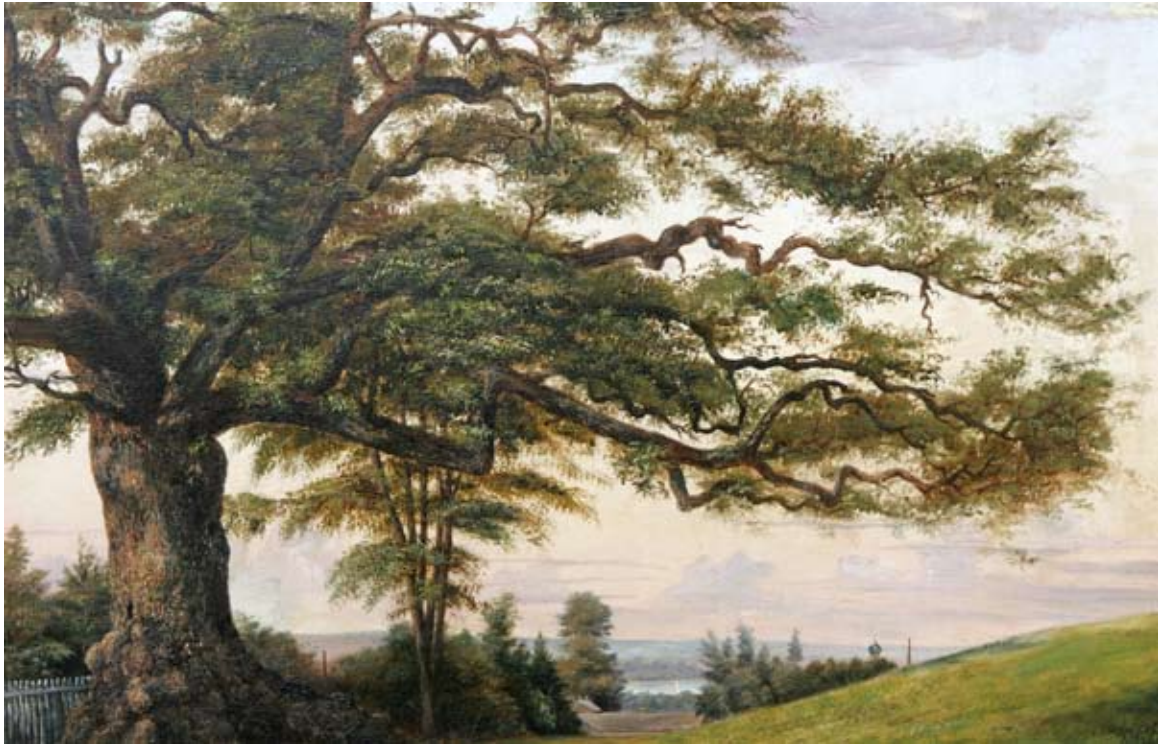


STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

Public Service and Trust Commission





For over 300 years, the Charter Oak has been a dramatic symbol of political liberty for the citizens of Connecticut. In 1662, King Charles II gave the colony of Connecticut a Royal Charter, with liberties not enjoyed by many other colonies. In 1687, King James II sought to revoke the charter through his agent, the governor of all New England. At a nighttime meeting in Hartford, when the governor and his armed forces attempted to seize the charter, the room went suddenly dark, the charter disappeared and one Captain Joseph Wadsworth hid the charter in an oak tree which became known as the "Charter Oak." The charter was never relinquished and remains prominently displayed at the Museum of Connecticut History at the State Library in Hartford. When the oak tree fell in 1856, it was over 700 years old. Its history and legend are inspirational to us as we work to improve our judicial system and preserve the rule of law.



Appellate Court
State of Connecticut

Chambers of
ALEXANDRA D. DiPENTIMA
Judge

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Hartford, CT 06106
TEL. 860-713-2192
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June 30, 2008

The Honorable Chase T. Rogers
Supreme Court
231 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Chief Justice Rogers:

As chair of the Public Service and Trust Commission, I am pleased to present for your consideration the first strategic plan for the Connecticut Judicial Branch. Less than a year ago, you formed the Commission to create a plan to guide the Branch over the next three to five years. This plan sets forth a framework to enhance the public's trust and confidence in the Branch by improving services, accessibility and accountability.

In furtherance of your charge to the Commission, we gathered information from more than 1,500 individuals who interact with the Branch in a variety of ways; we analyzed the trends and impacts identified by those individuals; and we proposed strategies to address those impacts. In addition, the Commission developed a new mission statement for the Branch, a vision statement and a set of core values. We expect an implementation plan for this strategic plan to follow within the next few months.

Your decision to compose the Commission of individuals who represent groups particularly concerned with the judicial system led to a breadth of perspective and experience that can be seen in the plan. Every member of the Commission worked hard in providing valuable time, thought and effort to produce this plan. I am most grateful to each member of the Commission and to each member of the excellent support staff.

Finally, the Steering Committee of eight Commission members deserves special gratitude and appreciation for its additional efforts.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alexandra D. DiPentima".

Alexandra Davis DiPentima

ADD:mf

Table of Contents

<i>Public Service and Trust Commission</i>	2
<i>Committees</i>	3
<i>Introduction</i>	4
<i>Executive Summary</i>	7
<i>Vision and Mission Statement</i>	9
<i>Values Statement</i>	10
<i>Outcome Goals and Strategies</i>	
<i>Outcome Goal One</i>	12
The Judicial Branch will provide equal access to all of its facilities, processes and information through the identification and elimination of barriers.	
<i>Outcome Goal Two</i>	18
The Judicial Branch will provide a diverse and culturally competent environment that is sensitive to the values and responsive to the needs of all who interact with it.	
<i>Outcome Goal Three</i>	24
The Judicial Branch will provide effective, uniform and consistent delivery of services by enhancing the management of court practices.	
<i>Outcome Goal Four</i>	30
The Judicial Branch will improve its communication and collaboration with the Executive and Legislative branches of government and their agencies, the Bar, other partners, and the public, as well as within the Branch, to better serve the needs of all who interact with it.	
<i>Outcome Goal Five</i>	36
The Judicial Branch will ensure a judicial system where all participants can expect and experience clear, fair and consistent justice from an independent and impartial judiciary.	
<i>Appendix</i>	42

Public Service and Trust Commission

Chair

Hon. Alexandra DiPentima
Judge, Appellate Court

Members

Chief Family Support Magistrate Sandra Sosnoff Baird
Honorable Robert E. Beach, Jr., Appellate Court Judge
Ms. Elizabeth Bickley, Information Technology Division
Honorable John D. Boland, Judge, Superior Court
Mr. William H. Carbone, Court Support Services Division
Honorable Patrick L. Carroll III, Deputy Chief Court Administrator
Honorable Thomas J. Corradino, Judge, Superior Court
Attorney Joseph D. D'Alesio, Superior Court Operations Division
Honorable Nina F. Elgo, Judge, Superior Court
Attorney Melissa A. Farley, External Affairs Division
Honorable Roland D. Fasano, Judge, Superior Court
Honorable James T. Graham, Judge, Superior Court
Ms. Lisa Holden, Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Attorney Norman K. Janes, Statewide Legal Services of CT, Inc.
Honorable Clarence J. Jones, Judge, Superior Court
Attorney Kevin T. Kane, Chief State's Attorney
Justice Joette Katz, Supreme Court Justice
Ms. Caren Kittredge, Public Member
Honorable Sandra Vilardi Leheny, Senior Judge, Superior Court
Honorable Douglas C. Mintz, Judge, Superior Court
Attorney Joseph Mirrione, Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association
Attorney William H. Prout, Jr., Connecticut Bar Association
Honorable Barbara M. Quinn, Chief Court Administrator
Honorable Kevin A. Randolph, Judge, Superior Court
Honorable Antonio C. Robaina, Judge, Superior Court
Attorney Kenneth B. Rubin, Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers
Honorable William B. Rush, Judge, Superior Court
Attorney Michael T. Ryan, Connecticut Defense Lawyers Association
Honorable Mary Sandak Sommer, Judge, Superior Court
Honorable Dan Shaban, Judge, Superior Court
Honorable Joseph Shortall, Judge, Superior Court
Mr. Thomas A. Siconolfi, Administrative Services Division
Attorney Carolyn Signorelli, Chief Child Protection Attorney
Attorney Toni M. Smith-Rosario, Connecticut Hispanic Bar Association
Attorney Robert Stillman, Representative of the Connecticut Business and Industry Council
Attorney Susan O. Storey, Chief Public Defender
Honorable Hillary B. Strackbein, Judge, Superior Court
Attorney Frederic S. Ury, Attorney-at-Law
Attorney Dawne G. Westbrook, NAACP
Mr. Alex Wood, Journal Inquirer
Attorney Jennifer Zito, Connecticut Criminal Defense Lawyers Association

Committees

Steering Committee

Hon. Alexandra DiPentima (chair)
Hon. Patrick L. Carroll III
Atty. Joseph D. D'Alesio
Atty. Melissa A. Farley
Hon. Douglas C. Mintz
Hon. Barbara M. Quinn
Atty. Frederic S. Ury
Atty. Dawne G. Westbrook

Committee on Access

Elizabeth Bickley
Hon. Patrick L. Carroll III
Lisa Holden
Hon. Joseph Shortall (co-chair)
Atty. Toni M. Smith-Rosario (co-chair)
Alex Wood

Committee on Accountability

Hon. Thomas J. Corradino
Hon. Nina F. Elgo
Hon. Roland D. Fasano
Justice Joette Katz (co-chair)
Caren Kittredge (co-chair)
Atty. William H. Prout, Jr.
Hon. Kevin A. Randolph
Atty. Susan O. Storey
Atty. Jennifer Zito

Committee on Changing Demographics

Chief Family Support Magistrate
Sandra Sosnoff Baird
Hon. Clarence J. Jones
Hon. Barbara M. Quinn
Hon. Antonio C. Robaina (co-chair)
Atty. Carolyn Signorelli (co-chair)
Hon. Hillary B. Strackbein

Committee on Collaboration

Hon. Robert E. Beach, Jr.
William H. Carbone
Hon. James T. Graham (co-chair)
Atty. Kevin T. Kane
Hon. Sandra Vilardi Leheny
Atty. Kenneth B. Rubin
Thomas A. Siconolfi (co-chair)

Committee on Delivery of Services

Hon. John D. Boland
Atty. Norman K. Janes (co-chair)
Atty. Joseph Mirrione
Hon. William B. Rush
Atty. Michael T. Ryan
Atty. Robert Stillman
Hon. Dan Shaban (co-chair)
Hon. Mary Sandak Sommer

Committee on Vision, Mission and Values

Hon. Clarence J. Jones
Hon. Douglas C. Mintz (chair)
Hon. Joseph Shortall
Thomas A. Siconolfi
Atty. Robert Stillman
Atty. Dawne G. Westbrook
Atty. Jennifer Zito

Committee Support Staff

Heather Collins	Krista Hess	Steve Marhefsky
Stacey Franklin	David Iaccarino	Alice Mastrony
Joseph Greelish	Shawna Johnson	Vicki Nichols
Jamey Harris	Sandra Lugo-Ginés	

Introduction

Every workday, thousands of people stream into the Judicial Branch's 82 courthouses and facilities. They are attorneys and jurors, defendants and plaintiffs, victims and advocates, staff, the media and the public.

The judicial system belongs to the people of the state. Between March 2007 and February 2008, people passed through metal detectors located in our 47 courthouses approximately 6.5 million times. Some of those people were the 108,380 jurors who served at least one day last year. Still others participated in the 774,000 new cases added to Connecticut's court system between July 2006 and June 2007.

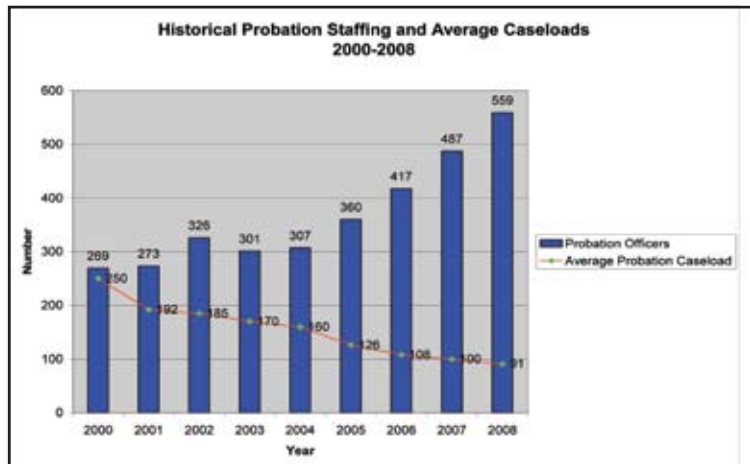
Almost every one of those cases was heard by the justices of the Supreme Court, Appellate Court judges, a Superior Court judge, a Senior Judge, a Judge Trial Referee or a Family Support Magistrate. The pivotal role of Connecticut's judges cannot be overstated. It is the constitutional responsibility of the judges to decide cases before them based on the facts and the law, without regard to outside pressures. These decisions have a significant impact on the lives and liberty of the people of this state.

Connecticut's Judicial Branch is, of course, more than the sum of its cases and courthouses. Collectively, it develops, oversees, implements and maintains programs that affect the everyday lives of the public.

In fact, the range of services provided by the Branch is as varied as the people it serves. Currently the Court Support Services Division oversees 57,400 adult and juvenile probationers. Over the last two years, the Office of Victim Services provided assistance to 103,000 crime victims. Working with the state Department of Social Services, the Support Enforcement Services unit annually collects hundreds of millions of dollars in child support for thousands of children and their parents.

In our open judicial system, the Branch strives to provide ready access to accurate and timely information. Each year the External Affairs Division answers more than 1,000 media inquiries and coordinates electronic media coverage of court proceedings. It also manages the Judicial Branch website, which receives approximately 23,000 visits per day. The Information Technology Division develops and supports programs that give the

	Filed	Disposed
Criminal		
Judicial Districts	3,678	3,382
Geographical Areas	123,454	121,368
Total Criminal	127,132	124,750
Motor Vehicle		
Centralized Infractions Bureau	226,009	239,133
Geographical Areas	202,444	201,449
Total Motor Vehicle	428,453	440,582
Civil	57,349	69,200
Small Claims	80,571	55,821
Family	32,871	34,210
Juvenile		
Delinquency	13,391	14,092
Family With Service	4,391	4,405
Youth in Crisis	1,460	1,377
Child Protection	11,500	12,411
Total Juvenile	30,742	32,285
Housing	16,984	16,867
Total Superior Court Cases	774,102	773,715



public Internet access to criminal, civil, and family case information and maintains the flow of information throughout the Branch.

Inside many Branch courthouses, the public will find Court Service Centers or information desks that offer not only forms and booklets but also one-on-one assistance. In 2007, more than 243,000 self-represented parties were assisted by Branch staff at the centers and desks.

Many of the court help centers are staffed by bilingual Branch staff — an important trend in a state that is home to an increasing number of people from varied cultural backgrounds. In 2006, the Branch provided interpreter services in 22 different languages and dialects, assisting close to 50,000 people.

The Branch works hard to fully and fairly serve those whose lives intersect with the judicial system. While many have no trouble, for others it is a struggle: the sexual assault victim kept waiting outside a courtroom while her attacker's family glares from a few feet away; the man with an intellectual disability who cannot read but is told to find his name and assigned courtroom on the list posted on the wall in a crowded courthouse lobby; the minimum-wage worker who waits for hours trying to resolve a motor vehicle infraction, all the while losing precious time on the job; or the individual with limited-English proficiency who is told at the courthouse door that she cannot bring a camera phone in and, not understanding, leaves without resolving her case.

When those are the experiences of people who want or need to use the court system, then the Judicial Branch is not meeting its stated mission of resolving matters in a fair, timely, efficient and open manner. When those experiences occur, the trust that people are entitled to have in their judicial system is eroded.

The vision of a fully open, transparent and accountable judicial system led Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers in 2007 to create the Public Service and Trust Commission. Forty-two people — judges, advocates, attorneys, Branch executive directors, and representatives of the public and media — graciously accepted her invitation to be part of the Commission to help craft the first long-term strategic plan for the Branch. Appellate Court Judge Alexandra D. DiPentima was chosen by Chief Justice Rogers to chair the Commission and its Steering Committee.

The Chief Justice's charge to the Commission was ambitious: find out what people think about the court system based on their experiences and perceptions; ask what people value about their judiciary and what they believe the future will bring; and then, based on those responses and suggestions, develop a meaningful blueprint for the next three to five years detailing how the Branch intends to meet the public's needs.

The Commission gathered information from a number of sources including focus groups, public hearings, surveys and input from Judicial Branch employees. This information is set forth in the appendix to this plan.

Under Judge DiPentima's direction, the eight-member Steering Committee ultimately identified more than 90 constituent groups that interact with the court system and whose input would be critical to developing the strategic plan. With the assistance of Branch staff, Steering Committee members facilitated often-spirited focus group sessions throughout the summer, fall, and winter. In all, more than 1,000 people — advocates for minorities, victims, children, the elderly and those with disabilities, as well as attorney associations, Branch staff, and justices and judges from the Supreme, Appellate, and Superior Courts — voiced their opinions in these sessions.

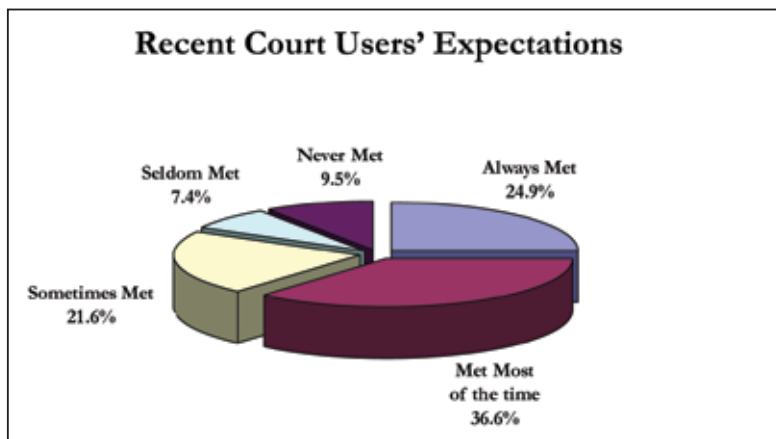
In addition to the focus groups, the Commission gathered information from two public hearings held in December of 2007 — one in Hartford at the Connecticut Supreme Court building and one in Bridgeport at the Fairfield Judicial District courthouse. Over

twenty members of the public appeared at one or both of the public hearings and presented testimony regarding their concerns and their recommendations to improve the court system.

The Commission also obtained information from two surveys. One was a transactional survey conducted by the Center for Research and Public Policy of some 500 recent users of our courts. The individuals surveyed included those who were involved in jury service and the criminal, motor vehicle, civil, small claims, family, juvenile and housing dockets. While over 80% of the people surveyed were satisfied with the Judicial Branch, areas in need of improvement were identified. In addition, a 14-question survey about the court system was posted on the Judicial Branch's website. Over 1,000 people have completed the survey, identifying areas that are working well and those that are not.

This strategic plan is a comprehensive, quantifiable plan of action for the present and the future, a type of roadmap for the Branch. It is also a fluid document and not a final report. As we implement the strategies, the plan will be modified to address new challenges that will inevitably arise in our modern society. The success of the plan will require the efforts of every person in the Branch. Ongoing evaluations will ensure that progress is made toward achieving the goals, realizing the vision, and fulfilling the mission of the Judicial Branch to serve the interests of justice and the public by resolving matters brought before it in a fair, timely, efficient and open manner.

The Steering Committee evaluated all of the information collected and concentrated the expressed concerns into five broad categories: access, changing demographics, delivery of services, collaboration, and accountability. Commission members were then assigned to committees to review the focus group and survey responses and public hearing transcripts. Thereafter, they developed outcome goals to address each category.



An additional committee then was created to develop a vision statement and to revisit the mission statement. This committee also developed values based upon the responses from focus groups to guide all Branch members in dealing with the people they serve. After listening to many, analyzing all that it heard and organizing that information, the Commission produced the following strategic plan.

Executive Summary

Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers in May of 2007 formed the Public Service and Trust Commission, charging it with developing a plan to enhance the public's trust and confidence in the Judicial Branch by improving services, accessibility and accountability.

What is contained in the following pages is that plan — the first strategic plan for Connecticut's Judicial Branch. The plan addresses, in a systematic way, the trends and issues, falling into five broad categories, that will impact the Branch in the coming years.

The strategic plan contains a vision statement, a mission statement and core values to provide the framework within which the Branch will operate. The plan articulates five broad outcome goals, targeted strategies for achieving each goal, activities to accomplish those strategies, and specific and quantifiable measures for each goal, strategy and activity. The outcome goals, which will take from three to five years to achieve, answer the question, "Where are we going?"

The outcome goals are:

- ▶ **ACCESS:** The Judicial Branch will provide equal access to all of its facilities, processes and information through the identification and elimination of barriers.
- ▶ **CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS:** The Judicial Branch will provide a diverse and culturally competent environment that is sensitive to the values and responsive to the needs of all who interact with it.
- ▶ **DELIVERY OF SERVICES:** The Judicial Branch will provide effective, uniform and consistent delivery of services by enhancing the management of court practices.
- ▶ **COLLABORATION:** The Judicial Branch will improve its communication and collaboration with the Executive and Legislative Branches of government and their agencies, the Bar, other partners, and the public, as well as within the Branch, to better serve the needs of all who interact with it.
- ▶ **ACCOUNTABILITY:** The Judicial Branch will ensure a judicial system where all participants can expect and experience clear, fair and consistent justice from an independent and impartial judiciary.

These outcome goals are supported by strategies, which are listed in the plan following each outcome goal. They identify what must be increased, decreased, reduced or improved for the Branch to accomplish the goals. The strategies and ultimately the outcome goals will be accomplished through hundreds of activities and defined actions.

A separate implementation plan will contain the activities and actions that support and effect the strategies. We anticipate that plan will be published by the end of the summer.

The outcome goals, the strategies that support those goals and their associated activities contain quantifiable measures by which the Branch and the public will know that progress is being made.

This strategic plan is a comprehensive, quantifiable plan of action for the present and the future, a type of roadmap for the Branch. It is also a fluid document and not a final that will inevitably arise in our modern society. The success of the plan will require the

efforts of every person in the Branch. Ongoing evaluations will ensure that progress is made toward achieving the goals, realizing the vision, and fulfilling the mission of the Judicial Branch to serve the interests of justice and the public by resolving matters brought before it in a fair, timely, efficient and open manner.

VISION STATEMENT

An independent, accountable and responsive Judicial Branch will administer justice, ensure access to the courts and deliver effective, uniform and consistent services to a diverse public. In doing so, the Judicial Branch will collaborate with the Executive and Legislative branches of government and others with an interest in administration of justice.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch is to serve the interests of justice and the public by resolving matters brought before it in a fair, timely, efficient and open manner.

VALUES STATEMENT

These core values represent what is important to the people we serve, guide the actions of the members of the Branch as we carry out our mission and enhance the public's trust and confidence in their judicial system.

FAIRNESS:

The Judicial Branch embodies fairness through the equal and impartial treatment of all people. It is a core value of the Judicial Branch that all of its members treat every person equally, without bias or favoritism.

INTEGRITY:

The integrity of the Judicial Branch is dependent upon the principled and ethical actions of all of its members. It is a core value of the Judicial Branch that all of its members serve the interests of the public, uninfluenced by considerations of personal gain or favor.

PROFESSIONALISM:

The professionalism of the members of the Judicial Branch is reflected in their commitment to the administration of justice. It is a core value of the Judicial Branch that all of its members serve the public and the interests of justice efficiently, consistently and effectively.

RESPECT:

The Judicial Branch demonstrates respect for the people it serves by the manner in which its members interact with the public. It is a core value of the Judicial Branch that its members acknowledge the dignity of each person who comes into the court, responding to his or her particular concerns with courtesy, understanding and compassion.

1

OUTCOME GOAL

ACCESS

The Judicial Branch will provide equal access to all of its facilities, processes and information through the identification and elimination of barriers.

All courts shall be open, and every person, for an injury done to him in his person, property or reputation, shall have remedy by due course of law, and right and justice administered without sale, denial or delay.

Connecticut State Constitution, Art. I, Sec 10.

OUTCOME GOAL ONE

ACCESS

The Judicial Branch will provide equal access to all of its facilities, processes and information through the identification and elimination of barriers.

Confidence in the judicial system stems from an individual's belief that he or she is being treated fairly and with respect, regardless of age, physical or intellectual ability, mental health or proficiency in English. That confidence can be undermined when there are, or appear to be, barriers that result in the denial of physical access to court facilities, meaningful participation in court processes or reasonable access to court information. The ultimate result of barriers can be, both in perception and in reality, unequal access to the courts and a lack of public trust and confidence in the judicial system.

Although thousands of people make their way in and around Judicial Branch facilities, actively participate in the court process and easily obtain the information they need, that is not true for everyone: the defendant with intellectual disabilities who is unable to focus on and understand the advisement of rights by the court; the frightened elderly landlord with limited English proficiency who is unable to understand the information she received in advance of her hearing; the person with a hearing disability who is unable to understand the questions being asked of him at the clerk's office and sees no information regarding listening assistive devices posted; the public defender with no private area to meet with a client to explain a plea offer; or the person who, because he cannot read the docket sheets posted, spends all day in the wrong courtroom, only to have a warrant issued for his arrest for failure to appear. These are people who do not have equal access to the courts because of barriers. These barriers — to entry and movement within the court building, to participation in court processes and to obtaining necessary information — impede the mission of the Judicial Branch.

The achievement of this committee's outcome goal and supporting strategies will enhance equal access to facilities, processes and information for every person who interacts with the Branch.

The achievement of this goal will be measured by:

- changes that allow individuals equal access to Judicial Branch facilities;
- changes that allow individuals equal access to court processes; and
- changes that allow individuals equal access to Judicial Branch information.

The following strategies will move the Branch toward the realization of Outcome Goal One.

1.1 - Improve physical access to Judicial Branch facilities.

Barriers to physical access range from difficulties and delays in gaining entry to facilities to problems in navigating within the facilities to a lack of information on obtaining accommodations for people with disabilities.

Steps that will lead to the accomplishment of this strategy include:

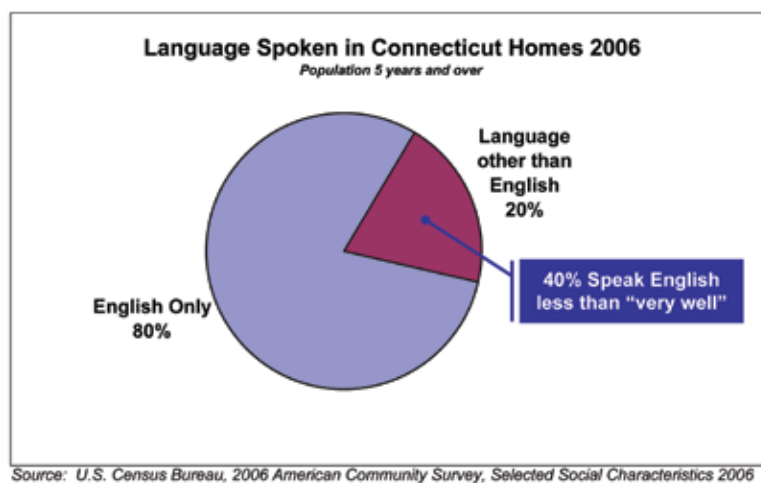
- increasing appropriate signs;
- providing location maps for facilities; and
- increasing information provided online and at facilities about accommodations for people with disabilities.

The achievement of this strategy will be measured by:

- an increase in the number and percentage of facilities in which improvements to physical access have been made.

1.2 - Improve access to Judicial Branch facilities, processes and information by individuals who have limited English proficiency.

Effective and meaningful access to the court system by people with limited English proficiency may be compromised when there are barriers to their ability to understand and be understood. Such barriers lead to increased difficulty in case scheduling, a growing number of cases going to trial, disparities in sentencing and unnecessary delays in civil, criminal, family and housing court.



Steps that will lead to the accomplishment of this strategy include:

- providing multilingual signs, publications, public service announcements, forms, and website pages;
- developing and implementing a system for tracking and scheduling cases in which an interpreter will be needed; and
- hiring and retaining an adequate pool of certified court interpreters.

The achievement of this strategy will be measured by:

- an increase in the number and percentage of staff who can communicate in languages other than English;
- an increase in the number and percentage of forms, publications and information available in languages other than English;
- an increase in the number and percentage of facilities that have improved ease of movement for individuals with limited English proficiency; and
- an increase in the number and percentage of cases tracked and scheduled based on the need for interpreters.

I.3 - Improve access to court processes and information for people with intellectual and psychiatric disabilities.

Whether it is entry to and movement around facilities, participating in the court process itself, or obtaining necessary information, people with intellectual and psychiatric disabilities face many challenges when interacting with the judicial system.

Steps that will lead to the accomplishment of this strategy include:

- developing and providing training to judges, family support magistrates and court personnel to help them recognize people with intellectual and psychiatric disabilities;
- expanding the use of technology to improve access and participation; and
- identifying laws and working with the legislature to revise laws or practices that hamper participation.

The achievement of this strategy will be measured by:

- an increase in the number and percentage of available forms and publications that can be used and understood by people with intellectual disabilities; and
- an increase in the number of procedural safeguards in the court process that address the needs of people with psychiatric or intellectual disabilities.

I.4 - Improve the utilization of Judicial Branch facilities.

Problems with utilization include lack of private space for attorneys, litigants, victims, and others, overcrowding, long lines for all services, and inefficient scheduling, all of which can impact safety, comfort, and efficiency.

Steps that will lead to the accomplishment of this strategy include:

- more flexible scheduling of cases;
- consideration of court users in the design and renovation of court facilities; and
- evaluation of the feasibility of extended hours of court operation.

The achievement of this strategy will be measured by:

- an increase in the staggered scheduling of cases; and
- an increase in the number of facilities that provide space to accommodate adequately the privacy needs of all who interact with the Branch.

1.5 - Increase public access to court processes and information while protecting personal privacy and other legitimate confidentiality concerns.

Providing public access to court processes and information is essential; equally essential is the need to assure those who become involved in the court process, whether by choice or necessity, that their information will not be misused, that their safety will not be compromised and that their privacy will be respected.

Steps that will lead to the accomplishment of this strategy include:

- reviewing current disclosability rules to improve consistency of access;
- expanding Internet access to include streaming videos of court proceedings; and
- expanding Internet access to court documents.

The achievement of this strategy will be measured by:

- an increase in the number of features, functions or information added to the Judicial Branch website; and
- an increase in the number of procedures available to protect the safety of participants in the court process.

2

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

OUTCOME GOAL

The Judicial Branch will provide a diverse and culturally competent environment that is sensitive to the values and responsive to the needs of all who interact with it.

Finding a way to cross the racial and ethnic divide has never been more important than it is today.

*Sheff v. O'Neill 238 Conn. 1, 44 (1996)
(Peters, C.J.)*

OUTCOME GOAL TWO

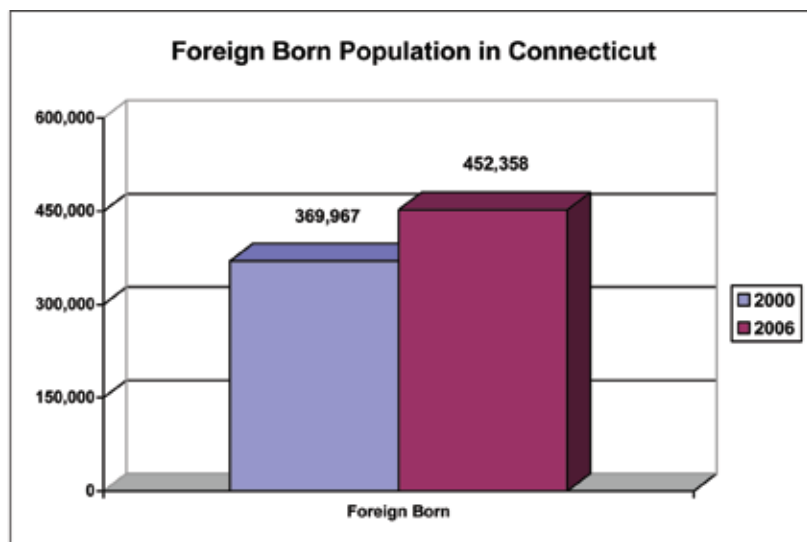
CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

The Judicial Branch will provide a diverse and culturally competent environment that is sensitive to the values and responsive to the needs of all who interact with it.

Connecticut's population is diversifying, with growing numbers of residents from varied racial, ethnic and national backgrounds. The Judicial Branch, which resolves hundreds of thousands of cases every year, must meet the needs and protect the rights of increasing numbers of people who need assistance to successfully interact within the judicial system. The Branch has become more diverse in its workforce over the last several years, but as the diversity of Connecticut's population continues to grow, the efforts made to increase workforce diversity must continue. The Branch must continue to study and be sensitive to different cultures, customs and socio-economic and educational backgrounds of the people it serves.

Each year, the Branch provides interpreter services tens of thousands of times, primarily in the criminal and juvenile courts, but it has not been able to meet the demand for such services in family and civil matters. Furthermore, simply providing language interpretation does not guarantee sensitivity to or understanding of other cultures.

For example, some individuals with limited English proficiency will not agree-



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3, Profile of Selected Social Characteristics 2000
U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey, Selected Social Characteristics 2006

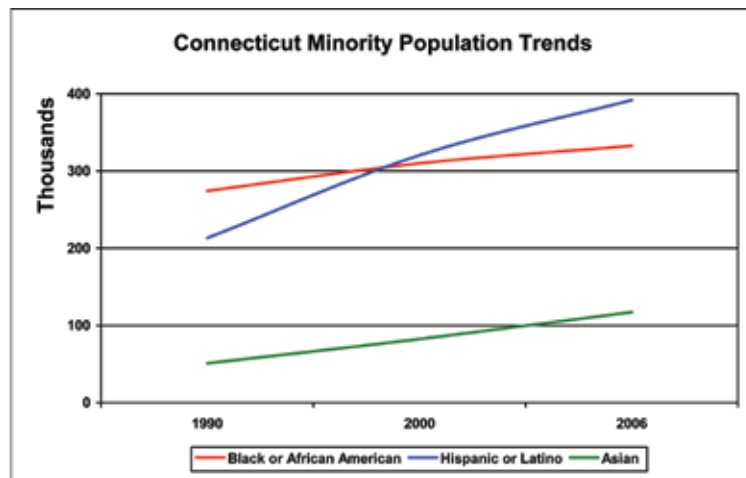
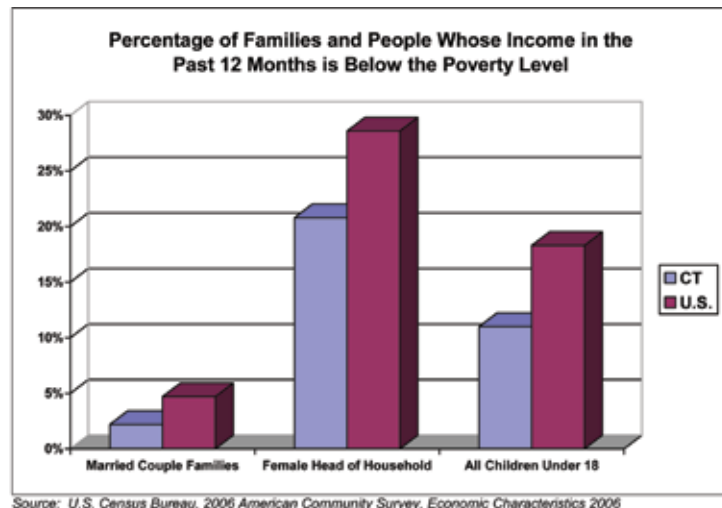
ment for fear of seeming disrespectful to authority despite the fact that they do not understand what the judge said.

In being responsive to a diverse population, the Branch must also consider the needs of adolescents and children. For example, an adolescent may not be capable of following a court order because he or she may lack the developmental capacity and impulse control to do so. In 2010, the majority of 16- and 17-year-old defendants, currently treated as adults, will become part of the juvenile system. This change will require the Judicial Branch to expand the number of appropriate services and programs.

While Connecticut may be one of the wealthiest states in the nation, there are stark differences in the economic realities of its people: 11 percent of its children live in poverty, as do 21 percent of single mothers. The disparate socioeconomic backgrounds of litigants, victims and criminal defendants may require the Branch to move beyond the traditional boundaries of how it provides services.

Some focus group participants commented on the continuing perception of racially disparate outcomes in the criminal justice and child welfare systems as well as the perception that there is disparity in the arrest, prosecution and sentencing rates for Hispanic and African American criminal defendants. The Branch must continue to work in particular with the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparity in the Criminal Justice System to address these perceptions.

This committee's outcome goal and supporting strategies will ensure that all people are provided a culturally competent judicial system in which those of diverse racial, ethnic, socio-economic, cultural and educational backgrounds are given every opportunity to receive, process and respond to information and to participate fully in all processes.



The achievement of this goal will be measured by:

- a broadened cultural and ethnic composition of Judicial Branch staff; and
- a decrease in the reported occurrences of incidents/behavior defined as “culturally insensitive.”

The following strategies will move the Branch toward the realization of Outcome Goal Two.

II.1 - Ensure the workforce of the Judicial Branch reflects the ethnic and cultural diversity of those who interact with the Branch.

The effectiveness of the court in serving a population consisting of an increasing number of minority groups and persons from other countries will be enhanced by a workforce that is more closely aligned with the diversity of participants in the court system.

Steps that will lead to the accomplishment of this strategy include:

- developing outreach strategies for making information about Branch job opportunities known to minority communities; and
- coordinating hiring efforts to secure applicants from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds.

The achievement of this strategy will be measured by:

- a more diverse Judicial Branch workforce.

II.2 - Ensure that all programs and services offered by the Judicial Branch are responsive to the ethnic and cultural differences of its participants.

It is important that those who receive Branch services and participate in Branch programs have the opportunity to succeed, whether they participate in an educational program or receive an alternative incarceration sentence or period of probation. Court-ordered programs should be intellectually appropriate and, when suitable, consider the cultural background of the individual.

Steps that will lead to the accomplishment of this strategy include:

- developing a list of all programs available in each jurisdiction, including those that can meet the needs of individuals with limited English proficiency; and
- consulting with representatives of minority populations about how the Branch can ensure its programs are effective.

The achievement of this strategy will be measured by:

- a comparison of program success rates between populations; and
- a comparison of program participation rates between populations.

II.3 – Ensure that judges, family support magistrates, non-judicial officers and staff act in a manner that shows awareness of the cultural values of the people whom they serve while providing consistent treatment in cases regardless of one’s ethnicity or cultural background.

As Connecticut’s population continues to diversify, so does the population that participates in the court system, including jurors, attorneys, victims, litigants and defendants. It is important that judges, family support magistrates, non-judicial officers and court staff be aware of the values of a wide number of cultures, and, when appropriate, make accommodations.

Steps that will lead to the accomplishment of this strategy include:

- developing and implementing effective training programs designed to promote cultural competence; and
- including questions on cultural awareness on judge evaluations and court satisfaction surveys.

The achievement of this strategy will be measured by:

- A decrease in the number of people who experience disparate treatment because of their racial or ethnic background;

II.4 - Ensure that judges and staff carry out their duties in a manner that shows an appropriate understanding of the developmental stages of children and adolescents.

From child custody cases to serious juvenile offenders, youths in crisis, abused and neglected children and families with service needs, the Judicial Branch increasingly handles matters involving children and adolescents. It is imperative to provide the appropriate services and programs — from education to therapeutic treatments — to those children, and that such programs are based on an understanding of their intellectual and psychological capacities.

Steps that will lead to the accomplishment of this strategy include:

- consulting with professionals to develop an appropriate and effective training program on child and adolescent developmental stages and needs;
- providing training and resources for judges and staff on child and adolescent development; and
- evaluating the effectiveness of that training.

The achievement of this strategy will be measured by:

- a reduction in the number of occurrences of actions or orders, in relation to youth participants, that are developmentally inappropriate.

3

OUTCOME GOAL

DELIVERY OF SERVICES

The Judicial Branch will provide effective, uniform and consistent delivery of services by enhancing the management of court practices.

The chief court administrator shall be responsible for the efficient operation of the department, the prompt disposition of cases and the prompt and proper administration of judicial business.

Conn. Gen. Statutes § 51-5a.

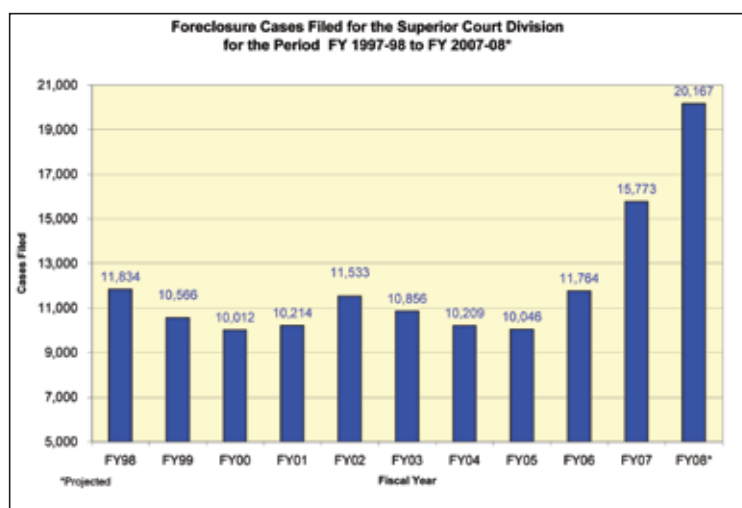
OUTCOME GOAL THREE

DELIVERY OF SERVICES

The Judicial Branch will provide effective, uniform and consistent delivery of services by enhancing the management of court practices.

Unless court rules, policies and practices are uniform, predictable and efficient, people who come into the courts — be they attorneys, self-represented parties, jurors or others — may experience confusion and frustration. Based upon the transactional survey conducted on behalf of the Judicial Branch, over 80% of those who had interacted with the courts were satisfied with their experiences. Yet, experiences described by some participants in the focus groups and public hearings show that further improvements can be made. Those experiences include: the self-represented party who is unable to afford an attorney and is facing foreclosure; the attorney who finds that the complex litigation courts have failed to live up to their original promise of efficient resolution of difficult disputes; the juror who is shocked to learn that she could be required to sit on a trial for a week, not just a day; the attorney who represents the real estate investment firm in a complicated trade secret case, arguing motions to a different judge each time the case appears on the calendar; the frustrated litigants and attorneys who are forced to call clerks' offices to find out how to obtain a hearing or where to send a continuance request. These experiences with the services being provided by the courts cause confusion and frustration and can lead to an overall perception of an ineffective, inconsistent and unfair judicial system.

The achievement of this outcome goal and supporting strategies will lead to more efficient procedures and practices; court rules and procedures that are easier to understand; enhanced guidance and assistance for those who interact with the courts; greater uniformity in the enforcement and application of court policies in case management practices from one



courthouse to the next; and finally, more efficient and productive use of jurors' service so their experiences are more meaningful.

The achievement of this goal will be measured by:

- an increase in the consistency of court practices;
- an increase in the clarity of court practices;
- a decrease in the time from filing to disposition of a case; and
- a decrease in the cost of delivery of services.

The following strategies will move the Branch toward the realization of Outcome Goal Three.

III.1 - Increase the utilization and effectiveness of alternative dispute resolution.

Efficient and timely resolution of cases can sometimes be impeded by the traditional adversarial trial process. In appropriate cases, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) allows parties to avoid unnecessary confrontations and arrive at creative and reasonable resolutions of their disputes more quickly and economically, reducing caseloads and increasing satisfaction.

Steps that will lead to the accomplishment of this strategy include:

- improving the ADR scheduling process through the use of technology;
- providing training in ADR for judges, court personnel and volunteers; and
- providing consistent ADR programs in each judicial district.

The achievement of this strategy will be measured by:

- an increase in the number of cases that use a court annexed ADR process; and
- a decrease in the number of cases returned to court after a court annexed ADR process.

III.2 - Improve jurors' participation and experience in jury service.

The public's participation in the jury process is one of the foundations of our democratic society and, as such, is fundamental to our system of justice in which people are entitled to a jury of their peers. The judicial system needs people who are willing and able to serve as jurors. Unless people are educated on the importance of jury service, provided with clear information on the process, and given the resources they need to enable them to serve, they will be reluctant to participate.

2006-2007 Jury Statistics

Number of Summonses Issued:	609,121
Number of Jurors who served: ¹	108,380
Jurors who completed service Within one day:	102,350
Number who served seven days or longer:	924
Number cancelled by Court:	160,501
Total disqualified:	284,288
Excused by Court:	6,720
<u>Telephone Calls from Potential Jurors:</u>	
Total calls answered:	154,302
Average calls per month:	12,859
Average calls per day:	620

¹ Includes individuals who postponed service from the previous court year

Steps that will lead to the accomplishment of this strategy include:

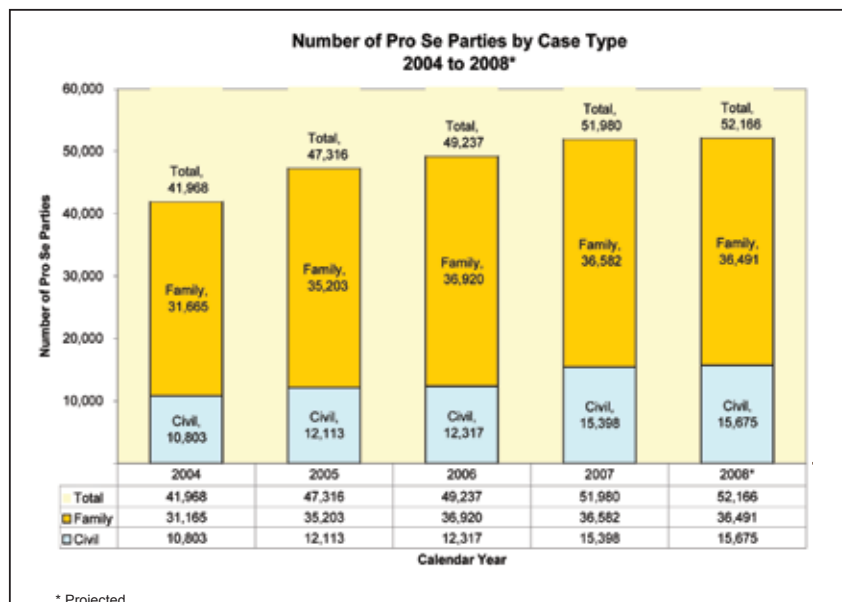
- using jury surveys to determine juror comfort and satisfaction; and
- developing user-friendly technology to educate jurors on their role, to provide them with clear information on jury service, and to automate the processes involved in jurors' managing and scheduling their service.

The achievement of this strategy will be measured by:

- an increase in the rate of appearance of those summoned for jury duty;
- an enhanced level of satisfaction with jury process.

III.3 - Improve the clarity of court procedures and information so that individuals without legal representation may more effectively participate in the court process.

A significant number of self-represented parties, who frequently appear in family and housing matters, find the court process to be complicated and confusing. Often they must seek assistance throughout the course of the case, causing delays and creating a perception of bias in their favor on the part of parties represented by counsel. Clearer court procedures and information would allow self-represented parties to participate more effectively in the court process.



Steps that will lead to the accomplishment of this strategy include:

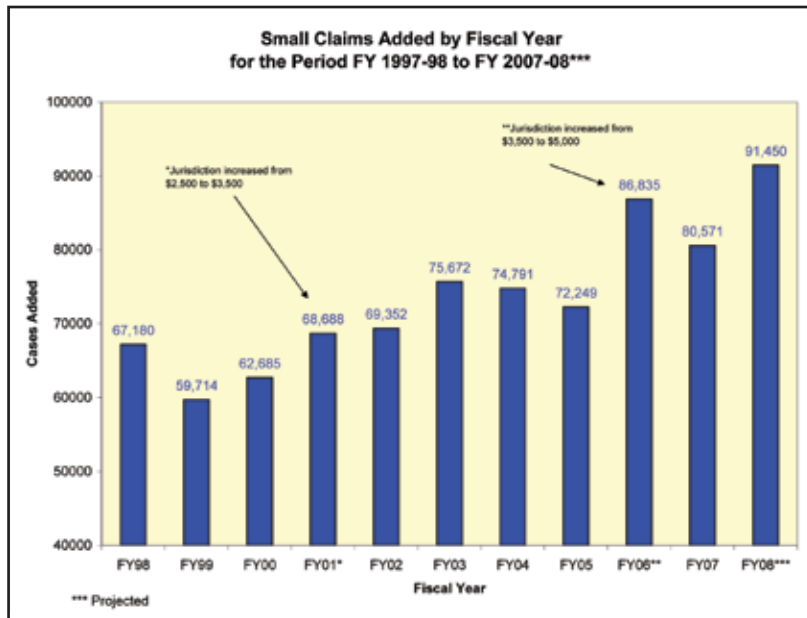
- increasing the number of available plain language forms and instructions;
- creating educational tools for self-represented parties; and
- increasing support services for self-represented parties through Court Service Centers.

The achievement of this strategy will be measured by:

- an increased amount of information available in plain language;
- a decrease in the number of requests for procedural clarification by self-represented parties; and
- an increase in the level of satisfaction with court process in cases involving self-represented parties

III.4 - Increase efficiency of case management and court practices.

Court practices and case management procedures vary from court to court resulting in confusion and uncertainty for attorneys and litigants. The varying practices and procedures also make the overall management of cases inefficient and result in unnecessary phone calls, wasted time, frequent rescheduling and great frustration on the part of litigants, attorneys, judges, family support magistrates, non-judicial officers and court staff.



Steps that will lead to the accomplishment of this strategy include:

- studying specialty dockets and specialty courts to examine their efficiency in handling certain case types;
- developing a strategic plan for technology to improve the consistency and efficiency of court practices and to provide cost effective litigation management; and
- expanding the use of telephonic and video technology for court appearances.

The achievement of this strategy will be measured by:

- an increase in the uniformity of procedures; and
- a decrease in the time between filing of case and disposition for specifically identified case types.

4

OUTCOME GOAL

COLLABORATION

The Judicial Branch will improve its communication and collaboration with the Executive and Legislative Branches of government and their agencies, the Bar, other partners, and the public, as well as within the Branch, to better serve the needs of all who interact with it.

Within the great edifice of our constitution, the rooms assigned to the legislative and judicial magistracies often open onto each other so that each can accommodate the proper functions of its occupants and can also properly aid the occupants of the neighboring rooms in the proper performance of their functions.

Fishman v. Middlesex Mutual Assurance Co.
4 Conn. App. 339, 354 (1985)
(Borden, J.)

OUTCOME GOAL FOUR

COLLABORATION

The Judicial Branch will improve its communication and collaboration with the Executive and Legislative Branches of government and their agencies, the Bar, other partners, and the public, as well as within the Branch, to better serve the needs of all who interact with it.

Collaborative efforts and communication between the Branch, those who interact with the court, its co-equal branches of government and partner agencies are necessary for many reasons, including effective public policy planning and successful implementation of cross agency efforts. Effective and consistent communication and collaboration with the executive and legislative branches is especially critical because of the integral role these branches have in enacting legislation under which the Branch operates and in providing the funding required to carry out the Branch's statutory and constitutional responsibilities. Collaborative efforts are also essential between the Branch and the bar, which share a special responsibility for the quality of justice in the legal system.

Current interagency partnerships include the Sentencing Task Force, the Criminal Justice Information System, the Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparity in the Criminal Justice System, the Commission on Child Protection, the state child support program and the Juvenile Jurisdiction Policy and Operations Coordinating Council. In addition, there are joint efforts between the Judicial Branch and the public, including the Judicial-Media Committee and the Identity Theft Committee.

The Branch also partners with members of the bar who provide valuable information about their observations of and experiences with the judicial system. One such partnership is the Civil Commission, a group consisting of judges and attorneys who work together to improve civil case management; another is the Client Security Fund Committee, which collects funds from attorneys and processes claims on behalf of aggrieved clients. In addition, a Criminal Practice Commission is in the process of being formed. It will consist of judges and key players in the criminal justice community and will take steps to enhance efficiency, professionalism and civility in the criminal courts.

Further collaborative efforts and expanded communication by the Branch are necessary, however, to ensure that those who interact with it continue to be served effectively and efficiently.

In addition to partnering with outside agencies and the bar, the Branch must maintain effective internal communication and collaboration. Currently, committees addressing the mentoring and continuing education of judges and family support magistrates and the

development of technology, including the Branch's website, have been established. To better serve the needs of those who interact with the Branch, these efforts should be continued and expanded.

As the hub of the criminal justice system, the Branch must communicate with its partners in the criminal justice community. Those partners include the co-equal branches of government and their agencies, local and federal law enforcement agencies, program service providers and various bar groups.

Information generated, collected and distributed by the Branch is the data source for many public safety initiatives, including the protective order registry, motor vehicle licensing and the State Police-maintained sexual offender registry. Judges and others in the criminal justice system rely on this information when setting bonds or release conditions for criminal defendants. Therefore, the dissemination of precise and current information between the Branch and its partners is essential to protect individual rights and the public's safety.

This outcome goal and its supporting strategies will lead to improved collaboration and communication between the Judicial Branch and its partners.

The achievement of this goal will be measured by:

- an increase in the quantity and timeliness of information communicated to those outside and within the Branch; and
- an increase in the number of effective joint efforts between the Branch and other entities.

The following strategies will move the Branch toward the realization of Outcome Goal Four.

IV.1 - More effectively convey information between the Branch and other entities.

Clear and effective communication is essential to facilitate effective planning among the branches of government. Equally important is providing information to our partners about the Branch's mission and responsibilities and about the critical issues that affect the Branch's ability to better serve the citizens of this state. Both communication and providing information are also necessary to secure adequate funding to ensure the effective resolution of matters before the court.

Steps that will lead to the accomplishment of this strategy include:

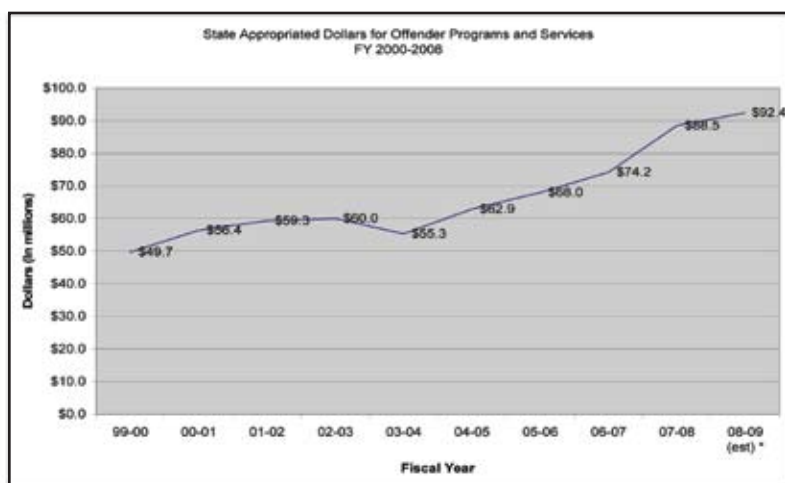
- supporting efforts to develop integrated information systems between the Branch and other state agencies; and
- developing partnerships designed to encourage information sharing.

The achievement of this strategy will be measured by:

- improvement in the delivery of appropriate information;
- improvement in accuracy of information; and
- improvement in timeliness of information.

IV.2 - Expand and strengthen joint efforts between the Branch and other entities.

Collaboration and communication with the Legislative and Executive Branches is essential because of their roles in enacting the statutory framework within which the Branch operates and in recommending and appropriating funding to the Branch. Through Executive and Legislative initiatives, the role of the Judicial Branch is evolving from its core function of dispute resolution to one that includes a substantial role in providing human services such as treatment-based rehabilitation, education, advocacy and mediation. Therefore, obtaining necessary support for core court functions is challenging as resources increasingly are being directed toward the court's expanded human service role.



Steps that will lead to the accomplishment of this strategy include:

- collaborating with other state entities, as well as researchers and academic institutions, to improve the quality of services and programs; and
- developing more effective ways to partner with the bar.

The achievement of this strategy will be measured by:

- an increase in the core function services provided through expanding collaboration;
- a reduction in the duplication of service through effective partnerships; and
- a reduction in the number of conflicting policies and procedures between and among the Judicial Branch and other state entities.

IV.3 - Improve cooperation and information sharing within the Branch.

The Branch has multiple divisions and units, some with overlapping responsibilities. Duplicated efforts can cause delays for those who interact with the Branch, frustrate Branch staff and divert resources from necessary functions. Improving cooperation and coordination within the Branch will result in more efficient use of resources and consistent delivery of services to the public.

Steps that will lead to the accomplishment of this strategy include:

- improving communication and information sharing between the Branch's various divisions; and
- developing internal procedures to evaluate service delivery.

The achievement of this strategy will be measured by:

- increased communication of timely and accurate information;
- increased clarity and consistency in Branch policies and procedures;
- improved coordination and collaboration among staff; and
- improved service to those who interact with the Branch.

5

OUTCOME GOAL

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Judicial Branch will ensure a judicial system where all participants can expect and experience clear, fair and consistent justice from an independent and impartial judiciary.

Justice must satisfy the appearance of justice.

State v. Colton
234 Conn. 683, 701 (1995)
(Callahan, J.)

OUTCOME GOAL FIVE

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Judicial Branch will ensure a judicial system where all participants can expect and experience clear, fair and consistent justice from an independent and impartial judiciary.

It is the role of the Judicial Branch to ensure the fair adjudication of disputes by an impartial and knowledgeable judiciary who decide cases on the facts and the law. The fulfillment of this role is not possible without an independent judiciary, which exists only when the Executive and Legislative Branches and the public have trust and confidence in the judicial system. In order to retain that trust and confidence, the Branch must be accountable to the people it serves by providing a fair and open process and communicating clear and consistent expectations for all who participate in that process.

When a person does not know what to expect, court can be an unsettling and overwhelming place. From the moment people enter the courthouse, they are in an unfamiliar world where they do not know what to wear, where to go, what to say or where to stand. Their loss of personal privacy is immediate as they pass through a metal detector and submit to a search of their belongings. Even those summoned for jury duty have found their courthouse experiences unpredictable and uncomfortable as they were herded from place to place without any indication as to where they were going or why.

Unclear expectations can also impact court staff who may be uncertain as to the extent to which they can provide assistance or information to self-represented parties, attorneys, the media or other members of the public.

This committee's outcome goal and supporting strategies will lead to the establishment and communication of clear and consistent expectations for all participants in order to ensure fair and consistent justice from an independent and impartial judiciary.

This achievement of this outcome goal will be measured by:

- improved understanding of the court process on the part of all participants;
- increased understanding on the part of the Judicial Branch staff regarding their responsibilities to all who interact with the Branch; and
- increased confidence on the part of the public that matters are being resolved by an independent and impartial judiciary.

The following strategies will move the Branch toward the realization of Outcome Goal Five.

V.1 - Establish clear and consistent expectations and processes for all constituents

Clear and consistent expectations and processes are needed to promote a sense of predictability and fairness for all who interact with the Branch — litigants, jurors, attorneys, public, media, victims, and the other branches of government and their agencies. Identifying what people can expect from the Branch along with what is expected from them is essential to ensuring accountability for all participants in the judicial process. For example, the procedures to be followed for court appearances, for responding to notices from the court and the general expectations as to decorum should be understood by all who interact with the system.

Lack of job satisfaction and poor morale may have a negative impact on both the service that is provided to the public and the public's perception of Branch staff. Therefore, clear and consistent expectations are also necessary to address the concerns and needs of judges, family support magistrates and Branch staff in order to improve job satisfaction and morale.

Steps that will lead to the accomplishment of this strategy include:

- making information on the court process readily available;
- displaying expectations of court staff prominently;
- providing information to all who interact with the Branch regarding courtroom decorum and court processes;
- establishing additional career paths and opportunities for Branch staff; and
- instilling a “How can I help you today?” attitude and culture; and
- reviewing and reassessing human resources policies and procedures.

The achievement of this strategy will be measured by:

- improvement in the understanding of what is expected when an individual comes to court; and
- improvement in the understanding of what is expected of all Judicial Branch staff members.

V.2 - Develop and execute a robust communications campaign and feedback process

Establishing clear and consistent expectations and processes is only a part of the effort. Communicating these expectations in a clear and easily accessed manner is essential for several reasons. First, it is important to educate the public on the role of the Branch and on how the judicial system functions. Second, it is crucial to communicate these expectations to judges, family support magistrates, staff and all who interact with the Branch so that the judicial system can operate with appropriate respect, fairness and efficiency.

It is also important to enhance communication between the Judicial Branch and its co-equal branches so that the role, function and demands on the Judicial Branch are understood clearly and recognized. The Chief Justice, as the head of the Judicial Branch, should continue to be in the forefront of judicial innovation and take advantage of opportunities the future may present to reinforce the position of the Branch as a co-equal and independent branch of government that is willing to work cooperatively with the Executive and Legislative Branches. A commitment to openness and transparency, along with the implementation of this strategic plan, are major steps towards maintaining that independence and public trust and confidence in the Judicial Branch of government.

Finally, the process of obtaining feedback, which was begun by the Public Service and Trust Commission, should be institutionalized to monitor the effectiveness of these communications and to assure those who interact with the Branch that their concerns are being heard.

Steps that will lead to the accomplishment of this strategy include:

- conducting court exit surveys, and telephone and web surveys; and
- developing a media campaign to advance public education on the role of the Branch.

The achievement of this strategy will be measured by:

- an increase in the amount of information provided to the public about the role and functions of the judiciary;
- an increase in the number of public appearances by judges; and
- an improved public understanding of the role and actions of the judiciary.

V.3 - Assess policies/processes to ensure appropriate judicial discretion

Judicial independence and discretion are the foundation of the justice system and are essential to the integrity of the judicial process. A judge must be free to exercise discretion in all aspects of judicial decision-making without bowing to political or public pressure or fearing the potential impact that a decision may have on reappointment to the bench. Judicial independence also may be compromised through seemingly innocuous behavior that appears to implicate a judge's impartiality. While all in a democratic society under the rule of law must be concerned with the preservation of judicial independence, judges bear the ultimate responsibility for preserving it.

Judicial independence does not mean lack of judicial accountability. One means of ensuring that accountability is the periodic evaluation of judges and feedback from those who interact with the courts. An evaluation process that guarantees anonymity and provides fair and statistically reliable feedback will assist judges in identifying areas requiring additional training and support and will provide for an appropriate level of accountability.

Finally, judges must be provided with continuing education, sufficient support and adequate resources to do their jobs effectively. Consideration must be given to the difficulty of and perceptions about assignments and the complexity of the matters that come before the court.

Steps that will lead to the accomplishment of this strategy include:

- considering the feasibility of assigning a case to a specific judge for the duration of the case;
- assessing the current evaluation and feedback process by a group composed of judges and others who interact with the courts;
- reassessing support resources and workloads across the Branch; and
- considering the merit of judges' specializing in certain areas of the law; for example, land use appeals, trademark, patent and mass tort litigation.

The achievement of this strategy will be measured by:

- an increase in number of lawyers who, feeling their evaluations are anonymous, participate honestly in the evaluation process;
- an increase in the number of judges who feel that the evaluation process is fair, statistically reliable and instructive; and
- increased confidence that judges have the necessary and appropriate education, support and resources to discharge their duties.

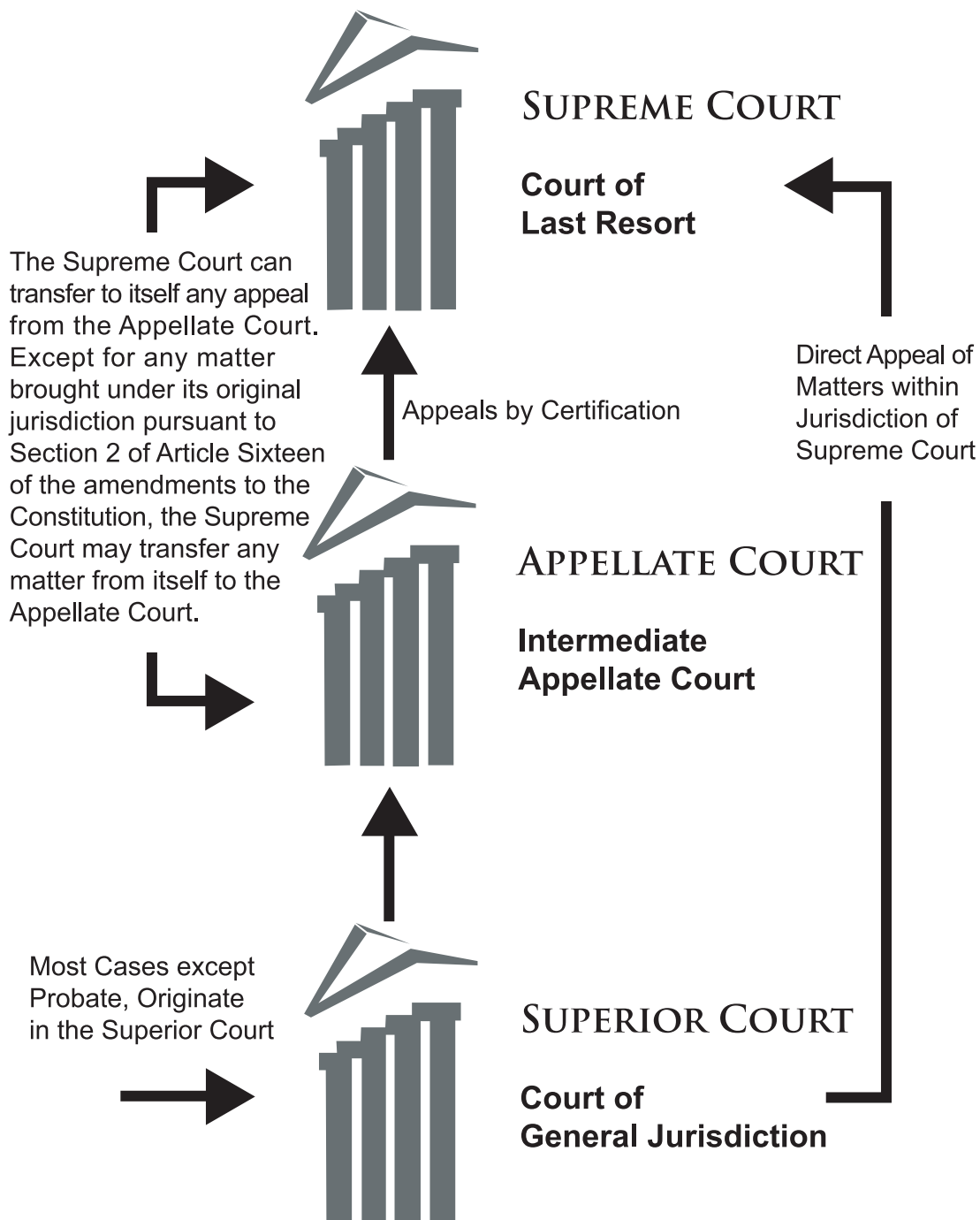
APPENDIX

Appendix

Table of Contents

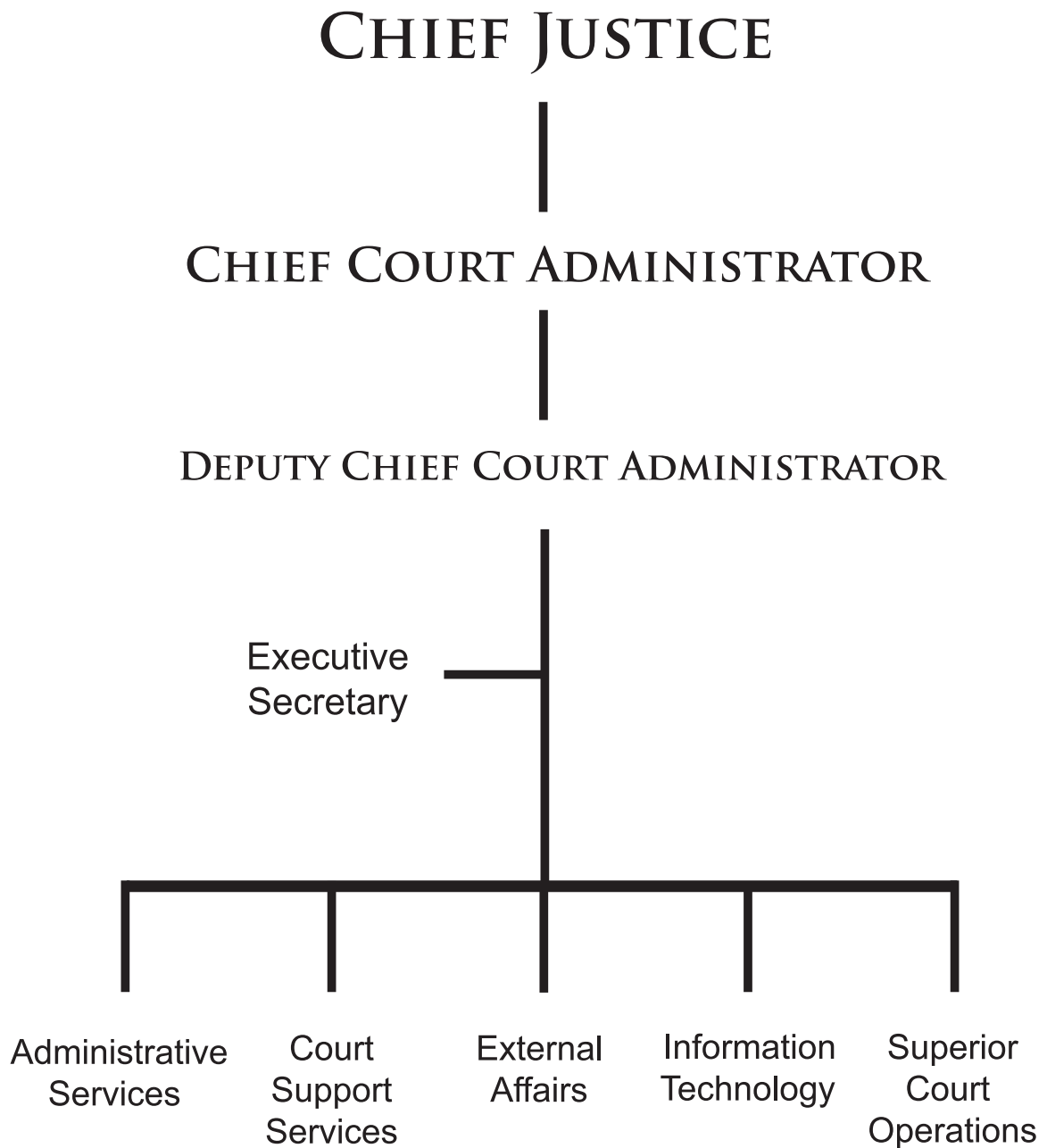
<i>A. Connecticut Court Structure.....</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>B. Administrative Organization.....</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>C. List of Focus Groups.....</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>D. Connecticut Court System Satisfaction Study Highlights.....</i>	<i>48</i>
<i>E. List of Links.....</i>	<i>50</i>
1. Focus Group Information	
2. Connecticut Court System Satisfaction Study prepared by The Center for Research & Public Policy	
3. Transcripts from Public Service and Trust Commission Public Hearings	
4. Questionnaire about the Court System posted on the Judicial Branch website	

A. *Connecticut Court Structure*



The above diagram depicts the relationship between Connecticut's courts.

B. Administrative Organization





List of Focus Groups

Over 90 focus groups were conducted with members of the following groups which interact with the Judicial Branch and with members of the judiciary and Branch staff.

Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers
Administrative Services Division – Judicial Branch
Advisory Committee to the Office of the Victim Advocate
African American Affairs Commission
Appellate Court Administration
Appellate Court Judges
Appellate Court Law Clerks
Civil Commission
Commission on Aging
Commission on Child Protection
Commission on Racial and Ethnic Disparity in the Criminal Justice System
Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims
Connecticut Asian Pacific American Bar Association
Connecticut Bar Association
Connecticut Chapter of American Immigration Lawyers Association
Connecticut Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA)
Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Connecticut Criminal Defense Lawyers Association
Connecticut Defense Lawyers Association
Connecticut Hispanic Bar Association
Connecticut Legal Services
Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association
Connecticut Women’s Education and Legal Fund
Court Support Services Division - Administrative Staff
Court Support Services Division - Executive Staff
Court Support Services Division - Field and Direct Service Staff
Court Support Services Division - Supervisory Staff
Department of Children and Families
Family Support Magistrates
George Crawford Black Bar Association
Information Technology Division - Judicial Branch
Judge Trial Referees
Judicial Branch Advisory Committee on Diversity
Judicial-Media Committee
Judicial-Media Committee - Fire Brigade Subcommittee
Juvenile Lawyers
Love Makes a Family
Motor Vehicle and Small Claims Magistrates
NAACP
Office of Protection and Advocacy
Office of the Attorney General
Office of the Chief Public Defender and public defenders

Office of the Chief State's Attorney and state's attorneys
 Office of the Child Advocate
 Public Service and Trust Commission (Civil)
 Public Service and Trust Commission (Criminal)
 Public Service and Trust Commission (Family)
 Public Service and Trust Commission (Steering Committee)
 South Asian Bar Association of Connecticut
 State Court Improvement Program Multi-Disciplinary Task Force
 State Victim Advocate
 Superior Court Judges
 Superior Court Operations Division - Administration Unit, Building Maintenance
 Superior Court Operations Division - Administration Unit, Computer Systems Support
 Superior Court Operations Division - Administration Unit, Interpreters
 Superior Court Operations Division - Administration Unit, Staff
 Superior Court Operations Division - Court Operations Unit, Central Unit, Wethersfield
 Superior Court Operations Division - Court Operations Unit, Civil/Family Line Staff
 Superior Court Operations Division - Court Operations Unit, Complex Litigation Court Officers
 Superior Court Operations Division - Court Operations Unit, Court Service Centers
 Superior Court Operations Division - Court Operations Unit, Deputy Chief Clerks Housing
 and Housing Specialists
 Superior Court Operations Division - Court Operations Unit, Deputy Chief Clerks Juvenile
 Superior Court Operations Division - Court Operations Unit, GA Chief Clerks
 Superior Court Operations Division - Court Operations Unit, JD Chief Clerks
 Superior Court Operations Division - Directors
 Superior Court Operations Division - Judge Support Services Unit, Administrative Staff
 Superior Court Operations Division - Judge Support Services Unit, Law Librarians
 Superior Court Operations Division - Judge Support Services Unit, Legal Research
 Superior Court Operations Division - Judicial Marshal Services Unit, Administrative Staff
 Superior Court Operations Division - Judicial Marshal Services Unit, Chief Marshals
 Superior Court Operations Division - Judicial Marshal Services Unit, Supervisor and Lead Marshals
 Superior Court Operations Division - Legal Services Unit
 Superior Court Operations Division - Office of Victim Services Unit, Administrative Staff
 Superior Court Operations Division - Office of Victim Services Unit, Line Staff
 Superior Court Operations Division - Support Enforcement Services Unit, Administrative Staff
 Superior Court Operations Division - Support Enforcement Services Unit, Line Staff
 Superior Court Operations Division - Support Enforcement Services Unit, Supervisors
 Supreme Court Justices
 Supreme Court Law Clerks
 Survivors of Homicide
 Village for Children
 Young Lawyers Section of the Connecticut Bar Association

For detailed information gathered at these focus groups, go to the Judicial Branch website at www.jud.ct.gov or contact External Affairs by phone at (860) 757-2270.

D. Connecticut Court System Satisfaction Study Highlights

A Satisfaction Index ...

- ▶ A satisfaction index is a measurement device created by averaging the mean positive ratings for Court Process / Treatment (80.9%), Court System Operations (80.9%), and Court Personnel (83.2%) after assigning equal weight to the three categories.
- ▶ The 2007 Satisfaction Index percent is 81.7.
- ▶ Most service organizations strive to attain satisfaction ratings in the high eighties.

On Awareness...

- ▶ A large majority, 84.7%, of all respondents suggested they were very or somewhat familiar with the Courts.

On Court History ...

- ▶ Just over one quarter of all respondents, 26.9%, suggested they initiated their most recent court experience. Another 71.9% said the experience was initiated by another party and 1.2% were unsure.
- ▶ Nearly two fifths of all respondents, 37.0%, said they were represented by an attorney.
- ▶ On average, respondents made 2.91 visits to the Court during the most recent case or experience.

On Strengths / Areas for Improvement ...

- ▶ In declining order, the most frequently perceived strengths of the Court included: good system, efficient, organized, polite, good communication, did the best they could, knowledgeable personnel, very thorough, security was tight, treated good/fair, and probation officers were helpful.
- ▶ And, in declining order, the most frequently perceived areas needing improvement included: improve the wait time, more expedient, better court system, lack of communication, too much time between cases, need fair process, prosecutors should listen more, more programs for children, and need to explain things better.

On Expectations ...

- ▶ In an open end format question, respondents named their expectations of the Court System. In declining order, the most frequently cited expectations included: fairness, expedient, justice should be served, efficiency, helpful, effective communication with court personnel, honesty, process quickly, do the job, treat everyone the same and organization.
- ▶ After further coding of the 59 different expectations presented by respondents, most fit into one of four new categories: speed, treatment, quality, and logistics.

<i>Expectations</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Treatment	71.3
Speed	29.2
Quality	26.6
Logistics	12.6

- ▶ A majority of respondents, 83.1% (without “don’t know” respondents), suggested their most recent Court experience met their expectations always, most of the time or sometimes.

On Rating the Court Process / Treatment ...

- ▶ The average overall positive rating for two different characteristics measured (treating you fairly and being open and honest) was 80.9%.

On Rating the Court System Operations ...

- ▶ The average overall positive rating for eight different characteristics measured was 80.9%.
- ▶ The highest ratings were recorded for “the building is easy to get around in” (90.0%) and “having convenient hours” (86.6%).
- ▶ The lowest positive ratings were recorded for “operating efficiently” (72.4%), “operating effectively (76.0%), and “having sufficient staff” (76.3%).
- ▶ A large majority of respondents, 95.5%, suggested they felt very (72.8%) or somewhat safe (22.8%) during their respective court experiences.

On Rating Court Personnel ...

- ▶ The average overall positive rating for Court personnel across nine characteristics measured was 83.2%.
- ▶ The two highest positive ratings were recorded for the “courtesy of Court Marshals” (86.6%) and “having courteous court staff overall” (85.2%).
- ▶ The two lowest positive ratings were recorded for “court staff on being good listeners” (79.2%), and “on helping you understand the process” (80.5%).
- ▶ Overall, 81.8% suggested they were very or somewhat satisfied with their recent court experience.
- ▶ Some respondents, 5.8%, indicated they felt discriminated against based on race, ethnicity, gender, age or disability. No respondent suggested feeling discriminated against based on sexual orientation.

On Communication ...

- ▶ While only 2.4% indicated requiring the services of a translator in Court, 100% said they were provided a translator. Of this group, 83.3% suggested the time spent with the translator was about right. And, 91.7% of those receiving translation support, said they understood the translation very or somewhat well.
- ▶ Nearly two thirds of all respondents, 62.5%, received notices from the court related to their most recent experience. The average overall positive notice rating for three characteristics measured was 92.0%.
- ▶ Nearly one quarter of all respondents, 23.7%, visited the Judicial Branch or Connecticut Court System website. The average overall positive rating for the three characteristics measured was 79.9%.
- ▶ The most frequently named sources for information about Connecticut Courts appears to be the internet (25.5%), newspapers (13.9%), and directly from the Courts (29.5%).
- ▶ A large majority of respondents, 95.5%, suggested they felt very (72.8%) or somewhat safe (22.8%) during their respective court experiences.

Among Jurors Only ...

- ▶ Jurors, alone, were asked to rate the Court on six different characteristics. The average overall positive rating was 86.9%.
- ▶ The highest positive ratings were recorded for “overall treatment by the judge” (90.6%), and “timely entrance into the building” (93.8%).
- ▶ The lowest positive rating was recorded for “parking” (71.4%).

E.

List of Links

1. Focus Group Information

<http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/>

2. Connecticut Court System Satisfaction Study

<http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst>

3. Transcripts of Public Service and Trust Commission Public Hearings

December 3, 2007 - <http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst>

December 6, 2007 - <http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst>

4. Questionnaire about the Court System Posted on the Judicial Branch Website

<http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst>



www.jud.ct.gov