - Caseflow and Workflow:** Court leaders play a critical role in caseflow and workflow management for the court, ensuring that court's work is performed efficiently and to promote the fair and timely resolution of all cases filed. Effective caseflow and workflow management requires that court leaders have a variety of analytic and communication skills.
 - Operations Management:** Courts are complex organizations, which are comprised of an array of departments, units and functions that need to be maintained on an on-going basis to support court operations. Although court leaders may not need to perform all of the various functions, organizational and management competencies should be developed to support whatever functions may be required.
 - Public Relations:** The court leader's role is not just limited to working internally within the court, it also includes communicating with a wide variety of audiences about the court and court processes. To be effective, court leaders need to use a variety of communication methods tailored to the nature of the message being conveyed and audience targeted.
 - Educational Development:** Excellence in court performance starts with a court leader who fosters a culture that embraces education, training, and development and who actively leads judicial branch education.
 - Workforce Management:** Managing and motivating the workforce requires court leaders to not only understand the laws, legal ethics, and policies that guide the courts' operations but also to be skilled in a number of specific human resource tasks.
 - Ethics:** Court leadership requires ethical actions and leaders must be ethical in order to preserve the public's trust and confidence for the judiciary and the value of rule of law. Ethics is the expression of a personal commitment to the principles of citizenship and justice, and demonstrates the court leaders' integrity, the integrity in court staff, to their judges, to other justice community leaders, and to the public that the courts serve.
 - Budget and Fiscal Management:** Even the most highly skilled judicial leader needs access to adequate funding, resources, and facilities for effective and efficient court operations. But one alone the court leader needs to be able to develop complete plans to secure the necessary resources, he or she must also be able to effectively manage the court's budgets and resources.
 - Accountability and Court Performance:** Thinking that the road to performance is in the end and knowing it is not the different things. Court leaders are accountable to both the judiciary and the public for a well-run court, which means that managers must be able to both effectively measure and manage performance. Detailed collection and analysis of performance information means that court managers no longer just think the court is performing well but are able to demonstrate it.

- **Operations Management:** Courts are complex organizations, comprised of an array of units and functions that need to be maintained on an on-going basis. The range and nature of these functions and activities varies significantly, depending on court jurisdiction (e.g., appellate, general, limited, administrative); whether the court is federal, state, local, or tribal; and the unique way(s) individual courts are organized, funded, and operated. Managing operations could range from facilities planning and management to filings, court-user services, court operations, and much, much more.

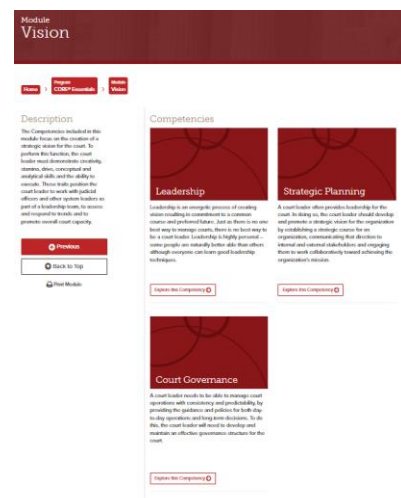
- **Public Relations:** To effectively increase public understanding of the courts, court leaders need to communicate what courts do to a wide range of audiences, using a variety of communication methods tailored to the nature of the message being conveyed and audience targeted. The court leader's overall goal for these communications should focus on promoting the public's accurate understanding of the role of the court to preserve the rule of law, and its critical role in safeguarding the fundamental constitutional and legal rights of all individuals.

- **Educational Development:** Because judicial branch education helps courts maintain the balance between a continually evolving operational environment and the enduring principles and predictable processes of the court, it cannot be remedial and limited to training alone; rather it must be strategic and involve education, training, and development. Excellence in court performance starts with a court leader who fosters a culture that embraces these tenets and who actively leads judicial branch education.
- **Workforce Management:** Managing and motivating the workforce requires court leaders to not only understand the laws, legal rulings, and policies that guide the court's operations but also to be skilled in a number of specific human resource tasks. The court leader must work to secure, manage, educate, and motivate court staff.

- **Ethics:** Court leaders must be ethical to fairly administer justice in accordance with the rule of law. Ethical leadership preserves the public’s trust and confidence and the value of the rule of law. Ethics is the expression of a personal commitment to the principles of citizenship and justice. It demonstrates the court leaders’ pledge to court staff, to the judges, to other justice community leaders, and to the public that the courts serve.
- **Budget and Fiscal Management:** Court leaders have a dual role to secure resources for court operations and to effectively manage those resources. All courts, regardless of size or jurisdiction, function as co-equal branches of government that must work transparently and collaboratively with legislative and executive branches to secure, manage, and account for the resources they need. These resources include the people, funding, equipment, technology, and supplies necessary to operate the court.
- **Accountability and Court Performance:** Court leaders are accountable to both the judiciary and the public for a well-run court, which means that managers must be able to both effectively measure and manage performance. Court leaders must be able to skillfully apply the tools available to address, among other things, expectations, effectiveness, efficiency, results, data that drives decisions, communications to different audiences, and a continuously improving system.

The **Vision** module details what a court leader needs to be able to do to effectively develop, manage, and lead a strategic vision for the court. There are three competencies within this module:

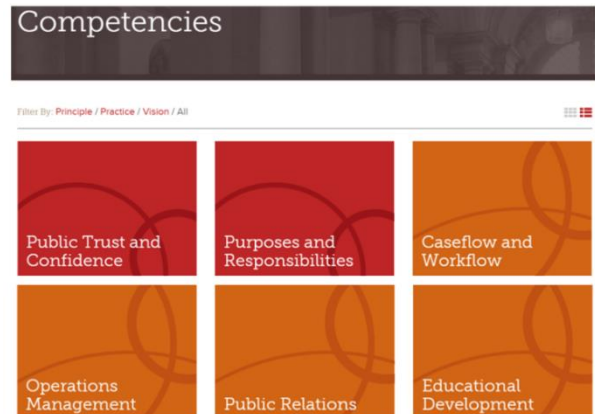
- **Leadership:** The effectiveness of a court leader is ultimately measured by the judiciary’s performance in the key areas of procedural due process, the protection of rights, transparency, accessibility, the stewardship of scarce resources, and the achievement of timely justice in individual cases. Effective court leadership delivers on these promises through a well-defined and fully operational governance structure.
- **Strategic Planning:** A court leader often develops and promotes a strategic vision for an organization by establishing a strategic course, communicating that direction to internal and external stakeholders, and engaging them collaboratively. Effective court leadership is exemplified through strategic thinking, planning, and action.



- **Court Governance:** Developing and maintaining an effective governance structure is imperative for a court leader to manage court operations with consistency and predictability. A well-developed and effective governance structure should include a set of rules and responsibilities that gives individuals and/or groups of individuals in supervisory/management roles the authority to make binding decisions regarding the organization’s policies, directions, and strategies.

Design and Format

Curriculum design involves a detailed process for ensuring that the intended use is well-defined, the potential audiences and their needs are identified, and the delivery methods are determined. In addition, the process should be inclusive, engaging practitioners and other users of the curriculum in the design process. Each part of the design process is a critical step in creating high-quality, relevant, and useful curriculum content that will ensure NACM meets its educational goals for the CORE®.



Court leaders cannot succeed by simply mastering the NACM CORE® individually. The future of our courts as an institution demands that they actively develop the next generation of court leaders through judicial branch education that applies the NACM CORE®.

(National Association of State Judicial Educators)

Flexible curriculum designs allow a faculty member to build a course, training, or session for any group of new or seasoned court personnel of every court type and size. The design is also adaptable enough to assist a faculty member in building a course, training, or session of any length and for a variety of delivery mechanisms (in-person or online learning, asynchronous or synchronous learning, self-study, or faculty-facilitated).

The curriculum is intended to serve as a guide for educational offerings including regional conferences, state-based trainings, online learning opportunities, and as a self-study guide. The curriculum is designed to supplement and inform the work of other national programming efforts rather than supplant it.

Each curriculum design includes a series of learning objectives and content to support those learning objectives. Further, each curriculum design includes faculty resources, participant activities, and a bibliography. The participant activities are created to measure achievement of the learning objectives, and the bibliography is intended to help faculty familiarize themselves with the content beyond what is included in the design. Additionally, a glossary is offered as an ancillary resource document to the curriculum designs to help the court management profession continue to develop a shared language of words and terms that represent, describe, and guide the work of the profession.

Continual Content Renewal

In recognition that knowledge, skills, and abilities continually evolve, the NACM CORE® competencies are continually under review. Reviews occur at the direction of the CORE® Committee with assignment of specific competency areas for review by a subcommittee or workgroup. Members can become involved and participate on the NACM CORE® Committee or specific workgroups/subcommittees that review and update content. The ultimate goal is to provide NACM members and students of the CORE® with high quality and current content.

Inclusive Practices

NACM has committed to a diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment for board members, members, volunteers, and educators to feel respected and valued regardless of gender, age, race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation or identity, disability, education, or other characteristics. NACM provides equal and nondiscriminatory opportunities for participation in all areas of the association and strives to listen to all points of view in recognition of the values that diversity of experiences brings to the association, leadership, and board. NACM also supports increased public awareness of the benefits of diversity, enhanced sourcing of minority individuals toward leadership within court administration, utilization of broad selection criteria and procedures in leadership advancement, and inclusion of minorities in the leadership selection process.

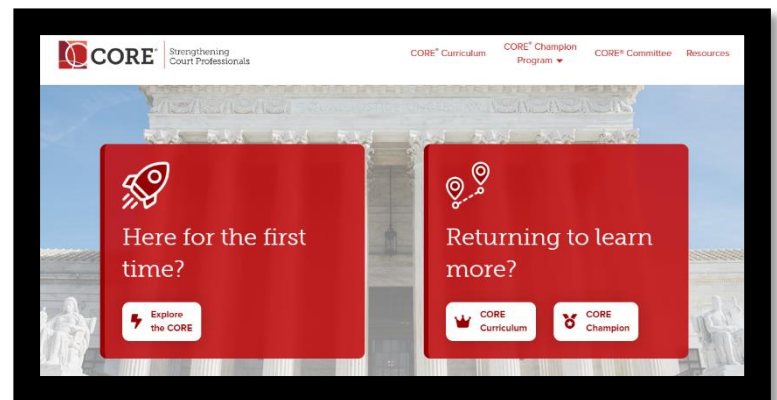
The NACM CORE® provides a foundation for current and aspiring court leaders coming from any level of knowledge and at all levels of employment. Regardless of individual backgrounds, students of court leadership development and enhancement can learn from the CORE® curricula.

Website

The NACM CORE® Curricula may be accessed through the CORE® website - <http://nacmcore.org/>.

This online platform allows NACM to maintain and disseminate current and accurate information. It also allows users to explore particular interests or access the CORE® at their convenience.

The CORE® website was designed and organized to encourage organic discovery. The competencies are categorized and accessed in different ways, including an overview of content for each module, full description of each competency, and notation of related competencies. A CORE® newsletter is also available on the website.



USING THE CORE® FOR INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Individual Professional Development for Court Development

The competencies within the CORE® facilitate the process of transformative learning, which is imperative in fostering skilled and well-trained court professionals who are creative and diligent in supporting traditional legal processes and responding to the changing demands on the administration of justice. Focusing on competencies within the CORE® can help courts improve overall system performance and achieve their preferred future. It may be a challenging process. Courts must maintain the rule of law through application of enduring principles and predictable processes while also responding to powerful forces of change—including necessary improvements—that are shaping society and impacting our nation’s courts.

The primary goal of judicial branch education (JBE) is excellent court and justice system performance. One means of achieving this outcome is professional development of judges and court staff (especially those in and aspiring to leadership positions), and other justice system partners both inside and outside the legal environment. With this in

Court leaders who understand adult learning concepts, the availability and viability of differing delivery methods and the applicability of different learning styles and preferences can more effectively oversee professional development.

mind, the CORE® constitutes a form of judicial branch education. Because JBE helps courts maintain the delicate balance between the forces of change and its enduring principles and predictable processes, it cannot be remedial and limited to training events. Rather, JBE is strategic and integral to overall professional development and

talent management.

Court leaders who understand adult learning concepts, the availability and viability of differing delivery methods, and the applicability of different learning styles and preferences can more effectively oversee professional development within their court.

Court leaders who oversee, fund, plan, and deliver JBE must constantly identify trends and threats that will impact courts in the short and long term, and thereby shape professional development. The planning efforts of the Conference of Chief Justices

(CCJ), the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA), and the NACM National Agenda offer tools to guide this process. Another key organization, the National Association of State Judicial Educators (NASJE), is similarly engaged in defining the practice of JBE and in gathering, sharing, and promoting resources (like the CORE®) among educators.

Court leaders who oversee, fund, plan, and deliver JBE must constantly identify trends and threats that will impact courts and thereby shape professional development.

Professional development programming through education must be intentional and well-managed. Leaders must ensure that JBE for judges, staff, and others is aligned with the court's mission, vision, structure, and workflow. At the same time, the programming itself must be built around a variety of sound adult education methods and advanced technology when warranted.

Judicial branch education helps courts maintain distinctive values such as due process and equal protection. However, it must also respond to social forces including demographic and population shifts; science and technology; social trends, public confidence, and increasingly pronounced service expectations; self-represented litigants' needs; different and expanded services; and the branch's historical principled reasons for incremental change. When context, vision, purpose, and organizational performance focus on JBE and define developmental needs, educational programming is better targeted, developed, and managed.

Effective leaders understand that courts cannot achieve their organizational goals without the help of a network of stakeholders both inside and outside the justice system. Courts are embedded in the paradox of an independent branch of government existing in an interdependent world. This requires strong judicial governance and leadership. JBE should include networking, interagency cooperation, and collaboration opportunities whenever possible. Court inspired collaboration and the strategic inclusion of others in JBE enhances court and justice system performance while broadening education development resources.

Professional development must be aligned with the court's mission, vision, structure, and internal workflows. Since court governance involves team management and structure by necessity, JBE leaders must encourage and reward collaborative efforts, both inside and outside of the judiciary.

When court management is less cohesive, the quality of education becomes less valuable because of its gaps. By contrast, in a well-managed court, JBE is less likely to be a mere add-on or a diversion from daily routines. Effective court leaders advocate, justify, and work to acquire needed educational resources. Persuasive advocacy links education needs to court performance, justice, and public service.

[T]he CORE® develop[s] and enhance[s] the skills necessary for individual and system-wide performance management, workforce planning, ethical decision making, staff talent management, change management, and effective court governance.

The Educational Development and Workforce Management competencies, for example, focus on ensuring that courts have the appropriate alignment of human talent to achieve their mission and vision. In addition to specific, technical expertise and substantive legal knowledge related to day-to-day staff supervision, these, and each of the other competencies within the CORE®, develop and enhance the skills necessary for

individual and system-wide performance management, workforce planning, ethical decision making, staff talent management, change management, and effective court governance.

Professional development is as important in the field of court administration as in any other profession. The NACM CORE® is the cornerstone of professional development for court staff. Learning about the CORE® creates opportunities for professional development that can lead to career advancement. Exposure to the CORE® allows one to hone existing skills while also learning new ones.

For court professionals moving to new roles or positions, professional development using the CORE® helps distinguish the professional. Certifications, as described below, create greater opportunities by providing objective criteria and by demonstrating a level of commitment to and understanding of the field of court administration. Court professionals who show initiative in independent learning by pursuing professional development signal to their court that they are open to new experiences and are enthusiastic about personal and professional growth.

Part of NACM's mission is to promote and encourage continuing education opportunities.

Part of NACM's mission is to promote and encourage continuing education opportunities. Mastering the field of court administration is a lifelong learning journey. The CORE® provides a recognized path for those in the field of court administration to become familiar with its principles through self-education, educational sessions, and more in-depth skills-based trainings.

Professional development can help courts improve performance and achieve their mission and vision. The CORE® competencies can be used in professional development in several ways:

The CORE® promotes the need for court professionals to attend training and to find new education opportunities inside and outside the system.

- For self-assessment of personal strengths and weaknesses,
- By individuals within the judicial system to evaluate individual competence,
- By individuals to advance competency levels to promote individual growth and development into a court manager or court leader position,

- As a basis for selecting appropriate educational programs,
- For individual performance,
- To enhance and fulfill current role requirements, and
- In preparation for promotional opportunities.

Excellence in court performance starts with a court leader who fosters a culture that embraces education, training, and development and who actively leads judicial branch education.

Like other organizations, the court must support individual development by solidifying itself as a learning environment. This is first established and then maintained by securing the time and capital resources to support court staff. Assistance can come in various forms. Examples include internal professional coaches, mentoring programs, agreements with local colleges and universities, job sharing, partnering between the court's divisions or other courts, and attendance at professional development conferences such as the NACM annual and mid-year conferences. With limited and increasingly constrained resources, the courts must be judicious in determining the applicability of educational offerings to the current and forecasted qualifications expected of court managers and employees.

Educational Conferences

NACM and its partners – the National Association of State Judicial Educators (NASJE), the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), and others – offer a variety of educational sessions that reflect and adapt many of the learning objectives in the CORE® competencies. Attendance at NACM conference sessions represents a prime opportunity to reach these learning objectives and interact with the subject matter experts presenting on the topic. Many of the sessions at NACM conferences are recorded and posted for viewing with some of these sessions focusing more in-depth on a single CORE® competency.

Self-Education

The CORE® curricula materials may be reviewed on the NACM CORE® website. Self-learners could work through the competencies from Principle to Practice to Vision.

The curriculum for each CORE® competency recommends performing some type of assessment for participants to gauge their abilities in the area of focus. By completing a needs assessment survey prior to engaging with the material, one can establish

priorities for the training session and measure the progress made in areas where skills gaps are identified.

In addition to a substantive assessment based upon a given competency, individuals within the judicial system can perform a self-assessment of personal strengths and weaknesses through assessments such as Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)³, Predictive Index⁴, and Strengths Finder.⁵ Training focused on individual development can be juxtaposed against the CORE's® modules in determining the "best fit" and areas of development for court managers. Each CORE® curriculum contains a series of learning objectives to serve as a basis for selecting appropriate educational opportunities for judicial employees.

The CORE® curricula can be used for both enhancement and fulfillment within an individual's current role as well as preparation for promotional opportunities. Individuals who identify areas for improvement or preparation can compare these needs with the goals outlined in the CORE® to help determine on which competencies they should focus.

CORE® Champion Program

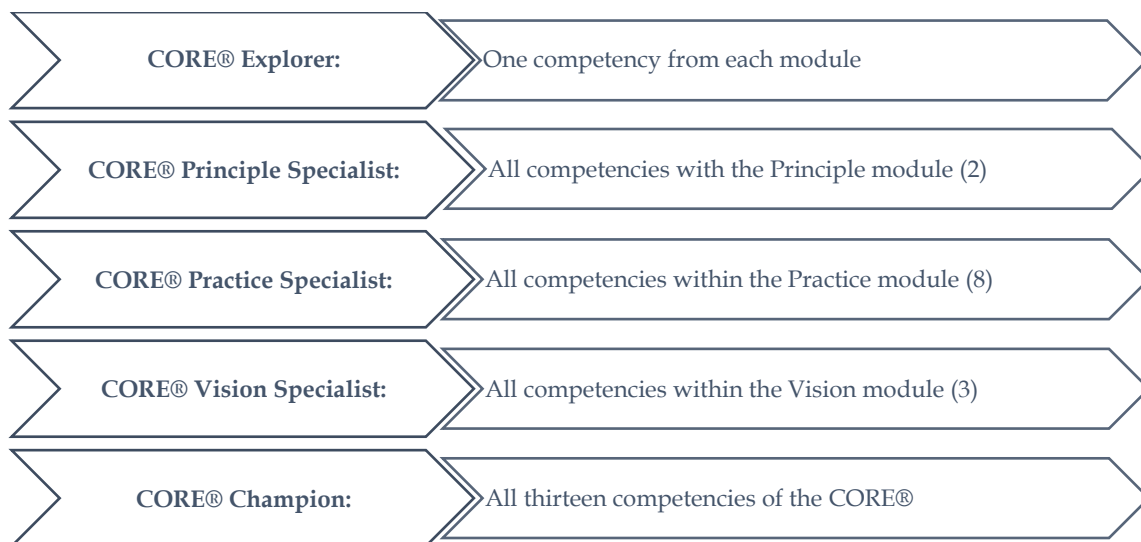
The CORE® Champion Program⁶ was established to expand the awareness and utilization of NACM CORE® curriculum content. The purpose of the CORE® Champion Program is four-fold:

- To strengthen court professionals,
- To provide greater exposure to the CORE®,
- To recognize attendance at qualified CORE® sessions, and
- To allow participants to demonstrate basic understanding of the thirteen CORE® Competencies.



To become a CORE® Champion, one must be a member of NACM, attend qualified sessions, and complete a structured response form. The CORE® Committee tracks completion of these forms and will issue certificates at various points in the program. Once a member has attended a session for each curriculum of the CORE®, they will need to write a short essay for review by the committee. If this essay is approved, NACM awards the CORE® Champion certificate. Educational sessions that a member selects may vary, therefore in-depth knowledge of a competency is not the test for this

program. The CORE® Champion program is designed to be an introduction to the CORE® and its competencies.



Other partner organizations, schools, and training organizations may also make use of the NACM CORE®. Practitioners in the field should consult the provider of the training to assess the level of adherence to the learning objectives outlined in each of the CORE® competencies.

Institute for Court Management at the National Center for State Courts

The National Center for State Courts' Institute for Court Management (ICM) uses the CORE® materials and centers their certification program around the CORE® competencies. ICM's courses were developed using feedback from participants, national and state faculty, the ICM Board of Advisors, and ICM staff. ICM embraced the CORE® in the curriculum development process to ensure that participants develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are necessary to be successful in today's courts. ICM also acknowledges the National Association of State Judicial Educators for the NASJE Curriculum Design manuals, which were used to apply adult education practices to its certification program. The curricula address the subject from a national perspective.

ICM offers three levels of certification: the Certified Court Manager (CCM) credential, the Certified Court Executive (CCE) credential, and the ICM Fellows Certification. Participants are only eligible for CCE certification if they have achieved CCM status and successfully completed all thirteen CCM and CCE courses. ICM also offers the Fellows Program (formerly known as the Court Executive Development Program), following completion of both the CCM and CCE coursework.

Continuing Education

The subject of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) or Continuing Legal Education (CLE) should also be addressed within the implementation of the CORE®. CEU requirements differ for various court employees, and the CEU value may also differ across courts and across states. The primary purpose of the CEU is to provide a formal record of individuals who have completed one or more non-credit educational experiences and have acquired or maintained a level of currency in skills.

Membership in State, Regional and National Professional Associations

Being an active member of a court-related professional organization gives court staff several important benefits. These include increasing knowledge in the field, networking, mentoring, friendships, opportunities for advocacy, and giving back to the profession, among many others. NACM is committed to promoting excellence in the profession, advocating for justice related issues, improving our courts and communities, and educating court professionals. Members of NACM can play a meaningful role in the development of court management while accessing tools to fulfill responsibilities most effectively in the courts. Organizations like NACM that are committed to the administration of justice offer conferences, webinars, publications, online resources, committee involvement, ethical guidance, and much more. Such organizations may focus on the use of the CORE® and elements of it that further contribute to professional development. Membership in a professional organization also demonstrates one's commitment to the field and professional growth.

USING THE CORE® FOR STRENGTHENING THE TEAM

The world is essentially organized around teams. John Donne wrote that “no man is an island.” Instead, society, and certainly organizations, depend upon operational groups, in common parlance, teams, to achieve their goals. The team may be called an orchestra, a flight crew, a military squad, a case processing team, an IT division, or any number of other descriptors for people working together to achieve a common goal.

In an efficient and well-aligned organization, each team and its members contribute to achieving the common goal. The team members normally comprise a diverse group and even though each person has a specific job function and belongs to a specific department, each member joins with other team members to accomplish the overall objectives. The bigger picture drives actions; each function exists to serve that bigger picture.⁷

Consider the following sports analogy: Every Sunday afternoon in the fall, teamwork is in action during an NFL game. On offense, the quarterback gets the ball from the

Principle - What are the key attributes required for this position regarding public trust and confidence? How is integrity measured? How does this position fit into the court's purposes and responsibilities?

Practice - What role does the position have within the organization's operations? What caseflow or workflow knowledge and abilities are required? With whom will the person communicate and what current and prior experience is important in these relationships? Is the knowledge of laws, policies or specific procedures required? As appropriate for the position, managers should also consider budget and fiscal management or the ability to measure and analyze performance of personnel or programs.

Vision - Consider the court's own vision for the future - what role will this position have in that vision?

center and either hands it off to a running back, passes it to a receiver or keeps the ball. The offensive linemen lay the foundation for the play by blocking the defensive players to protect the quarterback or give the team time to execute the play. Each player has a role to play and knows the complementary roles the other team members will perform to help the play succeed. When necessary, as the offense responds to the defense, one or more players adjust to assist another player as they collaborate for the play to succeed.

Just as sports teams pursue their mission of winning the championship and consistently work toward that goal, it is equally critical for the respective teams of other kinds of organizations to understand and work toward contributing to the organization's

mission. Courts as an organization are no exception to this analogy. Consequently, it is important that all courts develop a clearly articulated mission statement. The mission should be accompanied by a vision statement and statement of fundamental values.

Exceptional teams in any organization or industry seldom come together by chance. Organizations develop teams by design over time. It takes smart recruitment, rigorous coaching, and continuous assessment.⁸ Effective courts expect that their leaders will recruit, retain, evaluate, and train staff with skills firmly grounded in the NACM CORE®.

Leaders must have the necessary leadership and human resource related skills and capabilities, including knowledge of relevant laws and policies relating to day-to-day operations to permit the organization to function effectively. Use of the CORE® Champion Program⁹ provides a systematic program to strengthen court professionals through a greater exposure to and training with the thirteen CORE® competencies.

Building an effective court team requires careful planning, inculcation of knowledge, and implementation of tools. The court should not be drawn into what is expedient or convenient. Nor should the court begin the process with a generic or obsolete job announcement. The CORE® offers court leaders the information and tools to purposefully and carefully consider the continuous growth of both the individual and the team at all career stages. Through participation with the CORE® Champion Program, courts may strengthen the existing workforce and develop the next generation of court leaders who possess the skills needed to build and strengthen its team.¹⁰ The following, based on CORE® material, describes some ways in which the CORE® can be used to strengthen teams of court professionals.

Recruitment

The court leader effectively manages and motivates the workforce and possesses the skills and capabilities necessary for job analysis and classification: performance management, workforce planning, professional staff development, development and updating of compensation and benefit plans, risk management, employee relations, and organizational change management. These are not innate skills, but require education and training to learn, practice, and develop. The thirteen NACM CORE® competencies provide a useful, cost-effective, and accessible curriculum for working court professionals to develop and strengthen the skills court leaders will use on a daily basis.

Within the context of recruitment, the court manager employing the CORE® competency of workforce management will possess the tools to attract and retain a diverse workforce. This includes incorporating multi-generational employees, who reflect the demographics of the community, into a court “team.” To ensure that the court successfully delivers services, it is critical for managers to understand what motivates these employees and how to integrate their needs, skills, and communication styles into a high functioning team that serves its community.

The court manager seeking to recruit an effective, diverse workforce would also do the following:

- Ensure merit-based selection and promotion.
- Provide ongoing employee evaluations that include timely feedback and are not limited to a perfunctory annual or biannual exercise.
- Assess and recommend appropriate personnel classification and competitive compensation, benefit, and reward structures.
- Support activities that address generational and other differences in the workforce.

Finding the successful job candidate requires that the court manager adequately define the qualifications and pertinent experience to perform a set of responsibilities. Court managers who effectively implement the competencies embodied in the CORE® strengthen the recruitment process. Use of the CORE® modules provides a manager with a broad conceptual range that can assist one in writing an effective description of the position to be filled and preparing for the interview process.

Onboarding Process

The CORE® can also assist in staff development as an orientation tool for new staff and as a guide to the onboarding process. Onboarding consists of more than just new employee orientation; it is a process. By contrast, orientation is an event and often serves as the first step in the onboarding process where courts collect all relevant human resources, payroll, and benefit forms. The onboarding process helps develop an engaged and motivated contributor and stays with the employee throughout the employee's career. Onboarding conveys the organizational brand, explains values and professional culture, aligns institutional expectations and performance, and provides the tools for the employee to be successfully assimilated into the judicial system with a quicker ramp-up to full productivity.

Onboarding follows the employee lifecycle for mentoring and development. It includes consistent and timely tracking of onboarding events, seamlessly transitioning the court professional from the new hire and onboarding experience to the performance management process to ensure success.

Employees need to know what is expected of them and receive timely, regular feedback on how they are doing. At all levels of an organization, many employees want to be

kept informed of court operations and development and to be recognized for their accomplishments by both managers and judges.

Employee satisfaction increases when they know that the work they do is important, and their tasks contribute meaningfully to the court's mission and common purpose.

Employees are generally motivated to do well if they receive the appropriate freedom and authority to carry out their work in the best way possible. Employees become more satisfied when the court supports and encourages staff to grow and develop their abilities on the job.

Staff Retention and Expansion of Organizational Knowledge

Within the context of staff and knowledge retention, the court manager employing the CORE® competency of workforce management would develop the tools needed to leverage technology in ways that benefit both the organization and the employee. For example, with today's technology and the use of remote or hybrid work capabilities, numerous opportunities exist for court teams to be dispersed throughout the county or an entire state using the virtual team concept. A court may realize many advantages by organizing a virtual team to enhance both efficiency and cost savings by leveraging a broader talent pool filled with diverse experiences that might not be available in a single entity. A team does not have to be in a particular department, office, building, or city.

As the workplace evolves, in part due to the implementation of new conferencing and collaboration tools, so has the way employees communicate with their co-workers, internal and external stakeholders, and court users. For some employees, completing their work and attending meetings no longer requires a physical office. Since many employees have access to a smartphone or tablet, collaboration can occur virtually anywhere through audio or video.¹¹

The court manager seeking to retain employees and expand organizational knowledge should also do the following:

- Develop and continually update a comprehensive manual of personnel policies and procedures that relate specifically to the court. Such manuals should be published online on the court's intranet accessible only to court employees.

- Set and monitor ethical standards and behaviors. The NACM Model Code of Conduct for Court Professionals can serve as a template for guiding principles.¹²
- Employ efforts to develop, implement, and enforce policies prohibiting harassment, bullying, and a hostile workplace so that a safe and secure environment is fostered.

Trainers using the CORE® curriculum should be aware of differences in the workforce they are training based on generational identities and culture. As of 2018, data on workforce composition shows that a majority of workers belong to Generation X or Generation Y (also known as Millennials):

Baby Boomers:	Born between 1946 to 1964 - 25% of US workforce
Generation X:	Born mid - 1960s to 1976 - 33% of US workforce
Millennials:	Born 1977-1994 - 35% of US workforce
Generation Z:	Born 1995 – 2010 - 5% of US workforce ¹³

Key differences between these generations center around their familiarity and preferences on the use of technology, their communication styles, and their approaches to work. Baby Boomers, for example, grew up without many of the technologies we have today, and tend to use these tools more for productivity rather than connectivity.¹⁴ Millennials and Generation Z, on the other hand, have lived most of their lives with technologies such as cell phones and laptops and stay connected through these devices.

The impact of these generations on the workforce and their differing expectations require greater use of technology and must be brought to bear by the courts. Court leaders should consider these differences when designing training programs using the CORE® by integrating blended learning opportunities and tailoring their training programs to best suit their participants’ needs.

To start, facilitators can engage with the CORE® competency on Workforce Management to “support activities that address generational and other differences in the workforce.”¹⁵ Court leaders must also recognize that court employees may prefer different methods of receiving information, whether due to generational differences or personal preferences. Applying the competency on Educational Development, facilitators can ensure that trainings are “delivered using multiple mechanisms – ensuring that education is interactive and uses blended teaching involving multiple

delivery mechanisms including in-person courses and online learning through webcasts and asynchronous learning management systems.”¹⁶

Identification of Gaps

Court professionals may also use the CORE® as a tool for identifying gaps in individual and court leadership development. This assessment process must be dynamic and creative, responding not only to traditional roles, but also to powerful and changing demands of a technology-centered society. Professional development must occur in all courts and across the judiciary and justice system and should be a priority for judges, court staff, and justice system partners. Learning experiences should be accessible and tailored so that personal, professional growth and skill development opportunities are equally available for all court professionals.

Evaluation

Finally, through constant program evaluation, court leaders can ensure that education programs evolve in response to social issues and changing individual and organizational needs. Often, aspiring leaders may be overlooked because they do not fit a traditional model, so it is important to consider equity when offering educational development opportunities throughout the court.

In sum, the court manager employing the Workforce Management CORE® competency would be able to do the following:

- Encourage staff development by resolving performance problems and setting and supporting individual and organizational goals to be achieved.
- Create a “high performance” work culture and environment by developing performance expectations, metrics-oriented performance monitoring systems and feedback, and review mechanisms.¹⁷
- Support activities that address generational and other differences in the workforce.
- Identify staff education and training needs and secure resources for meeting those needs.

- Use a variety of staff development tools: education, training, coaching, mentoring, and professional development opportunities of both a basic and advanced nature that meet individual and organizational needs.¹⁸

USING THE CORE® FOR DEVELOPING AND IMPROVING OPERATIONAL PRACTICES

The CORE® can be used to develop and improve business practices that impact a court’s overall organizational and operational performance. Today’s court professionals must continually focus on operational excellence and innovation for

PRINCIPLE – Do employees know and appreciate why they are important to the organization and the public they serve?

PRACTICE– Managers must provide the resources and information necessary for employees to actually do their jobs. What resources are available? What is your educational plan for this employee? What is the overall workforce management plan for motivating and preparing employees to meet the organizational goals? Successful employees need their managers and leaders to purposefully consider what they need in the practical application of their jobs.

VISION – Has the vision been clearly articulated to all team members? Do team members know their own role in achieving this vision? Strong court leaders will effectively plan for the purposeful application of the vision and values.

access to justice and the utilization of technology. Both require the development, assessment, and revision of business practices. Court professionals may use the CORE® to frame and implement such evaluations. The term “reengineering” also describes this process.

This section of the Guide briefly introduces proven strategies to review and improve business processes and organizational traits to improve the court’s business practices. These can be utilized in conjunction with the CORE® competency areas. When considering adding, deleting, or modifying operational or business practices,

typical steps that should be considered include the following:

1. Use of the problem resolution cycle, which involves identifying and defining the problem, gathering information and researching options, developing alternatives, selecting and implementing the best option, assessing the performance of the chosen action(s), and modifying or amending the action;¹⁹

2. Use of business process review (BPR), which is the analysis and design of processes, workflows, and actions that encourage a court to rethink how practices are currently configured;²⁰
3. Consideration of how other courts operate and innovate, which is commonly called benchmarking, or comparing court practices across diverse courts;
4. Utilization of the National Center for State Courts' High-Performance Courts Framework, vis-à-vis use of self-evaluation areas and problem-solving steps;²¹
5. Use of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis - a structured process that allows an organization to evaluate operational practices when considering change;²²
6. Review of court metrics and measures utilizing the National Center for State Courts' CourTools²³, which includes measurement of court-based processes such as access and fairness; clearance rate; time to disposition; age of active, pending cases; trial date certainty; reliability of case/court files; the automated case management system; utilization of jurors; enforcement of legal financial obligations; court employee satisfaction; and cost per case for court functions; and
7. Consideration of reengineering principles and practices, which include centralization or regionalization of functions, maximized use of technology and automation, limitation of redundancy, and review of structures and processes.²⁴

Examples of court business process evaluations include the following:

1. An operational inventory was conducted by the Scottsdale City Court, whereby court tasks were inventoried and evaluated to seek efficiencies and understand how limited human resources were utilized.²⁵
2. The Superior Court of the Virgin Islands used a pre-defined process to improve and refine operational practices. Strategic planning actions were rooted in understanding court performance measures and examining the court's culture to refine operational practices.²⁶
3. Reengineering actions, such as those used in various states to evaluate processes, implement technology, and consider changes in court structure.²⁷

4. Customer service improvements that make waiting less painful - for example, lengthy waits for a case to be called into court. One best practice involves texting attorneys and litigants on the scheduled day, apprising them of updates as the docket proceeds throughout the day. Similar practices might decrease the number of people and possibly the chaos.

By using the CORE® to evaluate and change business practices, court leaders will gain insights by assessing and validating chosen actions by asking these questions:

- How will the actions impact and be affected by caseload and operations management?
- How can staff and workforce development be involved?
- What may be affected by budget and fiscal impacts?
- How will the court demonstrate accountability and performance?

Top leaders should also consider influences from court leadership, planning processes, and governance structures while ensuring the processes support public trust and confidence in the court and align with the court's purposes, mission, and vision.

A court leader focused on process enhancement should exhibit specific skills and traits, including the following:

- Comfort in leading the organization through the change process;
- Focus on continuous improvement and maximizing efficiencies;
- Skill in facilitating discussions, seeking input, and communicating;
- Ability to ask critical questions and challenge the status quo;
- Ability to inquire about practice causes and effects;
- Possession of ample determination and stamina;
- Thorough knowledge of the organization; and
- Willingness to document and measure actions and accomplishments.

Organizational members should be comfortable with change, be receptive to continuing individual and organizational evaluation, and seek reengineering opportunities.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of their field or discipline, professionals have a duty to develop their skills. This duty is of a distinctive character when it is discharged in the public interest and as a matter of public trust. For public servants working in the courts, this duty is of a truly special nature. Courts play a singular role in society. Their effective administration requires a level of competence that is commensurate with the high standards to which the judicial branch is and must be held.

Created and refined with input from individuals working in all levels of court, the CORE® ensures that court professionals and leaders develop the tools necessary to lead and manage courts in the modern age. The CORE® recognizes the value of the enduring principles of the profession, emphasizes the interconnectedness of the competencies that define it, and provides for their application in ways that are dynamic, practical, and adaptable.

Whether used for individual or team training and assessment purposes, the CORE® serves as the basis for the selection and development of educational programming delivered in individual courts or court systems or through state or regional court professional associations, national judicial branch education providers, or universities.

Court leaders must actively encourage and model professional development within their courts. Training for court professionals cannot simply be a diversion from daily routines, a disconnected practice unrelated to the challenges confronting court managers, or a luxury for courts with greater resources. Court leaders have an obligation to regard professional development as an essential element of organizational success and accountability, and they must create and sustain a culture in support of it. This means the development of quality programming, systems for assessing individual development and organizational performance, and a commitment to the highest levels

The CORE® is not self-executing. Its ultimate value requires leadership from court leaders and others to ensure its relevance. This leadership is critical if the CORE® is to become the vital and lasting part of the fabric of our profession it was intended to be.

of individual and corporate accountability in recognition of the trust placed in the judiciary.

The NACM CORE® is a call to action for all court professionals to take full measure of their role, purpose, and potential. It is a dynamic body of work that has been designed to keep pace with the challenging and changing environments in which courts operate. To keep abreast of news about the ways in which the CORE® is improving justice in courts systems around the country, subscribe to the CORE® Newsletter at <http://nacmcore.org/>.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ See the CORE® website available at <http://nacmcore.org/>.
- ² See the CORE® website available at <http://nacmcore.org/>.
- ³ See <http://www.myersbriggs.org/my-mbti-personality-type/mbti-basics/>
- ⁴ See <http://www.piworldwide.com/solutions/predictive-index-system/>
- ⁵ See <http://www.strengthsfinder.com/home.aspx>
- ⁶ See program information at <https://nacmcore.org/core-champion-program/>
- ⁷ http://humanresources.about.com/od/involvementteams/a/twelve_tip_team.htm
- ⁸ Refer to a blog hosted by Harvard University at <https://professional.dce.harvard.edu/blog/why-is-professional-development-important/>
- ⁹ <https://nacmcore.org/core-champion-program/>
- ¹⁰ <https://nacmcore.org/core-champion-program/>
- ¹¹ The CORE® competency also encourages managers to develop appropriate policies for remote work and security protocols. See Operations Management and Workforce Management at <https://nacmcore.org/resources/>
- ¹² <https://nacmnet.org/sites/default/files/membersonly/Model%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20for%20Professionals%20with%20commentary.pdf>
- ¹³ <https://www.icims.com/blog/5-generations-in-the-workforce-the-demographic-info-you-need-to-know/>
- ¹⁴ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-truisms-wellness/201602/baby-boomers-generation-z>
- ¹⁵ <https://nacmcore.org/competency/workforce-management/>
- ¹⁶ <https://nacmcore.org/competency/educational-development/>
- ¹⁷ <http://nacmcore.org/competency/workforce-management/>
- ¹⁸ <https://nacmcore.org/competency/workforce-management/>
- ¹⁹ One example of a problem solving approach has been described in the National Center for State Courts, High Performance Court Framework, accessible at <https://cdm16501.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/ctadmin/id/1874>
- ²⁰ <http://www.wikihow.com/Analyze-a-Business-Process>
- ²¹ <http://www.ncsc.org/Information-and-Resources/High-Performance-Courts.aspx>
- ²² <http://articles.bplans.com/business/how-to-perform-swot-analysis/116>
- ²³ www.courttools.org
- ²⁴ https://nacmnet.org/wp-content/uploads/Mini-Guide-Steps-to-Reengineering_final.pdf
- ²⁵ J. Cornell, “One Court Looks at Itself in the Mirror: the “Bucket List” Project – a Low Tech Self-Review,” *Court Manager*, 27, no.4, (2012)
- ²⁶ See <http://ncsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/ctadmin/id/2087>
- ²⁷ Refer to the NACM Guide on Fundamental Thinking for High Performing Courts, published in 2012-2013, available at <https://nacmnet.org/resources/store/>