

**Bench-Bar
Centralized Small Claims Steering Committee**

**Meeting Minutes
November 18, 2008 – 10:00 a.m.**

Members in Attendance:

Honorable Barbara M. Quinn, Honorable James Abrams, Honorable Clarence Jones, Attorney Elaine Braffman, Attorney Marshall Collins, Attorney Natalie Erickson, Attorney Maureen Finn, Attorney Joanne Faulkner, Attorney Nancy L. Kierstead, Attorney Stacey Manware, Attorney Adam Olshan, Attorney Joseph Patchen, Attorney Robert Peat, Attorney Raphael Podolsky, Attorney Sarah Poriss

Welcome & Opening Remarks

Judge Clarence Jones, Chairperson

Five months and counting since this steering committee first met. The three subcommittees have met on several occasions in the past five months. The subcommittees are Access and Quality of Services, Legal Issues and Operational Process.

Discussed:

Each committee chair reported out and highlighted the topics covered by their committees and summarized issues recommended, rejected, pending and no action taken. Some highlights of the proposed items can be found below.

- Some of the topics discussed were the uniformity of process and the expectations of the parties.
- It has been suggested that adopting a standard script for magistrates might be beneficial, as well as a checklist for defaults and expanding and improving magistrate training.
- The need to tighten standards was brought up, especially with regards to the service of process. The need to address service to the proper address was demonstrated in the fact that 10% of all Small Claims cases mailed come back undelivered.
- Also discussed were ways to enhance the perception of Small Claims Court.

Before the Next Meeting:

Recommendations and draft materials need to be sent to Nancy L. Kierstead by December 15th. The list of recommendations will then be sent to the full committee for review. Any committee member who wishes to address or dispute any items has until December 22nd. The final report is expected to be completed by mid-February.

Next Meeting:

Friday, January 9, 2008 at 10:00 a.m., Conference Room 4B

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Recorder: Janet-Marie Harris, Court Planner I, Court Operations