

| THE SUPREME COURT OF LOUISIANA |

# Justice At Work



**The State Of  
Judicial Performance  
In Louisiana**

**2002  
2003**

FY 2002 - 2003  
**The State Of Judicial Performance In Louisiana**  
**Table Of Contents**



A Message From The Judicial Administrator . . . . .2

Performance Of The Supreme Court . . . . .4

Performance Of The Courts Of Appeal . . . . .35

Performance Of The District Courts . . . . .53

Performance of The City and Parish Courts . . . . .119

Supreme Court Data Gathering Systems . . . . .169

Data Standards . . . . .176

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# The State Of Judicial Performance In Louisiana

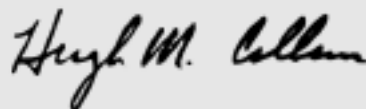
This fourth annual report on “The State of Judicial Performance in Louisiana” has been prepared pursuant to the provisions of the Judicial Budget and Performance Accountability Act of 1999 (R.S. 13:84). Under the Act, the Judicial Administrator of the Supreme Court is responsible for developing a performance accountability program and for reporting on court performance to the Supreme Court and the people of Louisiana on an annual basis. In each annual report, the Judicial Administrator is required to present the following information:

- A brief description of the strategies being pursued by courts to improve their performance based on their respective strategic plans;
- A detailed analysis of the Supreme Court's progress in creating a data gathering system that will provide additional measures of performance;
- A description of the uniform reporting standards that will be used to guide the development of the data gathering system; and,
- An analysis of the barriers confronted by the courts in establishing the data gathering system.

This fourth annual report on “The State of Judicial Performance in Louisiana” indicates in its title that the period covered by the report is FY 2002-2003, i.e., the period generally from July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003.

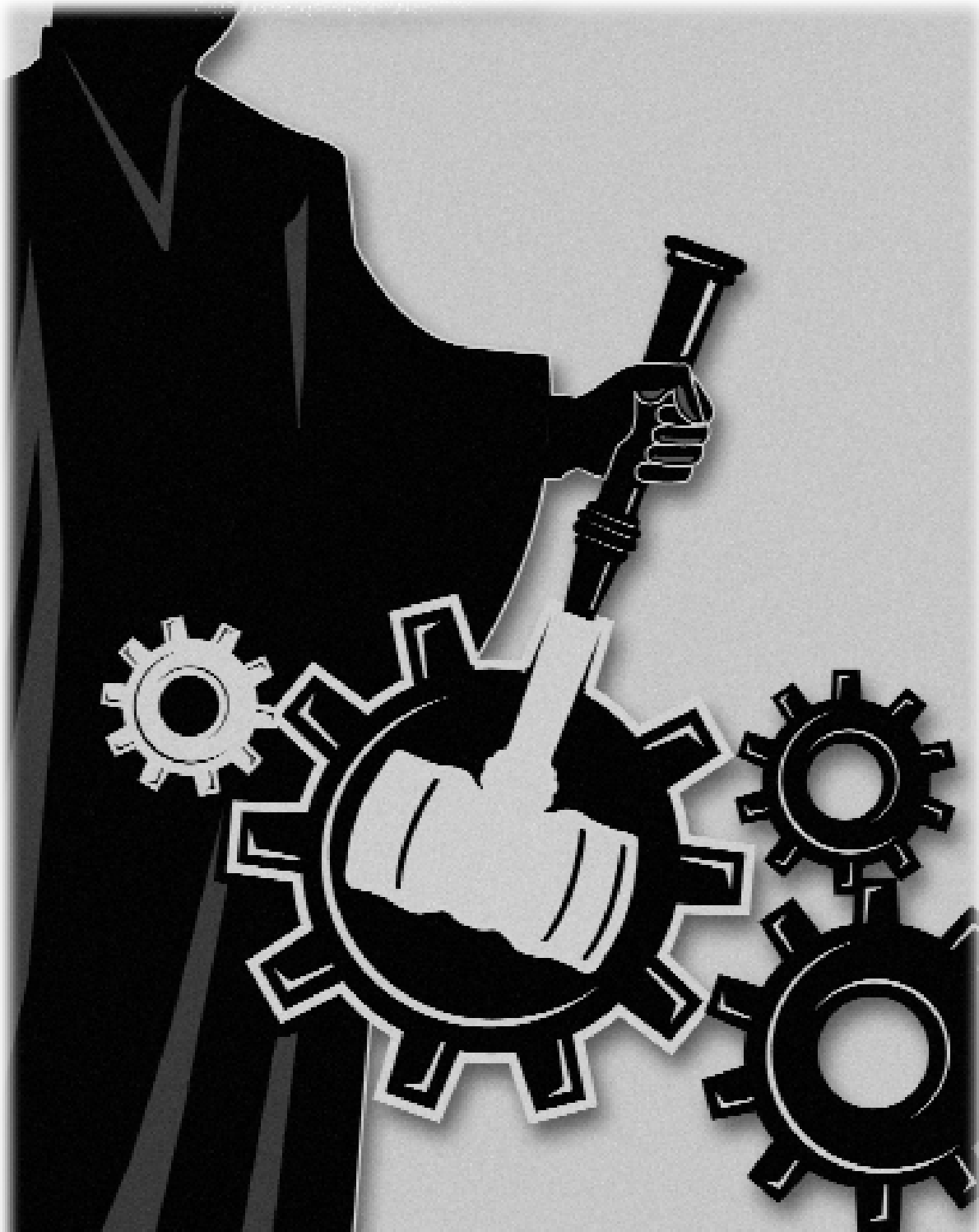
As this report shows, the strategic planning process, as well as the entire process prescribed under R.S. 13:81-85 relating to judicial budgetary and performance accountability, is providing direction, continuity, and motivation to the judiciary's long-standing interest and efforts to improve itself.

Respectfully submitted,



Hugh M. Collins, Ph.D.  
Judicial Administrator





PERFORMANCE REPORTS:

# PERFORMANCE OF THE SUPREME COURT

# PERFORMANCE OF THE SUPREME COURT

## INTRODUCTION

The Supreme Court of Louisiana adopted its strategic plan together with the strategic plans of courts of appeal and the district courts on December 31, 1999. At the time of adoption, the Strategic Plan of the Supreme Court contained six goals, eighteen objectives, and ninety-nine strategies. On October 10, 2000, the Supreme Court amended its plan to add five new strategies and to revise an existing strategy, bringing the total number of strategies to one hundred-and-four.

From the beginning of the Plan's implementation, the Court identified seventy-two of the original ninety-nine strategies as efforts that were either being accomplished through the Court's regular, ongoing activities or that were initiated before the adoption of the Plan and continue to be implemented as major initiatives of the Court. These strategies, therefore, were ongoing activities not requiring new or special initiatives under the Strategic Plan. These ongoing strategies are described briefly under each objective in the sections below entitled Responses to Objective.

In the first year of the Plan's implementation and with the adoption of the additional strategies in October 2000, the Court identified eighteen strategies requiring new initiatives that were targeted for implementation in FY 2000-2001 and continued through 2002-2003.

The Court assigned the lead responsibility for implementing the Strategic Plan to its Judicial Administrator. As part of this responsibility, the Judicial Administrator assigned tasks to various persons on his staff and to other staff members of the Court. He also created a small working group of three Deputy Judicial Administrators to monitor the progress of implementation and to report any problems affecting that progress to him.

The information comprising the "Intent of Objectives" sections of this Report was derived primarily from the Supreme Court Performance Standards and Measures, 1999. The goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan of the Supreme Court were based on the Supreme Court's Adopted Performance Standards (Cf. Louisiana Supreme Court Rules, Part G, General Administrative Rules, Section 10). The information presented in the "Responses to Objective" and "Future Steps" sections of the Report was derived from the responses of various divisions of the Supreme Court.

## SUPREME COURT OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 To provide a reasonable opportunity for litigants to seek review in the Supreme Court of decisions made by lower tribunals.
- 1.2 To clarify, harmonize, and develop the law and to strive to maintain uniformity in the jurisprudence.
- 1.3 To provide a method for disposing of matters requiring expedited treatment.
- 1.4 To encourage courts of appeal to provide sufficient review to correct prejudicial errors made by lower tribunals.
- 2.1 To ensure that adequate consideration is given to each case and that decisions are based on legally relevant factors, thereby affording every litigant the full benefit of the judicial process.



- 2.2 To ensure that decisions of the Supreme Court are clear and that full opinions address the dispositive issues, state holdings, and articulate the reasons for the decision in each case.
- 2.3 To resolve cases in a timely manner.
- 3.1 To ensure that the Supreme Court is procedurally, economically, and physically accessible to the public and to attorneys.
- 3.2 To facilitate public access to its decisions.
- 3.3 To inform the public of its operations and activities.
- 4.1 To ensure the highest professional conduct, integrity, and competence of the bench.
- 4.2 To ensure the highest professional conduct, integrity, and competence of the bar.
- 5.1 To seek and obtain sufficient resources from the executive and legislative branches to fulfill all duties and responsibilities of the judiciary.
- 5.2 To manage the Court's caseload effectively and to use available resources efficiently and productively.
- 5.3 To develop and promulgate methods for improving aspects of trial and appellate court performance.
- 5.4 To use fair employment practices.
- 6.1 To promote and maintain judicial independence.
- 6.2 To cooperate with the other branches of state government.



## Objective 1.1

To provide a reasonable opportunity for litigants to seek review in the Supreme Court of decisions made by lower tribunals.

### Intent of Objective

Our judicial system recognizes that decisions made by lower tribunals may require modification. American jurisprudence generally requires litigants to be afforded a reasonable opportunity to have such decisions reviewed by an intermediate appellate court and then by a court of last resort. The Supreme Court of Louisiana is a court of last resort that provides such opportunities through a system of full-panel review, i.e. review by all seven justices. Full-panel review allows “a degree of detachment, perspective, and opportunity for reflection [by all justices], beyond that which a single trial judge [or a panel of appellate judges] can provide.”<sup>1</sup> Full-panel review, therefore, provides a better opportunity for developing, clarifying, and unifying the law in a sound and coherent manner and for furnishing guidance to judges, attorneys, and the public in the application of constitutional and statutory provisions, thus reducing errors and litigation costs.

### Responses to Objective

- **Appellate/Supervisory Review.**

Appellate/supervisory review – the process of receiving, hearing, and deciding cases based upon the decisions of lower tribunals – is one of the Court’s most important regular, ongoing activities. The Supreme Court has three types of jurisdiction: original, appellate, and supervisory. Having original jurisdiction means that the Supreme Court is the only court to hear certain matters, such as attorney discipline or disbarment proceedings, petitions for the discipline and removal of judges, and issues affecting its own appellate jurisdiction. The Supreme Court has appellate jurisdiction only in certain cases. For example, a case is directly appealed to the Supreme Court if an ordinance or statute has been declared unconstitutional or when the death penalty has been imposed. The Supreme Court

has supervisory jurisdiction in all other cases. Cases falling under the Court’s original or appellate jurisdiction are initiated by the filing of an appeal. Cases under the Court’s supervisory jurisdiction are initiated through a writ application requesting the Court to exercise, in its discretion, its supervisory jurisdiction by deciding whether or not to hear the case.

Writ applications must be filed within thirty days of the action of the intermediate court of appeal and no extensions are given. Writ applications are scheduled for review by the Court usually within six weeks of filing, except in the fall when the time is slightly longer. When the Court grants a writ application for oral argument, the attorneys for the applicant are given twenty-five days from the date of the grant to file their briefs. The respondents’ attorneys are given forty-five days from the grant to file their briefs. Extensions are granted if they will not impact the date of the oral arguments.

In civil and non-capital criminal cases, appeals are initiated when the record from the lower court is lodged in the Supreme Court. Attorneys for the appellant are given thirty days from the lodging of the record by the lower court to file their briefs. The attorneys for the appellee have sixty days from the date of the lodging of the record to file their briefs. Civil cases are generally scheduled so that the last brief is received at least within the week prior to argument. The period for filing briefs may be shortened if an issue warrants quicker attention.

In capital cases, appeals are given to the Court’s Central Staff, prior to the formal lodging of the record by the lower court, to make sure the record is complete. Upon completion, the record is lodged and the attorneys are given, as in civil appeals, thirty to sixty days to file their briefs. The Court hears approximately two capital cases per argument cycle, thus allowing the Court to handle up to fourteen capital cases per year.

The Court, sitting with all seven members present, addresses cases in five- or seven-week



cycles. During the first week of the cycle, the Court hears oral arguments, usually hearing a maximum of twenty-four cases per week. Each justice is assigned to write two to three opinions per cycle. During the next four weeks, the opinions are researched and drafted. Also during these four weeks, the Court, as a whole, meets in weekly conferences to consider approximately seventy-five new writ applications at each conference. In the fifth week of the cycle, draft opinions are circulated and reviewed. At the last conference in the cycle, the opinions are voted upon. If an opinion receives four or more votes, it passes and is handed down. If it does not receive adequate votes, it is usually reassigned to another justice to author. Opinions are usually handed down from the bench on the second day of oral arguments.

In the performance of its adjudicative function, the Court is assisted by several staffs, including that of the Clerk of Court, the Administrative Counsel, the Civil Staff, the Central Staff, the personal staff of each justice, and the Law Library of Louisiana. The functions of each of these staffs are briefly described below.

- **The Clerk of Court.** The Office of the Clerk of Court receives, categorizes, and retains a copy of the filings relevant to each case, after checking for compliance with the Court's rules. The Office then sends copies of the case filings to the Administrative Counsel's Office which is described below. The Clerk's Office is also responsible for the accurate entry of all filings into the Court Information Management System, a computer software system especially designed to track case filings. The Clerk's Office manages and supports the computers and information systems operated by each justice and their personal staffs, as well as those of the Administrative Counsel, the Civil Staff, the Central Staff, and the Law Library of Louisiana. The Clerk of Court also operates an in-house microfilming section and is responsible for all attorney notification and for issuing news releases on the Court's opinions.

- **The Administrative Counsel.** The Administrative Counsel's Office, upon receipt of a copy of the filing from the Clerk's Office, checks each filing for timeliness, recusals, and anything else that appears unusual such as the need for expediting the case. The Administrative Counsel makes a random assignment of the case to an original and duplicate justice and schedules the case on the conference list. If the case involves a writ application, the Court first decides whether to hear the case. Upon granting of the writ by the Court, the Administrative Counsel then schedules the case for oral argument and prepares a brief abstract of facts and other factors relating to the case for the justices.
- **The Civil Staff.** The Civil Staff was created by the Supreme Court in 1997 to prepare reports in specialized cases involving interlocutory or pre-trial civil writs and bar discipline matters and judicial discipline civil summary dockets. The Civil Staff also prepares bench memoranda on cases on direct appeal when such cases have been found by a lower court to be unconstitutional.
- **The Central Staff.** The Central Staff was created by the Supreme Court in 1978 to prepare reports for the Court on criminal appeals and to prepare extensive bench memoranda on death cases on appeal. In 1982, the duties of the Central Staff were expanded to include reviewing and reporting on inmate pro se applications for post conviction relief. The Central Staff also assists the personal staffs of the justices on other criminal matters when requested.
- **Personal Staff of the Justices.** Each justice is assisted by clerical support and by three law clerks (at least one of whom is an experienced or permanent law clerk, the others being term-limited and generally just out of law school), except for the Chief Justice who has three law clerks and an executive counsel. The personal staffs of the justices handle all appeals and writ applications not addressed by the Civil Staff or the Central Staff and assist the justices in writing opinions. Competent law clerks greatly aid the Court in is





adjudicative functions. The Court's law clerks receive a thorough orientation upon commencement of their term of service. Throughout their tenure, law clerks are regularly offered training and refresher courses in computer-aided and other legal research.

- **Law Library of Louisiana.** The staff of the Law Library of Louisiana assists the justices and the Court's staffs in several ways. It helps the justices and the various legal staffs to find books and other information on particular subjects in the Law Library, other libraries throughout the nation, or via the Internet or electronic databases. It provides guidance and conducts legal research training for law clerks on the use of legal information materials and computer-assisted research services. It assists the justices and their law clerks in obtaining legislative history information and in researching non-legal topics such as science, medicine, demography, and other fields ancillary to the law.
- **Recusal.** In accordance with the Legislature's intent in promulgating 2001 La Acts 932 (CCP art. 152(d)), the following procedure has been adopted for circumstances in which a justice recuses himself or herself in a case. The recusing justice prepares a notice, stating the reasons for the recusal. The notice is then filed in the case record. If the recusal results in the appointment of a justice ad hoc, the recused justice does not participate in any way in the appointment. In addition, the recused justice is not allowed to participate in any way in the discussion or resolution of the case or matter from which he or she is recused.

### Future Steps

- **Expansion of Staff Resources.** The Court is considering expanding its Central Staff to provide greater opportunities for the consideration of prisoner writs and to meet the Court's time standards (see Objective 2.3).
- **Law Library Strategic Plan.** The Law Library of Louisiana is in the process of

implementing its strategic plan, a major part of which addresses ways to better serve the justices and their staffs with respect to all of the objectives contained in the Strategic Plan of the Supreme Court.

### Objective 1.2

**To clarify, harmonize, and develop the law and to strive to maintain uniformity in the jurisprudence.**

### Intent of Objective

The Supreme Court of Louisiana contributes to the development and unification of the law by resolving conflicts between various bodies of law and by addressing apparent ambiguities in the law. Our complex society turns with increasing frequency to the law to resolve disputes left unaddressed by the authors of our previously established legal precepts. Interpretation of legal principles contained in state and federal constitutions and statutory enactments is at the heart of the appellate adjudicative process.

### Responses to Objective

- **Clarification and Harmonization of the Law.** The Court's efforts to clarify, harmonize, and develop the law are regular, ongoing activities of the Court. See the Responses to Objective 1.1.
- **Judicial Legal Resources.** Through the Law Library of Louisiana, the justices and their staffs have access to an abundance of legal resources including: approximately 230,000 printed volumes - 160,000 in a bound format and 70,000 in microformat; an on-line card catalog; the Internet; web-based research tools such as LEXIS and Westlaw; Info-Trac and LOIS; all published Louisiana opinions, legislative acts, codes and statutes; many state documents and legal and historical materials relating to Louisiana; approximately 900 periodical titles, including the law reviews from most law schools and state bar journals; current and classic American legal treatises and reference books in many subject areas; a complete collection of federal statutes and case law and the statutes and case law of all fifty states; digests and citators covering all American jurisdictions; complete legislative acts from all



fifty states from their beginnings to the present; complete federal legislative materials and an extensive federal document depository collection; an extensive Louisiana document depository collection; an extensive judicial administration collection, including State Justice Institute depository materials; current legal newspapers and back runs in microform; and many other materials.

- **Opinion/Writ Application Databases.** The Administrative Counsel, the Central Staff, and the Civil Staff have each developed and continue to maintain and expand their own in-house databases. The Administrative Counsel maintains and continuously improves a subject index database to locate writ applications by subject or category. The Civil and Central Staffs maintain and continuously improve their databases for organizing and retrieving reports and opinions on writ applications and other legal filings that appertain to their respective responsibilities.

### Future Steps

- **Clarification and Harmonization of the Law.** As part of its regular, ongoing activities, the Supreme Court shall continue to render rulings that are clear and definitive of the law.
- **Law Library Strategic Plan.** As part of the implementation of its strategic plan, the Law Library shall continue to obtain and develop materials that will assist the justices and their staffs in clarifying, harmonizing, and developing the law.
- **Opinion/Writ Application Databases.** The Administrative Counsel, Civil Staff and Central Staff shall continue to develop and improve their in-house databases to assist the Court in its ongoing efforts to clarify and unify the law.

### Objective 1.3

To provide a method for disposing of matters requiring expedited treatment.

### Intent of Objective

The Supreme Court of Louisiana, pursuant to state constitutional provisions or legislative enactments, is often the designated forum for the determination of appeals, writs, and original proceedings, such as election disputes, capital appeals, post-conviction applications, and other issues. These proceedings often pertain to constitutional rights, sometimes affect large segments of the population within the Court's jurisdiction, or require prompt and authoritative judicial action to avoid irreparable harm. In addition, the Court has recognized that it has a special responsibility to ensure that cases involving children are heard and decided expeditiously to prevent further harm resulting from delays in the court process.

### Responses to Objective

- **Expeditious Determination of Certain Case Types.** Currently, election cases are expedited pursuant to R.S. 18:1409 and Supreme Court Rule X, 5(c). In addition, the Court developed, adopted, and made effective on February 1, 1999 Rule XXXIV providing for the expeditious handling of all writs and appeals arising from Child in Need of Care (CINC) cases brought pursuant to Title VI of the Louisiana Children's Code, Judicial Certification for Adoption (termination of parental rights) cases brought pursuant to Title X of the Louisiana Children's Code, Surrender of Parental Rights cases brought pursuant to Title XI of the Louisiana Children's Code, Adoption cases brought pursuant to Title XII of the Louisiana Children's Code, and all child custody cases. The Clerk of Court and the Administrative Counsel are reviewing the Court's cases to determine whether to request the Court to consider other types of cases for such general expedited treatment.
- **Priority Treatment.** At present, priority treatment is given to individual cases on a need-by-need basis. If priority treatment of a writ application is desired, the attorney for the applicant must complete a civil or criminal priority filing sheet, outlining why priority treatment is warranted. Upon circulation of the writ



application to the justices, the justice assigned as the original justice may refer the matter to staff for assistance and preparation of a memorandum, or may handle the matter in chambers. If the original justice agrees that the writ application warrants priority treatment or emergency attention, he or she will recommend a proposed disposition and will decide either to call a conference immediately, or to take the votes of the other justices by phone, or to schedule the matter at the next regularly scheduled writ conference. In all cases, all seven justices are given the opportunity to review and vote on the “emergency” writ application. Only in rare instances will action on a writ application be taken when more than four but less than seven justices have voted.

- **Availability of Justices.** The Court has developed internal procedures for ensuring that justices are available at all times to fulfill the Court’s duties and responsibilities. The internal procedures provide for a schedule of duty justices during the summer months when the Court is not in session (July and part of August). In the spring of each year, the justices prepare the summer duty schedule. Each justice, other than the Chief Justice, selects a 10-day period in the summer to handle all emergencies and other court functions that may arise, for example, the signing of motions and orders and supervising staff. The weekend schedule is maintained by the Clerk of Court who determines, according to regular rotation lists, which justice shall be assigned to handle emergencies on a particular weekend.

### Future Steps

- **Development of Valid Grounds for Expedited or Priority Consideration.** The Clerk of Court, the Administrative Counsel, and the Civil Staff are identifying the types of cases and situations in which expedited or priority treatment is warranted. They plan to present for the Court’s consideration the results of their analysis and a draft rule indicating the valid grounds that should be indicated by an applicant in any request for expedited or priority treatment.

## Objective 1.4

**To encourage courts of appeal to provide sufficient review to correct prejudicial errors made by lower tribunals.**

### Intent of Objective

A key function of appellate courts is the correction of prejudicial errors in fact or law made by lower tribunals. Appellate court systems should have sufficient capacity to provide review to correct these errors. The error-correcting function for a court of last resort is fundamentally different from the error-correcting function for an intermediate appellate court. A court of last resort is a court of precedent whose primary function is to interpret and to develop case law, rather than to correct errors in individual cases. On the other hand, an intermediate appellate court serves primarily as a court of error correction, following precedent created by the court of last resort. Of course, in the absence of binding precedent, an intermediate appellate court must also interpret and develop law. Because review is normally discretionary in courts of last resort, these intermediate appellate court decisions may serve an important function in the development of law. The Supreme Court of Louisiana recognizes its dual responsibility to interpret and develop case law and to encourage improved error correction in individual cases by the Courts of Appeal.

### Responses to Objective

- **Encouraging Error Correction by the Courts of Appeal.** The effort to encourage courts of appeal to provide sufficient review for correcting the prejudicial errors of lower tribunals is an ongoing, regular activity of the Court.

### Future Steps

- **Encouraging Error Correction by the Courts of Appeal.** The Court will consider in FY 2002-2003 specific ways to encourage the courts of appeal, in cooperation with district judges, to identify difficult areas of law that appear to induce reversals.



## Objective 2.1

To ensure that adequate consideration is given to each case and that decisions are based on legally relevant factors, thereby affording every litigant the full benefit of the judicial process.

### Intent of Objective

The Supreme Court should provide the ultimate assurance that the judicial branch fulfills its role in our constitutional scheme of government by ensuring that due process and equal protection of the law, as guaranteed by the federal and state constitutions, have been fully and fairly applied throughout the judicial process. The rendering of justice demands that these fundamental principles be observed, protected, and applied by giving every case sufficient attention and deciding cases solely on legally relevant factors fairly applied and devoid of extraneous considerations or influences. The integrity of the Supreme Court rests on its ability to fashion procedures and make decisions that afford each litigant access to justice. Constitutional principles of equal protection and due process are, therefore, the guideposts for the Court's procedures and decisions. Accordingly, the Court recognizes that each case should be given the necessary time, based on its particular facts and legal complexities, for a just decision to be rendered. However, the Court does not believe that each case needs to be allotted a standard amount of time for review but rather that each case should be managed – from beginning to end – in a manner consistent with the principles of fairness and justice.

### Responses to Objective

- **Due Consideration of Cases.** The Court's efforts to meet this Objective are part of its regular, ongoing activities. See the Response to Objective 1.1 above.
- **Writ Guidelines.** In 1992, the Supreme Court promulgated five writ grant considerations, one or more of which should be met before an applicant's discretionary writ application will be granted by the Court. Prior to this Court action, writ applicants were offered little guidance as to what

types of cases and controversies would prompt discretionary review by the Court. The Court continues to maintain and monitor the writ considerations set forth in Supreme Court Rule X, Section 1, and may, from time to time, make such adjustments to these guidelines as it shall deem necessary. Application of the writ grant considerations helps ensure that the Court's discretionary jurisdiction is exercised in cases and controversies where the Court's review is most urgently needed.

### Future Steps

- **Due Consideration and Writ Guidelines.** The Court will continue to meet this Objective through its ongoing, regular activities. It shall also continue to monitor its activities, from time-to-time, making such adjustments and improvements as may, in its judgment, be necessary.

## Objective 2.2

To ensure that decisions of the Supreme Court are clear and that full opinions address the dispositive issues, state the holdings, and articulate the reasons for the decision in each case.

### Intent of Objective

Clarity is essential in rendering all Supreme Court decisions. The Supreme Court believes that it should issue a written opinion only when it completely adjudicates the controversy before it. It believes that ending the controversy necessarily requires that the dispositive issues of the case be addressed and resolved. It further believes that a fuller understanding of the resolution of the dispositive issues occurs when the Court explains the reasoning that supports its decision. The Court believes that its written opinions should set forth the dispositive issues, the holding, and the reasoning that supports the holding. It recognizes that, at a minimum, the parties to the case and others interested in the area of law in question expect, and are due, an explicit rationale for the Court's decision. In some instances, however, the Court believes that a limited explanation of the rationale for its disposition may



satisfy the need for clarity. Clear judicial reasoning facilitates the resolution of unsettled issues, the reconciliation of conflicting determinations by lower tribunals, and the interpretation of new laws. Clarity is not necessarily determined by the length of exposition, but rather by whether the Court has conveyed its decision in an understandable and useful fashion and whether its directions to the lower tribunal are also clear when it remands a case for further proceedings.

### Response to Objective

- **Clarity and Scope of Opinions.** The Court's efforts to meet this Objective are part of its regular, ongoing activities. See the Response to Objective 1.1. The justices also address this objective by participating in and teaching workshops for judges attending judicial education sessions. Important Supreme Court decisions are routinely presented and discussed at these sessions. In addition, sometimes the judges from lower court tribunals will call either the Clerk of Court or the Administrative Counsel to solicit such clarifications. On those occasions, the Clerk or the Administrative Counsel will bring these matters to the attention of the Chief Justice or another justice for response. In addition, trial judges in criminal matters will often file per curiam opinions to explain their decisions and actions – sometimes at the request of the Supreme Court and sometimes on their own initiative. In many cases, these per curiam opinions assist the Supreme Court to better address the dispositive issues, state the holdings, and articulate its reasons for the decision more clearly.

### Future Steps

- **Clarity of Opinions.** In the coming year, the Court shall continue to make every effort to render clear, concise, and full opinions that address the dispositive issues, state the holdings, and articulate the reasons for the decision in each case.
- **Directions to Lower Courts.** In the coming year, the Court shall ask its staff to review the

methods currently used to ensure that the Court's directions to lower courts are clear and to report these findings to the Court.

- **Participation in Judicial Education.** The justices of the Supreme Court will continue to participate in and lead judicial education workshops at which Supreme Court opinions are presented, analyzed, and discussed.

### Objective 2.3

To resolve cases in a timely manner.

### Intent of Objective

Once the Supreme Court acquires jurisdiction of a matter, the validity of a lower tribunal's decision remains in doubt until the Supreme Court rules. Delay adversely affects litigants. Therefore, the Supreme Court recognizes that it should assume responsibility for a petition, motion, writ, application, or appeal from the moment it is filed. The Court also believes it should adopt a comprehensive delay reduction program designed to eliminate delay in each of the three stages of the appellate/supervisory process: record preparation, briefing, and decision-making. The Court believes that a necessary component of the comprehensive delay reduction program is the use of adopted time standards to monitor and promote the progress of an appeal or writ through each of the three stages.

### Responses to Objective

- **Consistently Current Docket.** Each year, the Court holds thirty-three to thirty-five weekly conferences to discuss and cast votes on writ applications, often voting on more than one hundred writ applications per conference. The Court also holds at least seven oral argument sittings annually with twenty to twenty-four cases argued each cycle. For almost thirty years, the Court has maintained a consistently current docket in the sense that, when writ applications are granted, they are scheduled for oral argument on the next available docket, and the opinions are almost always handed down within twelve weeks of the oral argument. In CY 2001, the Court's



filings were down 108 filings from CY 2000. However, dispositions increased by 305. In CY 2000, the Court disposed of 3,028 cases, compared to 3,333 in CY 2001.

- **Time Standards and Their Use.** The time standards used by the Court for the timely resolution of its cases became effective in October of 1993. The Court measures its actual case processing against these time standards and publishes the results as key performance indicators in the annual judicial appropriations bill. The Court took steps to improve its performance relative to the high volume of criminal case applications (481 in CY 2002) and pro se post conviction applications (1,064 in CY 2002) by retaining three contract attorneys to assist in these cases.
- **Cases Under Advisement (i.e. Cases Argued and Assigned for Opinion Writing).** The Court has developed internal procedures for ensuring that all cases argued and assigned for opinion writing are disposed of in a timely manner. Lists of all pending cases are circulated each cycle to all justices as a means of reducing delays in opinion writing.

### Future Steps

- **Time Standards.** The Court shall take steps in the coming year to improve its timely disposition of those types of cases that are out of compliance with its time standards.

### Objective 3.1

To ensure that the Supreme Court is procedurally, economically, and physically accessible to the public and to attorneys.

### Intent of Objective

Making the Supreme Court accessible to the public and to attorneys protects and promotes the rule of law. Confidence in the review of the decisions of lower tribunals occurs when the Court's process is open, to the extent reasonable, to those who seek or are affected by this review or wish to observe it.

The Supreme Court believes that it should identify and remedy court procedures, costs, courthouse characteristics, and other barriers that may limit participation in the appellate process. The escalating cost of litigation, particularly at the appellate level, can limit access to the judicial process. When a party lacks sufficient financial resources to pursue a good-faith claim, Louisiana law requires that ways be found to minimize or defray the costs associated with the presentation of the case. Physical features of the courthouse can constitute formidable barriers to persons with a disability who want to observe or avail themselves of the appellate process. The Court believes that accommodations should be made so that individuals with speech, hearing, vision, or cognitive impairments can participate in the Court's process.

### Responses to Objective

- **Programmatic Accessibility.** The Court, through its Human Resource Coordinator, has taken all necessary steps to ensure programmatic accessibility, especially with respect to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Court completed its initial assessment of accessibility in 1993 and continues to monitor programmatic accessibility. The Court has an adopted ADA policy that provides specifically for ADA accommodation in Supreme Court Rule 17, Section 4E. It has a designated ADA ombudsperson from the Law Library to answer the public's questions, to receive complaints and suggestions, and to refer parties to the proper resources or authorities to deal with their ADA-related issues. Its staff is trained to reasonably accommodate all requests for programmatic accessibility.
- **Procedural Accessibility.** The Deputy Clerks of Court are given continuous training to answer the public's questions about the various legal procedures of the Supreme Court. In addition, the Law Library's staff is available to respond to the public's inquiries regarding procedures. The Court's rules are provided on the Court's website.



- **Economic Accessibility: Fees and Charges.** The Court periodically reviews its fees and other user charges to assure that such assessments are reasonable. In addition, the Court makes the library collection of the Law Library of Louisiana available to the public and the bar free of charge. Photocopying at the Library is available at a reasonable charge, and Internet access is free. The Law Library also maintains a toll-free telephone number for use within Louisiana.
- **Economic Accessibility: Criminal and Juvenile Matters.** The Court provided significant improvements to appellate indigent defense in its establishment of the Louisiana Indigent Defender Board (LIDB) in 1997 and in its support of the transition of the functions of the LIDB to an executive branch agency created in 1999 as the Louisiana Indigent Defense Assistance Board (LIDAB). The LIDAB continues to fund, maintain, and improve the appellate program created under LIDB to ensure the adequacy of the right to counsel at the appellate level. When the LIDB was created, the Court also adopted standards relating to the effectiveness of indigent defense counsel in appellate matters. These standards continue to be effective. In 1999, the Court created an inter-branch initiative to address the problem of capital post-convictions in Louisiana. That initiative resulted in the passage of R.S. 15:149.1 and R.S. 15:151.2(E). In FY 2000-2001, the Court assisted the LSBA in establishing a program for recruiting and training pro bono attorneys to counsel prisoners in capital post-conviction applications. It also assisted the LSBA's Access to Justice Committee in its efforts to provide civil legal services to the poor. Through its Court Improvement Program, the Court initiated a pilot program for encouraging and facilitating the use of mediation in juvenile proceedings. The Court continued these initiatives in FY 2002-2003.
- **Communications Accessibility.** The Court has obtained and continues to maintain state-of-the-art telecommunications equipment, software, and processes to facilitate communication between the Court and the public.
- **Physical Accessibility.** The Court has identified and communicated all problems affecting ADA-required physical accessibility in its current building to the Division of Administration (DOA). The Court has also worked with the Division of Administration and the architects working on the Royal Street building renovation to ensure that the renovated new home of the Supreme Court, the 4th Circuit Court of Appeal, and other state entities will be completely compliant with all ADA standards.
- **Informational Accessibility.** The Court continues to make accessible through the Law Library of Louisiana both printed and electronic research materials and research expertise to assist both the public and attorneys with their legal information needs. In FY 2002-2003, the Library was open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays, except holidays. Reference service was also provided via telephone, fax, and e-mail. Requested copies are mailed for an affordable charge to any requesting party, including prisoners. The Law Library collection catalog is available through the Internet. The microfilming of court records continued in 2002-2003. Thus far, 300,000 documents, including records from 1921 to 1979 have been microfilmed. The Court is also involved in an electronic filing project with the 24th Judicial District Court and the 5th Circuit Court of Appeal. The results will help direct plans for electronic filing and data storage and retrieval.
- **Website.** In FY 2002-2003, the Court continued to make substantial improvements to its website. A web master and programmer continue to maintain and expand the site. The new website has a user-friendly system for facilitating and expanding the public's ability to access the Court's opinions, orders, rules, and other decisions in a timely and effective manner.
- **Filing Accessibility.** The Clerk of Court is available to accept filings twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Contact phone numbers are posted at each of the Court's entrances to facilitate such filings.



- **Filing Checklist.** The Clerk of Court has developed a draft checklist to help the general public understand the Court's filing requirements. The checklist will be presented to the justices for their review, comment, and approval in 2004.
- **Court Security.** The Court maintains a staff of highly qualified security officers who are properly equipped with appropriate security technology and other resources to control, direct, and facilitate public and employee accessibility. All points of access to the Court are controlled by security. All court officials and staff have ID/access badges. The Court has electronic security cameras, sound and metal detectors, and other equipment to ensure security and proper access.

### Future Steps

- **Website.** The Court will continue to improve and update its website in the coming year.
- **Filing Checklist.** The Court will publish a checklist on rules pertaining to filing.
- **Economic Accessibility.** The Court will continue to work with the Louisiana Indigent Defense Assistance Board to improve the process of capital post-conviction applications and to improve indigent defense generally.

### Objective 3.2

To facilitate public access to its decisions.

#### Intent of Objective

The decisions of the Supreme Court are a matter of public record. Making Supreme Court decisions available to all is a logical extension of the Courts' responsibilities to review, develop, clarify, and unify the law. The Court recognizes its responsibility to ensure that its decisions are made available promptly in printed or electronic form to litigants, judges, attorneys, and the public. The Court believes that prompt and easy access to its decisions reduces errors in other courts due to misconceptions regarding the position of the Court.

### Responses to Objective

- **Law Library of Louisiana.** The Law Library of Louisiana makes the Court's opinions immediately available in printed form and, since 1996, has also promptly posted the opinions on the Court's website.
- **Website Improvements.** As previously indicated in the Response to Objective 3.1, the Supreme Court has made and continues to make significant improvements to its website. The site has a user-friendly system for facilitating and expanding the public's use of the Court's website to access the Court's opinions, orders, rules and other decisions in a timely and effective manner.
- **Notice of Opinions.** The Clerk of Court provides timely news releases on the Court's opinions to all major media in the state.
- **File Room.** The Court maintains a highly qualified staff to ensure proper management and access to documents of all filings, exhibits, and other materials needed by litigants, attorneys, court personnel and the public for use in cases or for historical purposes.
- **File Room Technology.** The Clerk of Court continuously monitors, assesses, and utilizes new and more effective technological ways of storing, archiving, and retrieving the Court's files and records.

### Future Steps

- **Website.** The Court will continue to improve its website in the coming year.
- **Continuous Improvement.** The Court will make continuous improvements to the above processes as new problems and opportunities emerge and as its resources permit.

### Objective 3.3

To inform the public of its operations and activities.





## Intent of Objective

Most citizens do not have direct contact with the courts. Information about courts is filtered through sources such as the media, lawyers, litigants, jurors, political leaders, and the employees of other components of the justice system. Public opinion polls indicate that the public knows very little about the courts, and what is known is often at odds with reality. This objective states that courts have a direct responsibility to inform the community of their structure, functions and programs. The disclosure of such information through a variety of outreach programs increases the influence of the courts on the development of the law, which, in turn, affects public policy and the activities of other governmental institutions. At the same time, such disclosure increases public awareness of and confidence in the operations of the courts. The Supreme Court recognizes the need to increase the public's awareness of and confidence in its operations by engaging in a variety of outreach efforts describing the purpose, procedures, and activities of the Court.

## Responses to Objective

- **Department of Community Relations.** The Supreme Court maintains a highly qualified staff in the Judicial Administrator's Department of Community Relations as a means of informing the public of the Court's operations and activities.
- **Public Information Program.** The Department of Community Relations of the Judicial Administrator has developed and continues to implement a comprehensive program of public information and community relations for the Court. In addition to spearheading website renovations, the Department created several award-winning programs, including:
  - **Mock Trial.** In recognition of the Law Day 2003 theme, Celebrate Your Freedom: Independent Courts Protect Our Liberties, The Supreme Court sponsored a mock trial presented by 36 fifth-grade students from Port Sulphur High School in Plaquemines Parish. The mock trial was the culmination of a 12-week program, Project L.E.A.D. (Legal Enrichment and Decision-making), sponsored

by the Plaquemines Parish district Attorney's Office.

- **Poster Contest.** As part of Law Day, the Supreme Court also sponsored a "What Law Day Means to Me" Poster Contest for Louisiana middle and high school students participating in the Celebrate Your Freedom Youth Summit conducted by the Louisiana Center for Law-Related Education. Winning entries were chosen by a panel of Louisiana Supreme Court staff members based on creativity, interpretation of theme, and artistic expression.
- **The Courting Louisiana Students and Schools.** (CLASS) program provided high-school students with the opportunity to understand the appellate process through direct experience. As part of the program, oral arguments were taped and aired to schools throughout the state, accompanied by a handbook for teachers and curriculum planners. Through an Internet lesson plan, students were asked to write their own opinions and then compare them with the Court's official decisions in the cases.
- **Judicial Ride-Along Program.** The Department also created a Judicial Ride-Along program, which enabled legislators to observe district courts in operation and to talk to their judges.
- **Chamber-to-Chamber Program.** The Department's Chamber-to-Chamber program provided a similar opportunity for business leaders to observe courts in operation.
- **The Law School for Journalists Program.** The Law School for Journalists program helped those reporters who cover courts throughout the state to hone their skills and meet their sources.
- **Annual Report.** The Department prepares the Court's Annual Report. In calendar year 2000, the Press Club of Louisiana awarded the Court's Annual Report an Excellence in Publications award.



- **Supreme Court Ride-Along Program.** The Department assisted the justices in sponsoring two “ride-along” meetings with legislators, during which members of the legislature met with the justices, discussed the Court’s procedures and operations, and observed court processes.
- **Public Information Program of the Law Library of Louisiana.** The Law Library of Louisiana, in association with the Department of Community Relations, has developed and continues to implement a supplemental program of public information. The Law Library continues to conduct information sessions and tours for various groups. It also exhibits materials on Louisiana law, the Louisiana judicial system, and the administration of justice from time to time.
- **Oral Arguments.** As part of the overall program of public information described above, the Supreme Court has developed and implemented a plan for conducting oral arguments at various locations in the state. In FY 2002-2003, the Court held oral arguments at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux during an entire week in September 2002 and on one day at the University of Louisiana in Monroe in April 2003.

### Future Steps

- **Public Information.** The Court, through the various strategies indicated above as well as others to be developed in the coming year, will continue to develop and implement ways to inform the public of its operations and activities.
- **Oral Arguments.** The Court intends to conduct oral arguments at other outside locations in FY 2003-2004.

### Objective 4.1

**To ensure the highest professional conduct, integrity, and competence of the bench.**

### Intent of Objective

By virtue of the public trust placed in the bench and bar, those engaged in the practice of law should adhere to the highest standards of ethical conduct. Ethical conduct by attorneys and judges heightens confidence in the legal and judicial systems. Standards of conduct for attorneys and judges serve the dual purpose of protecting the public and enhancing professionalism. The Supreme Court has the lead responsibility for ensuring the development and enforcement of these standards. Regulation of the bench and bar fosters public confidence, particularly when it is open to public scrutiny. A disciplinary process that expeditiously, diligently and fairly evaluates the merits of each complaint to determine whether standards of conduct have been breached is an essential component of the regulation infrastructure.

### Responses to Objective

- **Louisiana Judicial College.** The Supreme Court continues to fund, assist, and facilitate the activities of the Louisiana Judicial College. A justice chairs the College's Board of Governors. Through the judicial budgetary and appropriations process, the Court provides for the director and staff of the College and for a portion of its operations. In addition, the Court provides the services of the Court's Judicial Administrator and staff to assist the College in various ways.
- **Programs of the Judicial College.** The Louisiana Judicial College maintains and strives continuously to improve the quality and accessibility of its continuing legal education programs for the judiciary. Each year, the College offers eight CLE programs for judges. It also provides benchbooks, newsletters, and videos relating to judicial practice. In CY 2002, the Supreme Court commissioned Dr. Maureen E. Conner of Michigan State University and Mr. Thomas Langhorne of The Langhorne Group to



assess the performance of the Judicial College in terms of its relevance and interest to the judges of the state. The audit began in the Fall of 2002 and was completed in August of 2003.

- **Judiciary Commission.** The Supreme Court continues to fund, assist, and facilitate the activities of the Louisiana Judiciary Commission to ensure the proper reception, investigation, and prosecution of complaints against judges accused of violating the Code of Judicial Conduct. The activities of the Commission are reported annually in the Supreme Court's Annual Report. The workload of the Commission is also reported as a key performance indicator in the annual judicial appropriations bill. In calendar year 2002, the Commission received and docketed 488 complaints against judges and justices of the peace. In addition, 126 complaints filed prior to 2002 were pending as of January 1, 2002. Of the 488 complaints filed and docketed in 2002, 288 were screened out as not within the jurisdiction of the Commission, or without merit or sufficient corroborating evidence. The remaining 200 cases were reviewed to consider the need for investigation. 81 of the 200 cases required in-depth investigation. In calendar year 2002, the Commission disposed of 480 cases.
- **Judicial Professionalism.** The Supreme Court continues to encourage judicial and attorney professionalism in two ways - through its CLE requirements and through its adopted Code of Professionalism. The Supreme Court re-enacted its rules for continuing legal education for lawyers and judges in November of 1992 by establishing a Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Committee to manage the CLE process (Supreme Court Rule XXX). Under these rules, lawyers and judges are required to complete a minimum of fifteen hours of approved CLE each calendar year. The rules also require that one of these required fifteen hours concern legal ethics and another hour concern professionalism. In 1997, the Supreme Court adopted its Code of Professionalism in the courts providing aspirational standards for both judges and attorneys. The Code is provided in Section 11 of Part G of the Rules of the Supreme Court. That portion of the Code pertaining to

judges was printed by the Court as a poster and distributed to all judges of the state. The Court displays the poster prominently in several of its offices and encourages all judges to do the same in their courtroom halls and offices.

- **Judicial Mentoring Program.** The Supreme Court, primarily through its Judicial Administrator and his staff and in association with the Louisiana District Judges Association and the Louisiana Judicial College, facilitates the continuation and expansion of the judicial mentoring program. As part of the program, each new judge is assigned a senior judge who serves as a mentor. Through the program, judges are better able to understand and manage their caseloads, avoid ethical conflicts, and access information and resources.
- **Judicial Ethics.** The Supreme Court, through its Committee on Judicial Ethics, continues to provide a resource to receive inquiries from judges and to issue advisory opinions regarding the interpretation of the Canons of the Code of Judicial Conduct. The Court's Judicial Administrator and lawyers employed in the Judicial Administrator's Office staff the work of the Committee. The Judicial Administrator's Office also provides informal assistance to judges who seek help in interpreting the Code of Judicial Conduct.
- **Cooperation with Judges.** The Supreme Court maintains and strives to continuously improve its communication and cooperation with judges and judicial associations at all levels. Its Judicial Council consists of representatives from all major judicial associations. All appellate courts are involved in the Court's Human Resource Committee and the Judicial Budgetary Control Board. The Court's Judicial Administrator provides staffing assistance to all major judicial associations and includes information on all levels of court in its newsletters. More recently, the justices of the Supreme Court have taken steps to improve their communication with the Louisiana District Judges Association by occasionally meeting with the Association's leadership.



- Judicial Campaign Conduct.** In April of 2000, the Court established an Ad Hoc Committee to study the benefits and feasibility of creating a permanent Judicial Campaign Oversight Committee to help facilitate ethical campaign conduct in Louisiana judicial elections. After studying the matter for approximately one year, the Ad Hoc committee issued a Final Report recommending the establishment of a permanent Judicial Campaign Oversight Committee. In March of 2002, the Court established a permanent Judicial Campaign Oversight Committee, consisting of 15 members, including retired judges, lawyers, and citizens who are neither lawyers nor judges. The purposes of the Committee are to educate candidates about the requirements of the Code of Judicial Conduct, to answer questions about proper campaign conduct, and to receive and respond to public complaints. However, public statements are only issued when two-thirds of the members believe clear and convincing evidence has been provided of a violation of certain enumerated Canons of the Code. During the Fall 2002 judgeship elections, the Committee drafted and distributed a Campaign Conduct Acknowledgement form that asked candidates to acknowledge that they had read, understood, and were bound by the provisions of the Louisiana Code of Judicial Conduct. The Acknowledgement was signed by 216 incumbent judges and judicial candidates who were involved in the 2002 elections. As part of its educational role, the Oversight Committee also conducted six educational presentations throughout the state, focusing on restrictions on judicial campaign activities incorporated in Canon 7 of the Code of Judicial Conduct. During the election campaign, the Oversight Committee received 32 complaints concerning campaign conduct, and issued one public statement concerning campaign conduct it found problematic.
- Costs of Judiciary Commission Matters.** In FY 2000-2001, the Court amended the Rules of the Judiciary Commission to provide for assessing judges disciplined by the Commission for all or any portion of the costs

of the process of judicial discipline as recommended by the Commission. This rule continues in effect.

### Future Steps

- Ensuring the Highest Professional Conduct of the Bench.** The Court shall continue to maintain and improve ways to ensure the highest professional conduct, integrity, and competence of the bench.
- Judicial Campaign Conduct.** The permanent Judicial Campaign Oversight Committee will continue to provide information and oversight over judicial campaigns in the coming fiscal year.

### Objective 4.2

**To ensure the highest professional conduct, integrity, and competence of the bar.**

### Intent of Objective

See the language relating to the Intent of Objective 4.1.

### Responses to Objective

- Cooperation with the LSBA.** The Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) is a non-profit corporation, established pursuant to Articles of Incorporation that were first authorized by the Supreme Court on March 12, 1941. According to the Articles of Incorporation, the purpose of the Association is to: regulate the practice of law; advance the science of jurisprudence; promote the administration of justice; uphold the honor of the courts and of the profession of law; encourage cordial interpersonal relations among its members; and, generally, promote the welfare of the profession in the state. The Association from time to time recommends changes to its Rules of Professional Conduct for attorneys to the Supreme Court for adoption. The Supreme Court maintains and strives to continuously improve its communication and cooperation with the Louisiana State Bar Association. The leadership or members of the LSBA are involved in virtually every committee of the Court. Similarly, several justices and staff members of the Court are also involved in LSBA activities.



- **Attorney Continuing Legal Education (CLE).** The Court exercises supervision over all continuing legal education through the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) Committee. The Committee was established by Supreme Court Rule XXX on November 19, 1992. Its purpose was to exercise general supervisory authority over the administration of the Court's mandatory continuing legal education requirements affecting lawyers and judges and to perform such other acts and duties as are necessary and proper to improve CLE programs within the state. In addition to its supervisory role, the Court continues to work with the LSBA to maintain and improve the quality of continuing legal education programs.
- **Attorney Professionalism.** The Court continues to work with the LSBA to encourage and support professionalism among attorneys. As previously mentioned, the Court, through its Continuing Legal Education Committee, requires all attorneys and judges to complete at least one hour of CLE per year on professionalism. The Court has also promulgated, as an aspirational standard, its Code of Professionalism in the Courts. Furthermore, as a means of instilling professionalism in attorneys at an early stage of their careers, the justices regularly participate in the professionalism orientation sessions held at the State's four law schools in the fall of each year.
- **Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board.** The Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board was created by Supreme Court Rule XIX on April 1, 1990 to provide a structure and set of procedures for receiving, investigating, prosecuting, and adjudicating complaints made against lawyers with respect to the Rules of Professional Conduct for attorneys. The Board consists of:
  - One permanent statewide agency that administers and manages the lawyer disciplinary system as a whole, performs appellate review functions, issues admonitions, imposes probation, and rules on procedural matters.

- Several hearing committees, which review the recommendations of the Board's Disciplinary Counsel, conduct pre-hearing conferences, consider and decide pre-hearing motions, and review the admonitions proposed by the Disciplinary Counsel.
- The Office of the Disciplinary Counsel, which performs prosecutorial functions for the Board.

Since 1998, the Court has taken several steps to improve the Attorney Disciplinary Board and its process. In 1999, the Court, based on a recommendation of the American Bar Association, imposed a significantly higher assessment on all attorneys in support of the Attorney Disciplinary Board's efforts to ensure the proper reception, investigation, and prosecution of complaints against lawyers accused of violating the Rules of Professional Conduct. In FY 2001-2002, the Court contracted with the American Bar Association to perform a performance audit of the Attorney Disciplinary Board's activities. The audit began with a site visit by the ABA during the week of November 12, 2001 and was completed in March of 2002. The Court and the Board are now in the process of implementing some of the Audit's recommendations.

In CY 2002, the Office of the Disciplinary Counsel received 2,794 complaints. In that same year, the Office resolved or disposed of 2,442 complaints.

In the past, the Board's investigative process took eighteen to twenty-four months. In 2000, the Board maintained eighty percent of its investigative files at six months or less and almost ninety percent of its files at less than a year.

- **Supervision of the Practice of Law.** The Court continues to maintain and improve its supervision of the practice of law by ensuring the quality, competency, and integrity of the bar admissions process, imposing sanctions in disciplinary matters, and requiring continuing



legal education. As part of its supervision of the practice of law, the Court, upon recommendation of the Committee on Bar Admissions, developed and promulgated in 2000 an interim procedure for allowing bar applicants who fail or conditionally fail Part I of the Louisiana State Bar Examination to review and compare their erroneous answers with representative good answers. The Court also increased the passing score on the Multi-State Professional Responsibility Exam (MPRE) from 75 to 80. Finally, through comprehensive amendments to the Bar Admissions rules, the Court moved to insure that the character and fitness of bar applicants would be carefully evaluated prior to their admission to the practice of law. Chief among these improvements is the required participation, by Louisiana Law students who intend to practice in Louisiana, in the Law Student Legislation Program sponsored by the National Conference of Bar Examiners. This program involves a comprehensive assessment of law students' character and fitness during their second year of law school, followed by a supplemental character review near the end of their law school courses. In 2001, the Committee on Bar Admissions administered exams during the weeks of February 12, with a passage rate of 67% and July 23, with a passage rate of 71%. These rates compared favorably to an average nationwide passage rate of 55% in February 2001, and 69% in July 2001. In 2001, the Committee also created a subcommittee to recommend improvements to the Bar Examination. The "Testing Subcommittee" will look at the substance of the exam, its structure, and its procedural aspects. The Committee continued to permit failing applicants to review their own exam papers as well as representative good answers. It also reorganized its Equivalency Panel and has eliminated its backlog of applications for equivalency determinations by graduates from non-U.S. law schools.

- **Encouragement of Pro Bono Activities.** The Court continues to encourage members of the bar to participate in pro bono activities. In FY 2000-2001, the Court assisted the LSBA in establishing a program for recruiting and training

pro bono attorneys to counsel prisoners in capital post-conviction applications. The Court also assisted the LSBA in its general efforts to recruit and train pro bono attorneys. In FY 2002-2003, the Court continued these activities.

- **Committee on the Prevention of Lawyer Misconduct.** In FY 2000-2001, the Supreme Court created a Committee on the Prevention of Lawyer Misconduct to serve as a vehicle for continuing communication and dialogue among the law schools, the Attorney Disciplinary Board, the Louisiana State Bar Association, and the Court on matters and issues relating to the prevention of lawyer misconduct. The Committee made several recommendations to the Court, which has taken appropriate action on most of these recommendations. One result of the Committee's work was the sponsorship by the Louisiana State Bar Association of orientation sessions on professionalism for new law students at each of Louisiana's four law schools in the fall of 2000.
- **Rule on the Transfer to Disability Inactive Status.** In FY 2000-2001, the Supreme Court clarified its Rules for Lawyer Disciplinary Enforcement relating to the transfer of attorneys to disability inactive status. The disability procedures attempt to balance the due process rights of lawyers with the need to protect the public from incapacitated lawyers.
- **Permanent Disbarment.** Through amendments to the Rules for Lawyer Disciplinary Enforcement, which became effective on August 1, 2001, the Court codified permanent disbarment as an available sanction for lawyers who commit particularly egregious acts of misconduct. These changes serve to protect the public from lawyers whose violations of the public trust are so serious as to warrant the permanent revoking of the privilege bestowed upon them of practicing law in Louisiana.

## Future Steps

- **Ensuring the Highest Professional Conduct of the Bench.** The Court will maintain and continue to improve its efforts for



ensuring the highest professional conduct, integrity, and competence of the bar.

### Objective 5.1

To seek and obtain sufficient resources from the executive and legislative branches to fulfill all duties and responsibilities of the judiciary.

### Intent of Objective

As an equal and essential branch of our constitutional government, the judiciary requires sufficient financial resources to fulfill its responsibilities. Just as court systems should be held accountable for their performance, it is the obligation of the legislative and executive branches of our constitutional government to provide sufficient financial resources to the judiciary for it to meet its responsibility as a co-equal, independent third branch of government. Even with the soundest management, court systems will not be able to promote or protect the rule of law, or to preserve the public trust without adequate resources.

### Responses to Objective

- **Judicial Budgetary Control Board.** The Court, through its Judicial Administrator, continues to staff and otherwise support the Judicial Budgetary Control Board in its efforts to obtain and manage the resources needed by the judiciary to fulfill its duties and responsibilities.
- **Legislative/Executive Branch Coordination.** The Court continues to communicate, coordinate, and cooperate with the legislative and executive branches of state government on all matters relating to the needs of the judiciary. As a result of these efforts, the Court is now working collaboratively with the other branches of state government on several programs, including the Families in Need of Services (FINS) program, Drug Treatment Courts, Truancy Centers, the Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program, the Integrated Criminal Justice Information System (ICJIS), the Louisiana Protective Orders Registry (LPOR), the Judicial Disposition Data Base, the Integrated Juvenile Justice Information System (IJJIS), and the Juvenile Justice Commission.

- **Judicial Budget and Performance Accountability Program.** The Supreme Court continues to develop and expand the Judicial Budget and Performance Accountability Program as required by R.S.13:81-85.
- **Strategic Plans.** The Court is aggressively implementing its Strategic Plan as adopted in December of 1999 and amended in October of 2000. The Court, through its Judicial Administrator, continuously monitors the implementation of the strategic plans of the courts of appeal and the trial courts, and renders assistance to them upon request. In FY 2000-2001, the Court appointed a Commission on Strategic Planning for the Limited Jurisdiction Courts to develop performance standards and a strategic plan for the city and parish courts before December of 2002. With assistance from the Judicial Administrator of the Supreme Court, the Commission developed draft performance standards and a draft strategic plan, both of which were approved by the Supreme Court in 2002.
- **Operational Plans; Key Objectives; and Key Performance Indicators.** The Court has developed and submitted Operational Plans for FY 2000-2001, FY 2001-2002, and FY 2002-2003 as required by R.S. 13:81-85. It has also developed and incorporated into its annual judicial appropriations bill key objectives, performance indicators, and mission statements as required by the statute.
- **Performance Audits.** Since 1999, the Court has sponsored four audits of judicial performance. It contracted with the National Center for State Courts to conduct a performance audit of district court compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in FY 1999-2000. The results of the audit were communicated to all district courts by the Chief Justice. The courts have responded by organizing activities to achieve and maintain compliance. In FY 2000-2001, the Court contracted with the National Center for State Courts to conduct a performance audit of district and city court compliance with the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) and with the provisions of the Louisiana Children's Code



relating to Child-in-Need-of-Care cases and Judicial Certification for Adoption. The final report of that audit is currently being reviewed by the Court. Once finalized, the report will be sent to all courts having juvenile jurisdiction, and all courts will be requested to comply. In addition, the Judicial Administrator of the Supreme Court and the Louisiana Court Administrators Association will provide technical assistance to all district courts needing help with compliance. In FY 2001-2002, the Court contracted with the American Bar Association (ABA) to conduct a detailed performance audit of the Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board and its process. The ABA began the audit with a site visit in the week of November 12, 2001 and completed the audit at the end of March 2002. In FY 2002-2003, the Court commissioned an audit of the performance of the Judicial College. The audit began in the Fall of 2002 and was completed in August 2003.

- **Judicial Compensation Commission.** The Supreme Court actively supported and assisted the work of the Judicial Compensation Commission created pursuant to Act 1077 of 1995. In FY 2000-2001, the Commission was successful in convincing the legislature to provide needed salary increases to all judges.
- **Compensation Plan and Human Resource Policies of the Supreme Court and the Courts of Appeal.** The Supreme Court, through its Judicial Administrator, continues to staff, maintain, and develop the compensation plan and human resource policies for employees of the Supreme Court and the courts of appeal.
- **Judicial Employee Compensation.** The Court continues its efforts to secure adequate salaries, benefits, other compensation and emoluments appropriate to each type of employee as a means of retaining and attracting highly qualified staff.
- **Employee Retirement and Group Benefits.** The Supreme Court, through its Judicial Administrator and Clerk of Court, continues to ensure that all courts and all judicial employees are aware of how to access the benefits

of their respective retirement and group benefit programs and are in compliance with the rules and regulations of such programs.

- **Judicial Financial Reform.** The Supreme Court continues to encourage its Judicial Administrator to study and make recommendations to the Court on ways to improve the financing of the judiciary.
- **Supreme Court Facilities.** The Supreme Court continued to advocate and pursue the renovation of the 400 Royal Street site as the future home of the Supreme Court, the 4th Circuit Court of Appeal, and other state entities. The Supreme Court also ensured that resources were available to maintain its current building at 301 Loyola Avenue and to house most of the Judicial Administrator's Office in rental facilities.

### Future Steps

- **Seeking and Obtaining Sufficient Resources.** In the coming year, the Supreme Court will continue to seek, and obtain, sufficient resources to fulfill its duties and responsibilities.
- **Parking for 400 Royal Street.** In the coming year, the Court will develop and take steps to implement a plan for providing parking to the employees of the 400 Royal Street Building.

### Objective 5.2

**To manage the Court's caseload effectively and to use available resources efficiently and productively.**

### Intent of Objective

The Supreme Court acknowledges that it should manage its caseload in a cost-effective, efficient, and productive manner that does not sacrifice the rights or interests of litigants. As an institution consuming public resources, the Supreme Court recognizes its responsibility to ensure that resources are used prudently and cases are processed and resolved in an efficient and productive manner.





## Responses to Objective

- **Case Management.** The Supreme Court, through its Clerk of Court, continues to maintain and expand effective case management techniques, including the development and operation of a state-of-the-art case management information system.
- **Fiscal Management.** The Supreme Court continues to require the Fiscal Office of the Judicial Administrator and the Clerk of Court to manage the Court's fiscal resources efficiently and productively.
- **Judicial Internal Auditor.** The Supreme Court continues to require the Judicial Internal Auditor to develop and maintain internal fiscal controls within all fiscal functions of the Court.
- **Internal Audit Committee.** In FY 2000-2001, the Supreme Court created an Internal Audit Committee consisting of three justices who meet quarterly with the Internal Auditor to ensure the timely implementation of internal fiscal controls within all fiscal functions of the Court.
- **Judicial Restructuring.** The Supreme Court continues to encourage its Judicial Administrator to study and make recommendations to the Court on ways to restructure the judiciary for greater efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Committee on Judicial Leave and Temporary Appointments.** In FY 2000-2001, the Supreme Court created a Committee on Judicial Leave and Temporary Appointments for the purpose of studying and making recommendations on matters relating to the improvement of policies concerning judicial leave and temporary appointments in limited and specialized jurisdiction courts. The Committee made a number of recommendations, some of which were adopted by the Court in FY 2001-2002.

## Future Steps

- **Resource Management in General.** The

Court will continue to manage its caseload effectively and to use available resources efficiently and productively.

## Objective 5.3

**To develop and promulgate methods for improving aspects of trial and appellate court performance.**

## Intent of Objective

Under Section 6 of Article V of the Constitution of Louisiana, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court is the chief administrative officer of the judicial system of the state, subject to rules adopted by the Court. The Chief Justice also has the authority, under the Constitution (Louisiana Constitution of 1974, Article V, Section 7), to select a Judicial Administrator, Clerks, and other personnel to assist him or her in the exercise of this administrative responsibility. The Court, therefore, through the Chief Justice, the Judicial Administrator, the Clerk of Court, and other personnel, has a constitutional responsibility to improve trial and appellate court performance. Furthermore, under the provisions of the Judicial Budget and Performance Accountability Act of 1999 (R.S. 13:81-85), the Court has an additional responsibility to ensure not only that strategic plans are developed but that they are implemented to improve judicial performance.

## Responses to Objective

- **Office of the Judicial Administrator.** The Supreme Court continues to maintain sufficient numbers of highly qualified professional and support staff in the Judicial Administrator's Office to develop and effectively promulgate methods for improving aspects of trial and court performance.
- **Judicial Budget and Performance Accountability Program.** The Supreme Court, through its Judicial Administrator, has provided assistance to the Strategic Planning Committee of the Louisiana District Judges Association and to the Louisiana Court Administrators Association in their efforts to comply with the provisions of the Judicial Budget and Performance Accountability Program.



- **Judicial Council.** The Supreme Court, through its Judicial Administrator, continues to staff and otherwise support the Judicial Council as a means of improving aspects of trial and appellate court performance that affect the judicial process. The Administrator continues to staff and support the work of the New Judgeship Committee of the Judicial Council in order to ensure that court performance does not suffer from a lack of judgeships or judicial officers in individual jurisdictions.
- **CMIS.** The Supreme Court, through its Judicial Administrator, continues to develop, maintain and expand the Case Management Information System (CMIS) Project as a means of improving aspects of trial and appellate court performance that affect the judicial process. Included as part of CMIS' activities are the following programs:
  - **Louisiana Protective Order Registry (LPOR).** The Louisiana Protective Order Registry (LPOR) is a centralized, statewide computer repository of civil and criminal orders intended to enable law enforcement officials and the courts to more effectively protect victims of domestic violence and their children from the harassing and/or abusive behavior of a spouse, intimate cohabitant, dating partner, or family member. From January 1 through October 31, 2003, registry staff received and entered 21,666 orders from sixty-four district, four juvenile, and twelve municipal or city courts across the state. This exceeds the number of orders received and entered in any prior year of the registry's operation since the program was launched in 1999. Of these 21,666 orders, 16,558 (76%) were civil and 5,108 (24%) were criminal. From the pilot phase of the project through the close of 2003, registry staff had received and entered a total of 85,746 orders. Of these, 60,873 (71%) were civil orders and 24,873 (29%) were criminal orders.

Registry staff responded to 295 requests for order verification submitted by examiners with the FBI's National Instant Background Check

System (NICS), which is designed to prevent the sale of firearms and ammunition to those who are prohibited, such as individuals who are the subject of a qualifying domestic violence restraining order. In addition, staff responded to 152 requests for order verification submitted by local, state, and out-of-state law enforcement officials conducting investigations involving the subject of a Louisiana restraining order. In 2003, the average of daily searches of the registry by law enforcement officials and the courts was 8,441. In 9.5% of these searches, the result was a possible hit on a record in the registry. The LPOR trainers conducted a variety of educational programs in 2003, reaching more than 900 people with information about the registry, applicable state and federal laws, appropriate use of the standardized forms and the custom software created to expedite the completion of the forms by courts, advocates and attorneys. LPOR staff members also fielded several thousand calls for information, technical assistance, and referrals for resources or assistance, averaging ten such calls per business day.

- **Disposition Data.** The Judicial Administrator continues to work with the courts to get electronic criminal and traffic disposition data to CMIS. CMIS is currently receiving electronic criminal data from sixty-one (61) parishes in Louisiana. Auditing of data from the sixty-one (61) district courts currently transporting to CMIS is an ongoing task. CMIS works with each clerk and their software provider to insure a quick resolution to any problems that may be discovered during the data audit. Regular visits to the district courts assists in resolving hardware, software, and data input and transmission issues. The CMIS team looks forward to working with the courts to collect disposition data on civil and juvenile dispositions in the future. The CMIS team also works closely with the Louisiana District Attorneys Association and the clerks currently reporting criminal data on implementation of electronic transfer of



criminal information residing in the District Attorney's database to the Clerk of Court criminal case management system. Additionally, the CMIS team works to assist judges with procurement and installation of necessary technologies that provide the judges with access to the Computerized Criminal History Index, Louisiana Protective Order Registry and Department of Motor Vehicles records. Installations also enable the judges to access local criminal disposition information from the courtroom. Access to criminal history records is provided using digital connections established by CMIS.

- **Uniform Commitment Document.** The Judicial Administrator continues to work with the Louisiana District Judges Association and Uniform Commitment Document committee to develop and deploy a statewide-standardized commitment form for defendants sentenced to custody in the Department of Corrections (DOC). The committee has completed a sample version of the proposed document and is working to begin testing in Judicial Districts throughout Louisiana.
- **Standardization of Data Collection.** The Judicial Administrator has standardized the data collection and reporting on filings and other information from appellate and trial courts to CMIS.
- **Wide Area Network.** The Judicial Administrator has deployed and maintains a statewide Wide Area Network for connecting all district and city courts to CMIS.
- **Court Technology Studies.** The Administrator continues to conduct studies to determine the feasibility of implementing new technologies in Louisiana courts such as electronic filing and the development of high-tech courtrooms.
- **Other Programs.** In association with the Louisiana Conference of Appellate Court Judges, the Louisiana District Judges

Association, the Louisiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and the Louisiana Association of Parish and City Court Judges, the Administrator continues to develop, maintain, and implement, other technology programs for improving those aspects of the administration of justice identified in the Appellate Court Strategic Plan, the Trial Court Strategic Plan, or the Strategic Plan of the Supreme Court.

- **Appellate Court Assistance Program.** The Supreme Court, through its Judicial Administrator, continues to develop, maintain, and implement, in association with the Conference of Appellate Court Judges and the respective chief judges and key staffs of each appellate court, an Appellate Court Performance Improvement Program for improving those aspects of the administration of justice identified in the Appellate Court Strategic Plan or the Strategic Plan of the Supreme Court. During FY 2002-2003, the Supreme Court approved and funded an Appellate Pilot Mediation Program for the First Circuit Court of Appeal. The purpose of the program is to assist the Court in resolving cases in a timely manner that will benefit attorneys, litigants and the judicial system as a whole.
- **Trial Court Assistance Program.** The Supreme Court, through its Judicial Administrator, and in association with the Louisiana District Judges Association, continues to develop, implement, and maintain a Trial Court Assistance Program for improving those aspects of the administration of justice identified in the Trial Court Strategic Plan or the Strategic Plan of the Supreme Court.
- **District Court Rules.** In October 2001, After several years of diligent effort by both the bench and bar, both the Judicial Council of the Supreme Court and the LSBA created committees to review local court rules in an attempt to achieve uniformity and predictability in the rules. the two committees presented to the Court the final draft of the Court Rules and appendices and



requested their adoption and implementation. In November 2001, the Court adopted the Rules for Louisiana District Courts, including appendices, and Numbering Systems for Louisiana Family and Domestic Relations Court and Juvenile Courts. The Court also established a Court Rules Committee charged with receiving related comments and with making recommendations for proposed additional rules or amendments to these Rules. During FY 2002-2003, the Judicial Council created a Family Court Rules Committee to develop and complete rules for juvenile and domestic courts. The Committee is still engaged in this activity.

- **Trial Court Facilitator.** The Judicial Administrator continues to assign a Deputy Judicial Administrator to meet the needs of district judges and to facilitate communication and coordination between the district judges, the Supreme Court, and other bodies.
- **Drug Court Assistance Program.** In 1997, the Legislature enacted legislation which allows courts to establish “drug divisions” in order to reduce the incidence of alcohol and drug addiction and crimes associated with such addiction. In the summer of 2001, the Court accepted the responsibilities of administering drug court funds and monitoring drug court programs from the legislature. The Court has created a drug court office to assist it in administering the appropriated funds. During fiscal year 2002/2003 this office provided approximately \$11 million to drug court programs around the state. New drug court programs are being established with some regularity. The Judicial Administrator has developed a program structure and process that will ensure accountability through a system of reporting and monitoring between the local drug court programs and the Court, and between the Court and the state. The program will be implemented and maintained through the Judicial Administrator’s staff.
- **Juvenile Court Assistance Program.** In association with the Louisiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the Louisiana

District Court Judges Association, and the Louisiana Parish and City Court Judges Association, the Supreme Court, through its Judicial Administrator, continues to maintain, develop, and implement, a juvenile court assistance program. The specific strategies included as part of the Juvenile Court Assistance Program are:

- **Louisiana Court Improvement Program.** The Court Improvement Program continues to offer technical assistance to courts throughout the state to help them fully implement the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. Direct assistance has been provided in the form of site visits, including process analysis, troubleshooting and recommendations for improvement. Additionally, CIP staff has been available to help local courts initiate inter-disciplinary facilitation teams around ASFA issues. Further assistance was offered with model forms and rules to steer court processes in compliance with state and federal law. Such forms include, but are not limited to:
  - Bench Cards for Essential Judicial Functions
  - Mandatory Timeframe Calculations
  - Sample Minute Entry Forms
  - Guidelines for Interpreting the ASFA Regulations
  - Issuing and Service Requirements
- **Pilot Mediation Program in Child in Need of Care Cases.** The Court Improvement Program is overseeing a three-year pilot mediation program in Orleans Parish Juvenile Court and Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court. This program will implement mediation in child welfare cases in accordance with 1999 legislation allowing for mediations in courts exercising juvenile jurisdiction. The process will include designing and developing needed policies and procedures, referral criteria and forms. In addition, the project will explore ways of perpetuating the program beyond the pilot period. Once fully developed and implemented, the “best practices” learned from the demonstration will be utilized to



assist other courts throughout the state.

- **Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Assistance Program.**

During FY 2002-2003, the Judicial Administrator has assumed programmatic and fiscal responsibility for the improvement and expansion of CASA statewide. The Administrator executed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Social Services for expenditure of federal TANF funds designated for this purpose. The Administrator developed a program structure and process that will insure accountability through a system of reporting and monitoring between the local CASA programs and the Court, and between the Court and the state. The program will be maintained and implemented through the Judicial Administrator's staff and with the assistance of a contractual program manager.

- **Truancy Assessment and Service Center (TASC) Assistance Program.**

During FY 2002-2003, the Judicial Administrator assumed programmatic and fiscal responsibility for the expansion of truancy centers statewide. The Administrator executed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Social Services for expenditure of federal TANF funds designated for this purpose. Additional state general funds are also appropriated for this use. The Administrator developed a program structure and process that will insure accountability through a system of reporting and monitoring between the local TASC programs and the Court, and between the Court and the executive branch. The program will be maintained and implemented through the Judicial Administrator's staff and with the assistance of a contractual program manager.

- **Families in Need of Services (FINS) Assistance Program.** The Administrator continues to maintain, develop, and implement the Families in Need of Services Assistance Program (FINSAP). FINSAP is working closely with related program entities in upgrading its current software to a web-based application for

tracking, managing, and reporting on informal FINS cases, programmatic standards, performance indicators, performance measures, and finances. FINSAP and the Louisiana FINS Association continue to make progress in developing best practice standards and processes to help implement a better needs-based allocation.

- **Integrated Juvenile Justice Information System.**

The Administrator continues to develop the Integrated Juvenile Justice Information System being piloted at the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court. Upon completion, the IJJIS shall be provided free of charge to all courts having juvenile jurisdiction. Currently, all existing CINC components are being transferred to a web-based application. This system will allow more courts to use the system, with all maintenance upgrades and trouble-shooting to be accomplished on one central server.

- **Comprehensive Continuum of Children's Services.**

The Administrator continues to support the initiative of the Governor's Children's Cabinet to develop and implement a comprehensive continuum of children's services in Louisiana.

- **Juvenile Justice Commission.**

In response to the Chief Justice's State of the Judiciary Message for the year 2001, the Louisiana Legislature created a 12-member Juvenile Justice Commission, consisting of six senators and six members of the House of Representatives to study and make recommendations regarding the reform and restructuring of the juvenile justice system. The Legislature also created a 43-member Advisory Board with representatives from the governor's office, several executive branch departments, law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies, courts, prevention and treatment services, advocacy services, and other stakeholders to assist the Commission. An inter-branch staffing team, consisting of staff members of the Judicial Administrator's Office and other staff, was also created to design the investigative process and to staff the Advisory Board. Throughout 2002 and the early part of 2003, the Advisory Board and



Commission, conducted 18 public hearings throughout the state to solicit views on the current system and to receive recommendations for its improvement. More than 1,000 persons attended these hearings; over 325 testified; and more than 600 filled out questionnaires and provided written information. As a result of this feedback, as well as information from research, national think tanks, and the experience of the members of the Commission and the Advisory Board, a comprehensive set of legislation was enacted as Act 1225 and HCR 56 of 2003.

- **Other Programs.** In association with the Louisiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the Louisiana District Court Judges Association, and the Louisiana City Court Judges Association, the Administrator continues to develop, maintain, and implement, new programs for improving the adjudication of child support cases and other juvenile cases. The Administrator continues also to develop, implement, and maintain other programs for improving those aspects of the administration of juvenile justice as may be identified in the Appellate Court Strategic Plan, the Trial Court Strategic Plan, the Courts of Limited Jurisdiction Strategic Plan, or the Strategic Plan of the Supreme Court.
- **Courts of Limited Jurisdiction Strategic Plan.** In FY 2000-2001, the Supreme Court created a Commission on Strategic Planning for the Courts of Limited Jurisdiction to develop performance standards and a strategic plan for the city and parish courts. The Commission completed and submitted its work in CY 2002 to the Supreme Court for approval. Upon approval of the standards and the plan by the Supreme Court in 2002, the standards and plan were promulgated to all city and parish judges for implementation.
- **Cases Under Advisement.** The Supreme Court, through the Judicial Administrator, continues to manage, report on, and enforce court rules, orders and policies relating to cases under advisement as a means of improving district court performance.

- **Judicial Assignments.** The Office of the Judicial Administrator continues to assist the Court in the exercise of its constitutionally conferred assignment authority. Through the promulgation of hundreds of court orders, which assign sitting and retired judges to over-burdened courts and time-consuming and difficult cases throughout the state, the administration of justice is advanced and litigants' access to justice ensured.
- **General Counsel.** The Supreme Court has retained a highly qualified attorney and research associate to research legal issues involving the administration of justice and the performance of the courts.

### Future Steps

- **Good Practices Guides.** With assistance from the Louisiana District Judges Association and the Louisiana Juvenile and Family Court Judges Association, the Administrator will develop and distribute, upon request, "Good Practices Guides" on such areas of court administration as: outreach and community relations; human resource policies and procedures; case management and delay reduction; pro se litigation; jury improvement; compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); compliance with the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) and the Louisiana Children's Code; and other matters. The Guides on delay reduction and pro se litigation are scheduled to be completed in FY 2003-2004.
- **Performance Standards and Strategic Plan of the City and Parish Courts.** During the coming year, the city and parish courts, with the assistance of the Judicial Administrator, will begin implementing their strategic plan.
- **Assistance to Other Courts.** In the coming year, the Supreme Court, through its Judicial Administrator, will continue to provide assistance, as needed, to the courts of appeal, the trial courts, and the city and parish courts, especially with respect to the implementation of their respective strategic plans.



- **Other Matters.** The Court, through its Judicial Administrator, will also maintain and strive to improve all other programs indicated under this Objective.

## Objective 5.4

To use fair employment practices.

### Intent of Objective

The judiciary is an important and visible symbol of government. Equal treatment of all persons before the law is essential to the concept of justice. Accordingly, the Supreme Court of Louisiana recognizes that, it should operate free of bias in its personnel practices and decisions. The Court believes that fairness in the recruitment, compensation, supervision, and development of court personnel helps to ensure judicial independence, accountability, and organizational competence. The Court also believes fairness in employment, as manifested in the Court's human resource policies and practices, will help to establish the highest standards of personal integrity and competence among its employees.

### Responses to Objective

- **Human Resource Policies.** In FY 2002-2003, the Court, through the Human Resources Department of the Judicial Administrator's Office and the Human Resources Committee of the Supreme Court and the courts of appeal, continued to develop and implement policies and procedures for proper human resource development at the appellate and district court levels. Among the activities planned and executed by the Department in FY 2002-2003 were:
  - **Management Training for Court Administrators.** A training session entitled, "Federal and State Employment Laws. A Discussion of Possible Applicability to State Courts," was presented at the first annual Louisiana Court Administrators Conference held February 12-14, 2003. The laws covered in the training session included: Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Act of 1991; the Americans with Disabilities Act; the Fair Labor Standards Act;

the Equal Pay Act; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act; the Family and Medical Leave Act; USERRA; COBRA; Immigration Reform and Control Act; Workers' Compensation; Drug-free Workplace; and 11th Amendment Immunity. Court staff also prepared and distributed a 21-page handout on employee recruitment and selection. The training concluded with a question and answer session. At their October 2002 meeting, the court administrators identified core competencies important to performing their jobs and selected areas on which to focus future continuing education efforts. Top choices included:

- Court community communications
- Court purposes and responsibilities
- Managing essential components
- Information technology management
- Education, training and development

The Judicial Administrator's staff also provided human resource guidance to court administrators upon request.

- **E-mail and Internet Usage Policies.** The Court adopted a policy on the use of computers, electronic equipment, voice mail and other forms of electronic communications in addition to e-mail and Internet access. All employees received a copy of the policy and new employees are given a copy during orientation.
- **Nepotism Policy.** This policy has been developed and will be implemented upon approval by the Supreme Court Conference.
- **ADA Policy.** Following a thorough review of its ADA policy vis a vis recent EEOC guidelines and case law, the Court adopted its "Policy and Procedures Pertaining to Individuals with Disabilities" on May 6, 2003. The policy is an update of the previous policy and includes definitions of key terms as well as information for patrons and employees on how to request accommodations and lodge complaints. The Court's ADA statement includes contact information, and the names



of contacts are also posted on its website at [http://www.lasc.org/human\\_resources/ADA\\_Website.htm](http://www.lasc.org/human_resources/ADA_Website.htm).

- **Training for Supreme Court Managers.** As part of its new training initiative, the Human Resource (HR) Department presented training to Supreme Court management and supervisory personnel in February of 2003 on how to give constructive criticism. In addition, court managers along with other court employees received training on “Blood Borne Pathogens: Safety and Control” in May of 2003.

- **Training Films for Court Administrators Association.** Following a film festival organized and presented by Court staff, the following films were purchased and made available to court administrators:

- Ten Commandments of Communicating with People with Disabilities
- Avoiding Litigation Land Mines
- Hire for Attitude
- The Attitude Virus – Curing Negativity in the Workplace
- Performance Matters – The Importance of Praise
- Performance Matters – The Need for Criticism
- Respect in the Workplace

Members are encouraged to check out films for use in training at their location.

- **Disciplinary Policy.** Court staff researched disciplinary policies and found that current court policies include a clause, which addresses the matter of disciplinary action to be taken in the event of a policy violation. In the meantime, the Court will address various prerequisites to discipline through its management-training program.
- **ADA and Other Model Personnel Policies.** The Court HR staff wrote policies for ADA, hiring, discipline, benefits, separation, and other human resource portions of the manual

entitled “Model ADA and Other Human Resource Policies” which was sponsored as a Louisiana Court Administrator’s initiative. The manual was distributed to all district court judges and court administrators in March 2003. Each manual also included a disk copy of the policies to facilitate customization, adaptation and printing of policies by court administrators for dissemination at their location.

- **Military Leave Policy.** The military leave policy was reviewed and revised to comply with changes in federal and state law. Key changes included the provision of a “pay differential” to employees on unpaid military leave whose state base pay is greater than their military base pay, and the continued accrual of annual and sick leave by employees on unpaid military leave. The Court adopted the revised policy on December 10, 2002.
- **Other Activities.** Staff from the Court’s Human Resource division provided training on Harassment Prevention to employees and managers at the Second Circuit Court of Appeal in January 2003, and on “Blood Borne Pathogens: Safety and Control” to employees and managers at the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal in May 2003.

Court staff revised and/or developed the following policies that were adopted and distributed in June 2003 by the Court’s Safety Committee as part of the Court’s Loss Prevention Program:

- Violence and Weapons Policy (Revised)
- Policies and Procedures on Harassment in the Workplace (Revised)
- Substance Abuse and Drug-Free Workplace Policy (Revised)
- Equal Employment Opportunity Policy Statement (New)
- Transitional Return to Duty Policy (New)
- Employee Assistance Program (New)

The Human Resource Committee for the Supreme Court and Courts of Appeal adopted a new political activity rule for personal staff employees, revised the prohibition of private





practice rule to include arbitration and mediation, reviewed and revised the appellate employees' pay plan, and considered and addressed other Human Resource issues which were presented this fiscal year. The Human Resources Department implemented an electronic time sheet to manage the leave program more accurately and efficiently. The Human Resources Department continued to ensure the integrity and competitiveness of the uniform judicial pay plan by reviewing resumes, determining competitive hire rates for new positions in the appellate judiciary, participating in salary surveys, and reviewing salary data from various publications. The HR staff also conducted routine job, classification and pay studies to maintain the uniform pay plan.

### Future Steps

- **Training for Court Administrators.** The Court will develop and implement a workshop for court administrators on "at will" employment in Louisiana.
- **Safety Training.** The Court will provide Violence in the Workplace Training to Supreme Court employees and managers.
- **Separation Policy.** The Court will review separation policies from other courts/entities and will develop its own separation policy – a policy that may also serve as a good practice example for the courts of appeal and the district courts.
- **Harassment Prevention Policy.** The Court will review its Workplace Harassment Policy in light of recent case law, and will amend it as necessary.
- **Training for Supreme Court Managers.** The Department will conduct two training sessions for managers and supervisors covering delegation and documentation.
- **Records Retention and Destruction Schedule.** The HR Department will develop a records retention schedule.

- **LEP.** The HR Department will gather information and statistics pertaining to possible implementation of a Limited English Proficiency policy and program.

### Objective 6.1

**To promote and maintain judicial independence.**

#### Intent of Objective

For the judiciary to be fair and impartial, it should develop and maintain its distinctive and independent status as a separate, co-equal branch of state government. It must also be conscious of its legal and administrative boundaries and vigilant in protecting them. As the court of last resort and the chief administrator of the Louisiana court system, the Supreme Court believes that it has an obligation to promote and maintain the independence of the entire judiciary.

#### Responses to Objective

- **Supreme Court Leadership.** During FY 2001-2002, the Supreme Court continued to assert the separation of powers and the need of judicial independence in its communications with the other branches of state government and in its releases to the media.

#### Future Steps

- **Supreme Court Leadership.** During FY 2002-2003, the Supreme Court will continue to assert the separation of powers and the need for judicial independence in its communications with the other branches of state government and in its releases to the media.

### Objective 6.2

**To cooperate with the other branches of state government.**

#### Intent of Objective

While insisting on the need for judicial independence, the Supreme Court of Louisiana recognizes that it must clarify, promote, and



institutionalize effective working relationships with the other branches of state government and with other components of the State's justice system. Such cooperation and collaboration is vitally important for maintaining a fair, efficient, impartial, and independent judiciary as well as for improving the law and the proper administration of justice.

## Responses to Objective

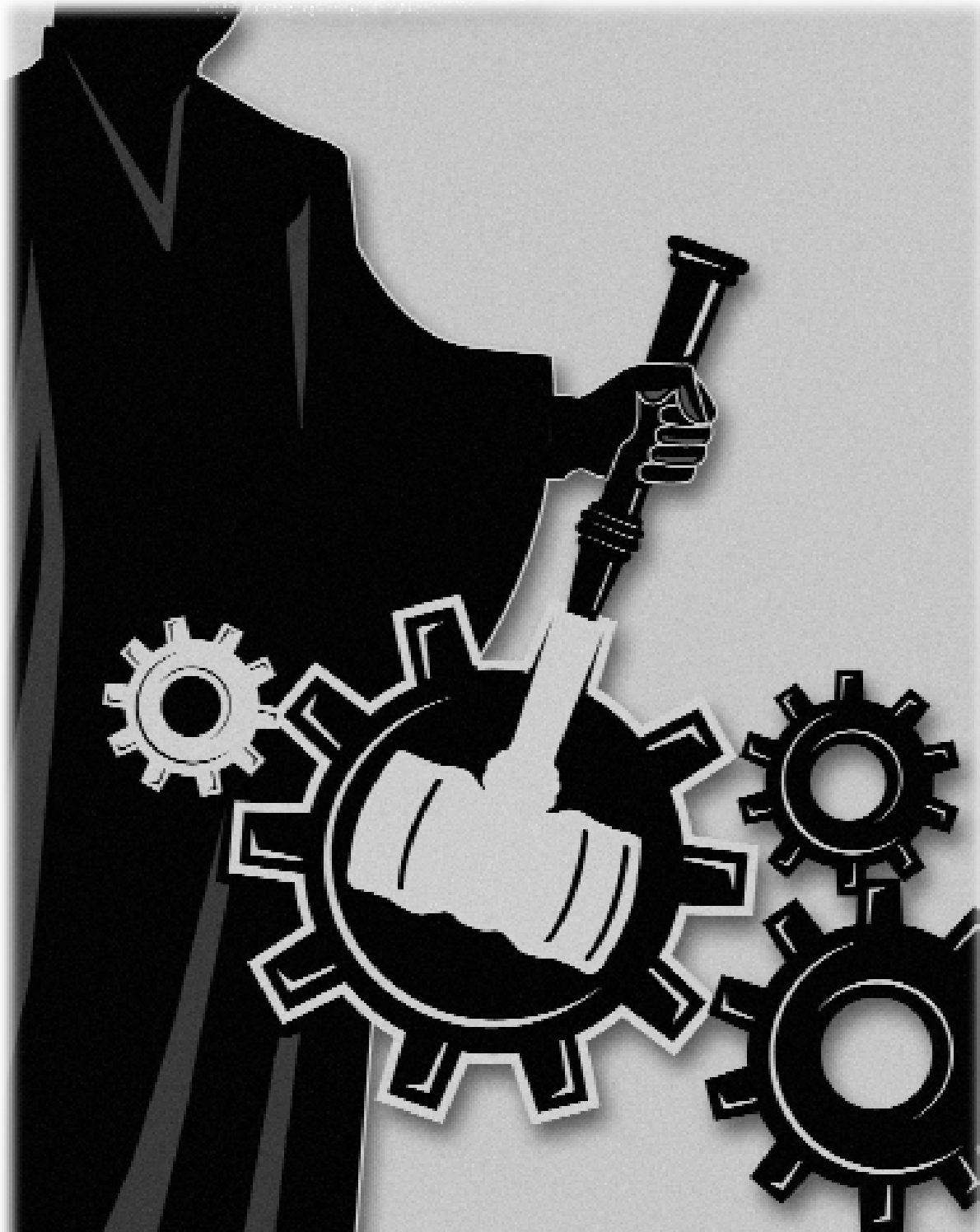
- **Intergovernmental Liaison.** The Court has appointed a justice to be the primary liaison between the Court and various intergovernmental agencies. The justice is assisted by a deputy judicial administrator, who has responsibility for monitoring legislation and communicating with both legislative and executive branch officials and staff. In addition, the Chief Justice and other justices, together with the Court's Judicial Administrator and Clerk of Court, and their respective staffs, have responsibilities for coordinating, collaborating and communicating with executive and legislative branch officials on specific projects or areas of responsibility.
- **Cooperation with the Executive Branch.** During fiscal year 2001-2002, the Court cooperated and collaborated with the Governor's office and other departments of the executive branch on numerous committees and projects, including: the renovation of the 400 Royal St. Building; the Louisiana Court Improvement Program Committee (LCIP); the SAFE Act (i.e. the Adoption and Safe Families Act) Committee of the Office of Community Services; the Families in the Balance Conference; the Justice for Children Conference; the Governor's Children's Cabinet; the Governor's Advisory and Review Commission on Additional Assistant District Attorneys; the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement (LCLE); the Integrated Criminal Justice Information System Policy Board; the Louisiana Indigent Defense Assistance Board; Info Louisiana; the Louisiana Children's Trust Fund; the Louisiana State Police; the Governor's Justice Funding Commission; Governor's Office of Women's Affairs; Louisiana Data Base Commission; and the Attorney General's Task Force Relating to Workplace Violence.

- **Cooperation with the Legislative Branch.** During fiscal year 2001-2002, the Court cooperated and collaborated with the Legislature and legislative agencies on numerous committees and projects, including: the Integrated Criminal Justice Information System Policy Board; the Judicial Compensation Commission; the State of the Judiciary Message of the Chief Justice (Regular Session, 2001); the Judicial Ride-Along Program; the Judicial Council, especially its new judgeship evaluation process; the Judicial Budget and Performance Accountability Act (R.S. 13:81-85); the Judicial Appropriations Bill; judicial reapportionment; annual report on special motions affecting 1st amendment rights; the Attorney Fee Review Board; the Judicial Campaign Oversight Study Committee; the Task Force to Review the Disproportionate Caseload in the First Circuit Court of Appeals (SCR 61, Regular Session, 2001); and the Juvenile Justice Commission (HCR 94, Regular Session, 2001).
- **Cooperation with Other Justice Agencies.** During fiscal year 2001-2002, the Court cooperated and collaborated with numerous local or district justice associations, agencies, and programs, including: the Louisiana District Attorneys Association; the Louisiana Clerks of Court Association; Louisiana City Court Clerks of Court Association; the Louisiana FINS Association; the Louisiana CASA Association; the Louisiana Sheriffs Association; the Louisiana Public Defenders Association; the New Orleans Integrated Coordinating Committee; the Louisiana Association of Drug Court Professionals; Conference of Court of Appeal Judges; Louisiana District Judges Association; Louisiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges; and Louisiana City Court Judges Association.

## Future Steps

- **Intergovernmental Liaison.** During Fiscal year 2002-2003, the Court, through its justices and the Court's staff, will maintain and improve the linkages it has with the officials and staffs of the executive and legislative branches.





PERFORMANCE REPORTS:

**PERFORMANCE OF THE  
COURTS OF APPEAL**

# PERFORMANCE OF THE COURTS OF APPEAL

## INTRODUCTION

The chief judges of the five courts of appeal adopted the Strategic Plan of the Courts of Appeal in early December 1999. The Supreme Court of Louisiana approved the Plan together with the Plans of the Supreme Court and the Trial Courts on December 31, 1999. Currently, the Strategic Plan of the Courts of Appeal contains six goals, sixteen objectives, and eighty-one strategies.

The information comprising the “Intent of Objective” sections of this Report was derived primarily from the Appellate Court Performance Standards and Measures, June 1999. The goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan of the Courts of Appeal were based on the Courts of Appeal Adopted Performance Standards (Cf. Louisiana Supreme Court Rules, Part G, General Administrative Rules, Section 10). The information presented in the “Responses to Objective” and “Future Steps” sections of the Report was derived from the responses of each court of appeal to a Survey of the Chief Judges, which was prepared by the Office of the Judicial Administrator of the Supreme Court and disseminated to each court of appeal during the fall of 2002.

## COURTS OF APPEAL OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 To provide a reasonable opportunity for multi-judge review of decisions made by lower tribunals.
- 1.2 To develop, clarify, and unify the law.
- 1.3 To determine expeditiously those petitions and/or applications for which no other adequate or speedy remedy exists, including mandamus, habeas corpus, election proceedings, termination of parental rights and other matters affecting children’s rights, and to consider expeditiously those writ applications filed under the court’s supervisory jurisdiction in which expedited consideration, or a stay, is requested.
- 2.1 To ensure that adequate consideration is given to each case and that decisions are based on legally relevant factors, thereby affording every litigant the full benefit of the judicial process.
- 2.2 To ensure that decisions of the courts of appeal are clear and the form of the opinion is controlled by Rule 2-16, Uniform Rules, Courts of Appeal.
- 2.3 To publish those written decisions that develop, clarify, or unify the law.
- 2.4 To resolve cases expeditiously.
- 3.1 To ensure that the courts of appeal are procedurally, economically, and physically accessible to the public and to attorneys.
- 3.2 To facilitate public access to the courts’ decisions.



- 3.3 To inform the public of the courts' operations and activities.
- 3.4 To ensure the highest professional conduct of both the bench and the bar.
- 4.1 To seek and obtain sufficient resources from the legislative and executive branches to fulfill the courts' responsibilities, and to institute and maintain a system of accountability for the efficient use of these resources.
- 4.2 To manage the courts' caseloads effectively and use available resources efficiently and productively.
- 4.3 To develop methods for improving aspects of trial court performance that affects the appellate judicial process.
- 4.4 To use fair employment practices.
- 5.1 To vigilantly guard judicial independence while respecting the other coequal branches of government.
- 6.1 To conduct operational planning by the Operational Planning Team.

**Objective 1.1**

**To provide a reasonable opportunity for multi-judge review of decisions made by lower tribunals.**

**Intent of Objective**

Our judicial system recognizes that decisions made by lower tribunals may require modification. American jurisprudence generally requires litigants to be afforded a reasonable opportunity to have such decisions reviewed by an intermediate appellate court and then by a court of last resort. The courts of appeal of Louisiana, as intermediate appellate courts, provide such opportunities through a system of multi-judge review, i.e. review by a panel of judges. Multi-judge review allows a “degree of detachment, perspective, and opportunity for reflection by [all] judges, beyond that which a single trial judge can provide...” Multi-judge review, therefore, provides a better opportunity for developing, clarifying, and unifying the law in a sound and coherent manner and for furnishing guidance to judges, attorneys, and the public as to the application of constitutional and statutory provisions, thus reducing errors and litigation costs. For multi-judge review to be fair and effective, however, appellate courts should develop internal procedures for ensuring that recusals and

random allotment of cases are in compliance with existing legal provisions.<sup>2</sup>

**Responses to Objective**

- **Second Circuit Court of Appeal.**

The Second Circuit Court of Appeal reports that Strategies 1.1(a-d and f) are accomplished through the court's regular, ongoing activities. The Second Circuit utilizes a formal exchange between the reading and writing judge through written memoranda and regularly conducts pre-and post-argument conferences to achieve a multi-judge review of all matters before the Court and to promote collegiality. Deputy clerks are certified through the Louisiana Clerk’s Institute and fulfill mandated continuing education classes to maintain their certifications. The Court continues its efforts to maintain a qualified legal support staff by promoting continuing legal education through the Second Circuit Judges Association and through other continuing legal education initiatives. Improvements to the docketing system, utilizing computer-based assistance where possible, insures that random allotment of cases is a regular, ongoing activity.



<sup>2</sup> Daniel J. Meador, *Appellate Courts: Staff and Process in the Crisis of Volume*, St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1974

The Court reports that the chief judge appointed a committee to review all internal docketing procedures. The committee made recommendations to the Court en banc to insure consistency in case management and random assignment. This committee will continue its review as an ongoing initiative for the year 2003-2004.

The Second Circuit adopted a formal procedure for recusal in compliance with the requirements of Act 932 of 2001, C.C.P. Art. 152(D) and Supreme Court Rule, Part K, Rule XXXVI on August 8, 2002. Orders of recusal are made part of the record and written reasons are maintained by the Clerk's office and made available to the public on request. This is an ongoing regular activity.

- **Third Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Third Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it continues its outreach program where two panels of three judges travel the circuit to hear oral arguments at least once a year. The Court, in its random allotment of assigning appeal panels, tries to insure that each judge sits with each of the other judges at least once, and no more than twice, with any judge in a calendar year.
- **Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal reports that the internal problems referred to in its last report that prevented fully random selection have been resolved. Fully random selection is now in place.
- **Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal reports that the Court conducts twelve (12) full appellate cycles annually, or one cycle each month. The Court maintains close contact with all lower tribunals located in the Fifth Circuit's jurisdiction, and monitors the lodging of appellate records from those tribunals. With respect to writ applications, the Fifth Circuit accepts timely writ applications during business hours each day. In the case of emergency writ applications,

the Court has procedures in place for parties to file their applications at anytime, whether during or after business hours.

## Future Steps

- **None Reported.**

## Objective 1.2

To develop, clarify, and unify the law.

## Intent of Objective

The courts of appeal of Louisiana contribute to the development and unification of the law by resolving conflicts between various bodies and by addressing apparent ambiguities in the law. Our complex society turns with increasing frequency to the law to resolve disputes left unaddressed by the authors of previously established legal precepts. Interpretation of legal principles contained in state and federal constitutions and statutory enactments is at the heart of the appellate adjudicative process.

## Responses to Objective

- **First Circuit Court of Appeal.** The First Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it has entered a five-year, flat fee plus reasonable inflation contract for on-line legal research "anytime, anywhere" to allow unrestricted access through internet-based service. It has also established a library committee to review hard-copy publications to eliminate duplicate and redundant subscriptions.
- **Second Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Second Circuit Court of Appeal reports that providing adequate judicial legal resources and promoting collegiality is a regular, ongoing activity. The Court, through the Second Circuit Judges Association, conducts annual continuing legal education seminars to promote and improve the effective administration of justice and to provide a forum for the continuing education of its member judges and their legal support staffs. The Court reports that in 2002-2003, members of



the Court participated in the Harry Booth & Henry Politz Inns of Court conducting programs on professionalism. Members have also presented programs for the Summer School for Judges and 2003 LSU Recent Developments in Legislation and Jurisprudence on Judicial Ethics, Contempt of Court Issues and Professionalism. The judges of the Court have participated in local bar association presentations on subjects such as Ethics, Recent Developments in Tort, and Louisiana Appellate Process and its role in error correction and clarification of the law directed at new bar members and the young lawyer's section. In addition, the Court's judges participated in the New Judges Orientation Conference discussing Judicial Ethics (Canon 1-3) and the Louisiana Association of Defense Counsel discussing the topic of Louisiana Appellate Practice.

The Court reports that, in November of 2003, the judges of the court worked with federal and local courts, legal agencies, and civic organizations to host a delegation of Russian judges and the Deputy Director of Media Relations for the Russian Federation Supreme Court as part of the Open World-Rule of Law Program. The program was established to assist emerging Russian leaders during their transition to a new form of government. The visiting delegation was here to observe the operation of the jury system and other aspects of Louisiana's judicial and legal institutions.

The Court will continue to assist the district courts and state and local bar members by providing annual educational forums designed to promote discussion regarding error reduction and correction and the intermediate appellate process.

- **Third Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Third Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it has entered into a flat fee contract with both West and Lexus/Shepherds for online legal research. The Court has also reviewed its hard copy publications to eliminate subscriptions that have been replaced by the online services. Through the Third Circuit Court of Appeal Judges' Association, the Court conducts annual

continuing legal education seminars, which provide a forum for its member judges. This organization helps to promote and improve the justice system within the Third Circuit. The Court's judges routinely speak at CLE seminars for various associations.

- **Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it has adequate access to both electronic and printed legal research resources and uses those resources to clarify the law and to promote uniformity in the jurisprudence of the Fifth Circuit. In addition, the judges of the Court confer after each sitting, and monthly at an en banc meeting, both to discuss legal issues raised before the Court and to promote collegiality among members of the Court.

### Future Steps

- **None Reported.**

### Objective 1.3

**To determine expeditiously those petitions and/or applications for which no other adequate or speedy remedy exists, including mandamus, habeas corpus, election proceedings, termination of parental rights and other matters affecting children's rights, and to consider expeditiously those writ applications filed under the court's supervisory jurisdiction in which expedited consideration, or a stay, is requested.**

### Intent of Objective

The courts of appeal of Louisiana, pursuant to state constitutional provisions or legislative acts, are often the designated forums for the determination of appeals, writs, and original proceedings. These proceedings sometimes affect large segments of the population within the Courts' jurisdiction, or require prompt and authoritative judicial action to avoid irreparable harm. In addition, the courts of appeal have recognized that they have a special responsibility to ensure that cases involving children are heard and decided expeditiously to prevent further harm resulting from delays in the court process.



## Responses to Objective

- **First Circuit Court of Appeal.** The First Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it established a staff committee of the clerk's office staff and central staff to address routing, communication, and disposition issues associated with emergency or expedited writ applications.
- **Second Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Second Circuit Court of Appeal reports that the expeditious treatment of certain cases is a regular, ongoing activity. The Second Circuit operates with a rotating system of duty judges and a duty panel that are prepared to immediately act on matters warranting expeditious action. This Court expedites its cases as an ongoing regular initiative. Cases are screened at the time of lodging to identify those petitions/applications warranting expeditious processing as an ongoing regular activity of the Court.
- **Third Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Third Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it has adopted internal rules to insure that certain expedited children's cases are placed on the next available docket after briefing is completed. The Court strictly adheres to Rule 5 of the Uniform Rules and has always treated election-related cases on an expedited basis as provided for by the Election Code. Civil appeals are checked by central staff attorneys for jurisdictional flaws and any factors that would require the appeal to be handled expeditiously prior to lodging. The clerk or deputy clerk examines all incoming civil writs to determine if there is a need for the writ to be handled expeditiously. The criminal director, with the assistance of a paralegal, examines all incoming criminal appeals and writs to determine whether they need to be handled expeditiously. Special reports are utilized to track expedited criminal writ applications.

- **Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal reports that its Court has created a committee of three judges supported by central staff personnel in order to extend the use of summary docket procedures to a greater number of cases by screening all civil cases. This expanded use of the civil summary docket is in addition to the existing criminal summary docket.
- **Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it has procedures in place to identify those matters filed with the Court that require expedited consideration and disposition. Those procedures are implemented by the clerk of court's office in coordination with the Court's central staff. Appellate matters requiring expedited consideration are assigned to the next available appeal docket of the Court. Applications under the Court's supervisory jurisdiction that require expedited consideration are assigned to a special panel of judges randomly assigned to consider and dispose of emergency writ applications.

## Future Steps

- **None Reported.**

## Objective 2.1

**To ensure that adequate consideration is given to each case and that decisions are based on legally relevant factors, thereby affording every litigant the full benefit of the judicial process.**

## Intent of Objective

The courts play a major role in our constitutional framework of government by ensuring that due process and equal protection of the law, as guaranteed by the federal and state constitutions, have been fully and fairly applied throughout the judicial process. The rendering of justice demands that these fundamental principles be observed, protected, and applied by giving every case sufficient attention and deciding cases solely on legally relevant factors fairly applied and devoid of extraneous





considerations or influences. The integrity of the entire court system rests on its ability to fashion procedures and make decisions that afford each litigant access to justice. The constitutional principles of equal protection and due process are, therefore, the guideposts for the procedures and decisions of the courts of appeal. Each case should be given the necessary time based on its particular facts and legal complexities for a just decision to be rendered. However, each case does not need to be allotted a standard amount of time for review. Rather, each case should be managed, from beginning to end, in a manner consistent with the principles of fairness and justice.

### Responses to Objective

- **First Circuit Court of Appeal.** The First Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it developed a “records preparation seminar” that can be held at the First Circuit Courthouse or at the local clerk of court’s office to assist district courts in properly processing appeals, meeting deadlines, and reducing errors that might delay the lodging of the record. The Court reports that it supported rule changes to shorten opinions in appropriate situations and to clarify the writ application process. The Court also established a procedure to simultaneously notify counsel, the district court, and the Supreme Court of the Court’s decision in high profile cases. Under the procedure, the Court also expeditiously notifies the news media, and, if necessary, expeditiously posts the published decision on the Court’s website.
- **The Second Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Second Circuit Court of Appeal reports that, as an ongoing practice, it employs qualified legal support staff, provides adequate automated legal research tools, promotes continuing legal education, and continues to enhance its web page as a valuable resource for the public and bar. Internal practices of weekly writ conferences, pre- and post-argument conferences, promote adequate consideration of each case. The Court’s judges actively participate in monthly administrative conferences reviewing and enhancing procedures

and Uniform Rules. The Court’s web page keeps the public and bar informed of any changes in rules and procedures.

- **The Third Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Third Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it continued to update its Internet site with the internal rules of the Court to help keep the public and attorneys apprised of any internal rule changes. The Internet site also provides current and upcoming dockets, as well as published opinions from the Court. The Court has produced a pro se manual to help litigants in filing writ applications and appeals, which is also on the Internet site. The manual has greatly improved pro se litigants’ ability to provide the Court with necessary documentation, and aids the litigants in conforming to the Uniform Rules.
- **Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it has paid for continuing education and training.
- **Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it bases its decisions on complete appellate records, the briefs of parties, legal research by court personnel, and comprehensive discussion among panel members. If members of the panel consider it necessary, record supplementation or additional briefing by the parties is ordered. When appropriate, and as required by law, certain civil matters are referred to five-judge panels.

### Future Steps

- **First Circuit Court of Appeal.** The First Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it will contact the local offices of the clerks of court to offer them the opportunity to attend the “records preparation seminar” that has been developed to assist their efforts. It will initiate a Pilot Mediation Program to assist the public with an expeditious and appropriate resolution as an alternative to the traditional appellate process.



## Objective 2.2

To ensure that decisions of the Courts of Appeal are clear, and the form of the opinion is controlled by Rule 2-16, Uniform Rules, Courts of Appeal.

### Intent of Objective

Clarity is essential in rendering all appellate decisions. An appellate court should issue a written opinion when it completely adjudicates the controversy before it. Ending the controversy necessarily requires that the dispositive issues of the case be addressed and resolved. A fuller understanding of the resolution of the dispositive issues occurs when the Court explains the reasoning that supports its decision. Written opinions should set forth the dispositive issues, the holding, and the reasoning that supports the holding. At a minimum, the parties to the case and others interested in the area of law in question expect, and are due, an explicit rationale for the court's decision. In some instances, however, a limited explanation of the rationale for its disposition may satisfy the need for clarity. Clear judicial reasoning facilitates the resolution of unsettled issues, the reconciliation of conflicting determinations by lower tribunals, and the interpretation of new laws. However, the length of exposition does not determine clarity. Clarity is manifest when the Court conveys its decision in an understandable and useful fashion, and when its directions to the lower tribunal are also clear whenever it remands a case for further proceedings.

### Response to Objective

- **First Circuit Court of Appeal.** The First Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it worked with the other courts of appeal to draft a new rule outlining the appropriate use of full opinions, memorandum opinions, and per curiam opinions. The rule took effect January 1, 2004.
- **Third Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Third Circuit Court of Appeal reports that on August 1, 2003, the Court updated its Third Circuit Court of Appeal Citation Manual to insure that the citations and the form of its opinions are uniform.
- **Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal reports that, at the 2003 fall meeting of the Louisiana Conference of Court of Appeal Judges, various proposed revisions to the Uniform Rules of Louisiana Courts of Appeal (URCA) were discussed. Following that meeting, proposed amendments to URCA, Rule 2-16 were circulated to the judges of the courts of appeal and were approved by a majority of the courts. Those amendments, which became effective on January 1, 2004, provide as follows:
  - **URCA Rule 2-16. Decisions of the Appellate Courts.** The decision of the appellate court may be expressed in one of the following forms: a full opinion, a concise memorandum opinion, or a summary disposition conforming to the provisions of this rule. All opinions and summary dispositions shall contain the names of the judges who rendered the opinion or summary disposition.
  - **URCA Rule 2-16.1. Opinions of the Appellate Courts.** Opinions of the appellate courts, whether authored or per curiam, shall be formal opinions or memorandum opinions.
    - A. A case may be disposed of by formal opinion when at least one of the following criteria is satisfied. The decision involved:
      - (1) establishes a new rule of law or alters or modifies an existing rule;
      - (2) involves a legal issue of continuing public interest;
      - (3) criticizes or explains existing law;
      - (4) applies an established rule of law to a factual situation significantly different from that in published opinions of the courts of this state;
      - (5) resolves an apparent conflict of authority; or,
      - (6) constitutes a significant and non-



duplicative contribution to legal literature because it contains:

- (a) an historical review of law;
- (b) a review of legislative history;
- or,
- (c) a review of conflicting decisions among the courts or other jurisdictions.

B. Where the panel unanimously agrees that a case does not qualify for disposition by formal opinion, the case may be disposed of by a concise memorandum opinion. A memorandum opinion shall succinctly state:

- (1) the court from which the appeal comes;
- (2) the germane facts, including the ruling of the lower court;
- (3) the issues and contentions of the parties when appropriate;
- (4) the reasons for the decision;
- (5) the judgment of the appellate court; and
- (6) a statement that the memorandum opinion is issued in compliance with URCA Rule 2-16.1.B.

• **URCA Rule 2-16.1. Opinions of the Appellate Courts.**

A. In any case in which the panel unanimously determines no jurisprudential purpose would be served by a written opinion and that any one or more of the following dispositive circumstances exist, the decision of the court may be made by summary disposition. A summary disposition may be utilized when:

- (1) the appellate court lacks jurisdiction;
- (2) the disposition is clearly controlled by case law precedent, statute, or rules of court;
- (3) the appeal is moot;
- (4) the issues involve no more than an application of well-settled rules to recurring fact situations;
- (5) the opinion or findings of fact and conclusions of law of the trial court or

agency adequately explain the decision;

- (6) no error of law appears on the record;
- (7) the trial court or agency did not abuse its discretion;
- (8) the record does not demonstrate that the decision of the trier of fact is clearly wrong (manifestly erroneous);
- (9) the record demonstrates that the evidence in support of a criminal jury verdict is not insufficient; or,
- (10) the panel otherwise unanimously determines summary disposition is appropriate in accordance with the law and evidence.

B. The court may dispose of a case by summary disposition with or without oral argument at any time after the case is docketed in the appellate court. The disposition may provide for dismissal, affirmance, remand, reversal or any combination thereof as appropriate to the case.

C. When a summary disposition is issued, it shall contain:

- (1) a statement describing the nature of the case and the dispositive issues without a discussion of the facts;
- (2) a citation to controlling precedent, if any; and
- (3) the judgment of the appellate court and a citation to one or more of the criteria under this rule which supports the judgment, e.g., Affirmed in accordance with Uniform Court of Appeal Rule 2-16.2.A(1).

**Future Steps**

- **First Circuit Court of Appeal.** The First Circuit Court of Appeal reports that, pursuant to a newly adopted rule, it will begin issuing memorandum opinions and per curiam opinions in the spring of 2004.



## Objective 2.3

To publish those written decisions that develop, clarify, or unify the law.

### Intent of the Objective

The designation of judicial opinions as precedential authority is essential to achieving clarity and uniformity in the development of the law. The publication of these opinions as binding authority provides an easily accessible means of interested parties to ascertain the holdings of the Court and the rationale for its findings, thereby promoting understanding of the law and reducing confusion regarding the law. Decisions should be published or otherwise designated as authority when they: (1) establish a new rule of law, alter or modify an existing rule, or apply an established rule to a novel fact situation; (2) decide a legal issue of public interest; (3) criticize existing laws; (4) resolve an apparent conflict of authority; or (5) will serve as a useful reference, such as one reviewing case law or legislative history. See Uniform Rule 2-16.2.

### Responses to Objective

- **Second Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Second Circuit Court of Appeal reports that its judges served on two state committees – The Uniform Rules Committee and The Committee on Short Opinions/Publication Standards. These committees met jointly to review a report based on other states’ court rules applicable to the use of shortened, memorandum-type opinions, and summary orders, and rules applicable to the publication and citation of intermediate appellate opinions. The separate and joint meetings of these two committees working in concert with the Judicial Administrator of the Supreme Court resulted in the adoption of substantial revisions to Rules 2-16, 2-16.1, 2-16.2, and 2-16.3 of The Uniform Rules of the Louisiana Courts of Appeal, promulgated effective January 1, 2004.
- **Third Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Third Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it continues to follow the publication guidelines established by Rule 2-16.
- **Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal reports that the publication of court of appeal decisions is addressed by Rule 2-16 of the Uniform Rules of Louisiana Courts of Appeal (URCA). Previously, URCA Rule 2-16.2 governed publication of decisions. That provision was amended in the recent revision of URCA Rule 2-16. As revised, amended and adopted, effective January 1, 2004, URCA Rule 2-16.3 now provides as follows:
  - **URCA Rule 2-16.3. Publication and Citation.**
    - A. A formal opinion of a Court of Appeal shall be designated for publication unless a majority of the panel determines otherwise.
    - B. A memorandum opinion or a summary disposition of a Court of Appeal shall not be designated for publication except by unanimous vote of the panel.
    - C. Opinions and dispositions marked “Not Designated for Publication” shall not be cited, quoted, or referred to by any counsel, or in any argument, brief, or other materials presented to any court, except in continuing or related litigation. Opinions marked “Not Designated for Publication” shall be filed in the clerk’s office as public records.
    - D. The panel shall reconsider its decision not to publish an opinion upon the request of the trial judge or a party, provided that the request and reasons therefore are made in writing within the delays for rehearing following the rendition of the opinion.

### Future Steps

- **None Reported.**



## Objective 2.4

To resolve cases expeditiously.

### Intent of Objective

Once an appellate court acquires jurisdiction of a matter, the validity of a lower tribunal's decision remains in doubt until the appellate court rules. Delay adversely affects litigants. Therefore, appellate courts should assume responsibility for a petition, motion, writ, application, or appeal from the moment it is filed. Appellate courts should adopt a comprehensive delay reduction program designed to eliminate delay in each of the three stages of the appellate/supervisory process: record preparation, briefing, and decision-making. A necessary component of the comprehensive delay reduction program is the use of adopted time standards to monitor and promote the progress of an appeal or writ through each of the three stages.

### Responses to Objective

- **First Circuit Court of Appeal.** The First Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it significantly modified the Court's case management system to improve data input and review capabilities. The Court refined the "tickler" system to monitor a case for which a notice of abandonment has been issued, and to then dismiss the case after allowing for "postmarked" documents to be filed.
- **Second Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Second Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it has regular, ongoing procedures to monitor and reduce the backlog of all cases and time delays from lodging to disposition, employing electronic case management and docketing procedures. As an ongoing, regular activity, the Court strictly limits extensions and continuances. The Court monitors the progress of all pending cases through weekly and monthly status reports. It is an ongoing regular initiative of its court to strive for a 100% clearance rate in appeals and writs and to continue to process the majority of its cases within the time standards established for Louisiana courts of appeal.

It reports that a member of its court was appointed to the state Appellate Court Committee on Appeal Record Preparation. This committee will continue to identify problems with appellate record preparation and delay, and to make recommendations for change. As a regular ongoing initiative, the clerk of this court continues to work with court reporters to address problems with delay in preparation and receipt of the appellate record transcript. Several problem areas have been identified and procedures to remedy the problems are being explored. Addressing transcript delays will be a continuing cooperative initiative in 2003-2004.

- **Third Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Third Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it is current in hearing and rendering decisions on appeal and writ applications. There is little or no backlog in the Court. The Chief Judge receives timely and accurate monthly reports on the status of any holdover cases, including appeals and writ applications and monitors them through communication with the individual judges. The Court continues to utilize its "judges' bulletin board," a computerized case and opinion tracking program, that identifies held over cases and is a constant reminder to each judge of their cases' status. The Court continues to have a full-time paralegal on its criminal staff that works as a liaison with district courts and court reporters to insure the timely and proper filing of records and tracks supplementation of the records.
- **Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it adheres to the time standards for Louisiana Circuit Courts of Appeal contained in Part G, Section 6 of the Louisiana Supreme Court Rules. In addition, the Court has an ongoing, uniform policy for handling extension requests.

### Future Steps

- **The First Circuit Court of Appeal.** The First Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it will implement a document management system to allow instant retrieval of scanned and created



documents from within the Court's case management system.

### **Objective 3.1**

**To ensure that the Courts of Appeal are procedurally, economically, and physically accessible to the public and to attorneys.**

#### **Intent of Objective**

Making courts accessible to the public and to attorneys protects and promotes the rule of law. Confidence in the review of the decisions of lower tribunals occurs when the appellate court process is open, to the extent reasonable, to those who seek, or are affected by, or wish to observe its review. Appellate courts should identify and remedy problems relating to court procedures, court costs, courthouse characteristics, and other barriers that may limit participation in the appellate process. The cost of litigation, particularly at the appellate level, can limit access to the judicial process. When a party lacks sufficient financial resources to pursue a good-faith claim, provision should be made to minimize or defray the costs associated with the presentation of the case. Physical features of the courthouse can constitute formidable barriers to persons with disabilities who want to observe or participate in the appellate process. Accommodations should be made so that individuals with speech, hearing, vision, or cognitive impairments can participate in the court's process.

#### **Responses to Objective**

- **First Circuit Court of Appeal.** The First Circuit Court of Appeal reports that its checklists are used extensively. A "compliance" checklist is sent to each person receiving a notice of lodging of an appeal. If a received brief is non-compliant, it is returned with a checklist that notes deficiencies so that the brief can be properly corrected. Brief compliance checklists and a writ application checklist are posted on the Court's website.
- **Second Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Second Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it continues to insure physical accessibility through

participation in annual ADA surveys conducted through the Office of State Buildings and ORM Safety Management audits. Construction redesigning the court's security desk is increasing the presence of security within the courthouse facility. The Court utilizes its web page to insure public notification of court functions and services. The Court reports that the Supreme Court and Louisiana Courts of Appeal adopted a Uniform Loss Prevention Program in compliance with ORM Safety Management requirements. The Court is developing plans to enhance its web page to provide court rules and procedures to better assist pro se litigants. The Court reports that it worked with local bar associations scheduling CLE presentations at the courthouse to introduce all bar members to the courtroom, clerk's office, and courthouse facilities. The Court routinely opens its court and/or oral argument for student tours and orientation by the clerk of court/administrator and judges. Members of the Court conducted presentations at local schools and with organizations, such as the Boy Scouts of America, discussing the legal system and the judiciary's role in that system.

- **Third Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Third Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it has an appellate briefing checklist as well as a writ application checklist posted on the Internet site to help litigants and attorneys file their briefs and/or writ applications properly.

#### **Future Steps**

- **Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal reports that, in the coming year, the Court will study the adoption of formal written guidelines for assuring that information explaining the appellate process is made available to all users of the court, including victims of crime.



## Objective 3.2

To facilitate public access to their decisions.

### Intent of Objective

The decisions of the courts of appeal are a matter of public record. Making the decisions of the courts of appeal available to all is a logical extension of the courts' responsibilities to review, develop, clarify, and unify the law. The courts of appeal should ensure that their decisions are made available promptly to litigants, judges, attorneys, and the public, whether in printed or electronic form. Prompt and easy access to decisions reduces errors in other courts due to misconceptions regarding the position of the courts.

### Responses to Objective

- **First Circuit Court of Appeal.** The First Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it posts published opinions on the website the morning of release, along with a listing of all non-published opinions and the case dispositions.
- **Second Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Second Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it continues to provide timely decisions to the public and bar. Decisions are electronically transmitted to five publishing companies and published on the Court's web page immediately. News releases are available and published on the web page. The Court has developed internal procedures to insure opinions are rendered and released to the public in a timely manner.  
  
The Court reports that the clerk's office initiated dialog with representatives of media located within the twenty parishes of the Second Circuit in an effort to implement electronic notification of the rendition of opinions by submitting all news releases electronically and directing media sources to the web page to access the text of published opinions. This will be an ongoing initiative in 2003-2004.
- **Third Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Third Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it posts its published decisions on its Internet site. The Court has created a retention schedule for writ applications and appeal files. News releases are also published on the web page.

- **Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal reports that its website ([www.fifthcircuit.org](http://www.fifthcircuit.org)) contains a plethora of information available to the general public. The site allows the public to get copies of all published decisions of the Court, as well as copies of the Court's docket and local rules. The website also provides access to the Uniform Rules of Louisiana Courts of Appeal.

### Future Steps

- **Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal reports that in the coming year, the Court will consider adopting formal, written guidelines for handling sealed records and exhibits.

## Objective 3.3

To inform the public of their operations and activities.

### Intent of Objective

Most citizens do not have direct contact with the courts. Information about courts is filtered through sources such as the media, lawyers, litigants, jurors, political leaders, and the employees of other components of the justice system. Public opinion polls indicate that the public knows very little about the courts, and what is known is often at odds with reality. This objective implies that courts have a direct responsibility to inform the community of their structure, functions and programs. The disclosure of such information through a variety of outreach programs increases the influence of the courts on the development of the law, which, in turn, affects public policy and the activities of other governmental institutions. At the same time, such disclosure increases public awareness of and confidence in the operations of the courts.

### Responses to Objective

- **First Circuit Court of Appeal.** The First Circuit Court of Appeal reports that the Court continues to "ride circuit" to local universities and high schools to promote understanding of the Louisiana appellate process. The Court also



participates in informational programs with local civic and educational groups. The judges and staff are active participants in legal educational programs such as mock trials, Law Day, and continuing educational seminars. The Court reports that it routinely schedules group visits to the court, taking the groups on a tour of the courthouse building and arranging for time to meet the judges and staff to discuss the appellate process.

- **Second Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Second Circuit Court of Appeal reports that its judges regularly participate in local and state bar functions, including conducting programs on professionalism and ethics. The judges of the Court have served on the Board of Governors of the Louisiana Judicial College, the Northwest Law Enforcement Planning Agency, the Inns of Court, the Louisiana Supreme Court Ad Hoc Committees, and the State Committee to Evaluate Requests for New Appellate Judgeships. They teach pro bono at district judges' association meetings and the meetings of support groups, such as law enforcement officers, clerks of court, legal secretaries, and paralegal associations. The judges routinely examine the practices and procedures of the Second Circuit to ensure that all support staff carry out their court functions efficiently with professionalism and courtesy. The Court promotes continuing education for all professional staff. The Court also reports that it and the Second Circuit Judges Association conducted CLE seminars in 2002-2003 including sessions on professionalism and ethics.
- **Third Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Third Circuit Court of Appeal reports that its Circuit Riding Program helps educate the public within the Third Circuit by inviting the public and high school students to view oral arguments. The judges participate in various law day events and continuing legal education seminars.
- **Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal reports that judges and staff members of the Court are frequent lecturers at CLE programs presented by the Louisiana Judicial College, the Louisiana State Bar

Association, LSU Law Center, Loyola Law School, Tulane Law School and Southern Law School. The parish bar associations for the parishes within the Court's jurisdiction are invited to tour the court facility periodically during the year.

### Future Steps

- **First Circuit Court of Appeal.** The First Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it will continue to "ride circuit" to local universities and high schools to promote understanding of the Louisiana appellate process.

### Objective 3.4

**To ensure the highest professional conduct of both the bench and the bar.**

### Intent of Objective

By virtue of the public trust placed in the bench and bar, those engaged in the practice of law should adhere to the highest standards of ethical conduct. Ethical conduct by attorneys and judges heightens confidence in the legal and judicial systems. Standards of conduct for attorneys and judges serve the dual purpose of protecting the public and enhancing professionalism.

### Responses to Objective

- **First Circuit Court of Appeal.** The First Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it participated in LA State Bar Association's continuing education programs on the appellate practice.
- **Third Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Third Circuit Court of Appeal reports that through the establishment of the Third Circuit Judges' Association, it has helped provide pertinent CLE to lower court judges. The Association also offers a forum for feedback used in evaluating the Court's procedures and policies.

### Future Steps

- **None Reported.**





### Objective 4.1

To seek and obtain sufficient resources from the legislative and executive branches to fulfill their responsibilities, and to institute and maintain a system of accountability for the efficient use of these resources.

#### Intent of Objective

As an equal and essential branch of our constitutional government, the judiciary requires sufficient financial resources to fulfill its responsibilities. Just as court systems should be held accountable for their performance, it is the obligation of the legislative and executive branches of our constitutional government to provide sufficient financial resources to the judiciary for it to meet its responsibility as a co-equal, independent third branch of government. Even with the soundest management practices, court systems will not be able to promote or protect the rule of law, or to preserve the public trust without adequate resources.

#### Responses to Objective

- **First Circuit Court of Appeal.** The First Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it has worked with the Legislative Task Force to study the caseload problem at the Court over a two-year period, concluding with a final recommendation to refer the issue of additional judgeships to the Judicial Council for review in the spring of 2003.
- **Second Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Second Circuit Court of Appeal reports that the chief judge of that Court serves on the Judicial Budgetary Control Board. The Court also reports that it is a regular, ongoing initiative to maintain a system of accountability for the efficient use of resources in the operation of the Court and the management of its caseload.
- **Third Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Third Circuit Court of Appeal reports that in the past year the Court has upgraded its computer system to include WordPerfect II and has installed Microsoft Office. The Court has also upgraded its server hardware. The Court entered into a one-year

contract with Lexus/Sheperd to insure that its legal staff has access to the most recent cases.

- **Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it has worked with the other courts of appeal over the past year to coordinate budgeting requests for court operations. These requests are incorporated into the Court's annual budget request, which is then submitted to the Judicial Administrator's Office for review and recommendations. Once reviewed, the Court's budget request is considered by the Judicial Budgetary Control Board.

#### Future Steps

- **None Reported.**

### Objective 4.2

To manage their caseloads effectively and use available resources efficiently and productively.

#### Intent of Objective

The courts of appeal should manage their caseloads in a cost-effective, efficient, and productive manner that does not sacrifice the rights or interests of litigants. As an institution consuming public resources, the courts of appeal recognize their responsibility to ensure that resources are used prudently and that cases are processed and resolved in an efficient and productive manner.

#### Responses to Objective

- **First Circuit Court of Appeal.** The First Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it has engaged in continuous enhancement of the Court's case management system with the intent to allow web-based access to public information in the foreseeable future. It has completed the interface needed to send data electronically to the Court Management Information System and will begin transmitting such data electronically in 2004.



- **Second Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Second Circuit Court of Appeal reports that the chief judge appointed a committee, involving the clerk of court and central staff director, to review all internal docketing procedures and report to the court conference any recommendations for improvement or change. The continuing review and implementation of any recommended changes will be a targeted initiative for 2003-2004.
- **Third Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Third Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it is current in its filings. The “judges bulletin board” helps the judges manage their caseloads.
- **Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal reports that meeting this objective is an ongoing action at the Court.

#### Future Steps

- **First Circuit Court of Appeal.** The First Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it re-engineered the communications package with the court’s satellite office to allow for better case management data exchange. It will send data electronically to the Court Management Information System beginning January 1, 2004.

#### Objective 4.3

**To develop methods for improving aspects of trial court performance that affects the appellate judicial process.**

#### Intent of Objective

The efficiency and workload of appellate court systems are, to some extent, contingent upon trial court performance. If appellate courts do not properly advise the trial courts of the decisional and administrative errors they are making, appellate court systems waste valuable resources in repeatedly correcting or modifying the same or similar trial court errors. Appellate courts can contribute to a reduction in trial court error by identifying patterns of error, and by collecting and communicating information concerning the nature of errors and the

conditions under which they occur. Appellate courts, working in conjunction with state judicial education functions, might further this work by periodically conducting a variety of educational programs, seminars and workshops for appellate and trial court judges.

#### Responses to Objective

- **First Circuit Court of Appeal.** The First Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it has completed the interface needed to send data electronically to the Court Management Information System and will begin sending data electronically in 2004. In conjunction with a records preparation seminar designed by one of the court’s deputy clerks, the Court prepared, and provided, documentation to the district courts’ clerks regarding record preparation.
- **Second Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Second Circuit Court of Appeal reports that its judges exchange ideas and procedures with district judges; and, as an ongoing initiative, promote cooperative efforts in the appellate process by participation in various CLE programs, recent development seminars, and the Second Circuit Judges Association. The clerks of the courts of appeal present annual programs for the Louisiana Clerk’s Institute and City Court Clerks Association addressing appellate court issues involving record preparation, transcripts, and exhibits. The clerks of the courts of appeal initiated discussions concerning court reporter delay issues and presented the Judicial Administrator with initial recommendations for improvement in the notice/extension process. As a result of this initiative, the Supreme Court appointed a state committee in 2002-2003, consisting of representatives from all appellate courts to look at court delay issues impacting the appellate record preparation. The Supreme Court has appointed a member of the Second Circuit Court to participate in the Appellate Court Committee on Appeal Record Preparation. This will be an ongoing initiative for 2003-2004.



- **Third Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Third Circuit Court of Appeal reports that the Third Circuit Judges' Association provides a forum for issues concerning the judiciary. Through it, the judges of the court participate with the district judges in various CLE programs, including discussion of recent cases in the Third Circuit.
- **Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal reports that through its judges, clerk's office personnel, and central staff personnel, the Court has an ongoing dialogue with personnel of the district courts within the Fifth Circuit's jurisdiction. The purpose of this dialogue is to improve those procedures in the trial courts that affect appellate review. In particular, discussions focus on efficient appellate record preparation and timely filing of transcripts.

### Future Steps

- **Third Circuit Court of Appeal.** The judges of the Third Circuit Court of Appeal will continue their work and leadership in the Third Circuit Court of Appeal Judges' Association, their participation in the Circuit Riding Program, and in CLE seminars. The Court will continue to hire qualified staff and insure they are provided with the most efficient and cost effective research resources and equipment. The Court will use all necessary resources to insure the timely docketing and disposition of appeals and the handling of writ applications. The Court will also insure all cases requiring expeditious consideration will be identified and handled as quickly and effectively as possible.

### Objective 4.4

To use fair employment practices.

### Intent of Objective

The judiciary is an important and visible symbol of government. Equal treatment of all persons before the law is essential to the concept of justice. Accordingly, courts should operate free of bias in

their personnel practices and decisions. Fairness in the recruitment, compensation, supervision, and development of court personnel helps to ensure judicial independence, accountability, and organizational competence. Fairness in employment, manifested in the courts' human resource policies and practices, will help to establish the highest standards of personal integrity and competence among its employees.

### Responses to Objective

- **Second Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Second Circuit Court of Appeal reports that the chief judge actively serves on the Human Resource Committee and its Clerk of Court/Court Administrator serves on the Human Resource Team. Both take an active role in the appellate court's application of uniform and fair employment practices.
- **Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it has adopted, and every employee has signed, an e-mail and Internet policy.
- **Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it closely adheres to the employment policies and practices established by the Louisiana Supreme Court through the Human Resource Department of the Judicial Administrator's Office. The Court also has implemented all provisions of the Human Resource Management Manual.

### Future Steps

- **Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal reports that in the coming year it will study the adoption of formal ADA and Anti-Discrimination policies and procedures.

### Objective 5.1

To vigilantly guard judicial independence while respecting the other coequal branches of government.



## Intent of Objective

For the judiciary to be fair and impartial, it should develop and maintain its distinctive and independent status as a separate, co-equal branch of state government. It must also be conscious of its legal and administrative boundaries and be vigilant in protecting them. The judiciary has an obligation to promote and maintain its independence. While insisting on the need for judicial independence, the judiciary should clarify, promote and institutionalize effective working relationships with the other branches of state government and with all other components of the State's justice system. Such cooperation and collaboration is vitally important for the maintenance of a fair, efficient, impartial, and independent judiciary as well as for the improvement of the law and the proper administration of justice.

## Responses to Objective

- **Second Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Second Circuit Court of Appeal reports that its judges actively participate in the Louisiana Conference of Court of Appeal Judges and work closely to monitor legislative activity that adversely impacts the judiciary. The judges of the Second Circuit, through the Second Circuit Judges Association, provide a means to disseminate and discuss efficient procedures in the legal system to improve the administration of justice and to maintain the status and independence of the third branch of government.
- **Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal reports that it protects its judicial independence and integrity while respecting the independence and integrity of the Legislative and Executive branches.

## Future Steps

- **Second Circuit Court of Appeal.** The Second Circuit Court of appeal reports that it will continue to review and improve all regular and ongoing activities as a means of promoting the effective administration of justice. In 2004, the Court will again review its strategic plan to identify strategies requiring new initiatives and

the implementation and adoption of any additional objectives.

- **Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal.** The current Strategic Plan of the Courts of Appeal is a five-year plan for the period from 2000 to 2004. Since 2004 is the final year of that strategic plan, sound planning and operating procedures dictate that the Court continue to refine and execute the objectives of the current plan while developing a vision for the future of the Court. Standard planning procedures further dictate that the Court should request and receive planning guidance from the Louisiana Supreme Court prior to embarking on the planning cycle for the next strategic plan. The Court thus respectfully requests the Louisiana Supreme Court's vision for the future of the courts of appeal, particularly the desired end state for the courts of appeal in 2009.

## Objective 6.1

**To conduct operational planning by the Operational Planning Team.**

## Intent of Objective

The intent of the Objective is to establish an ongoing mechanism, under the supervision of the Conference of Chief Judges, Courts of Appeal, for ensuring the continued development and implementation of the Strategic Plan of the Courts of Appeal.

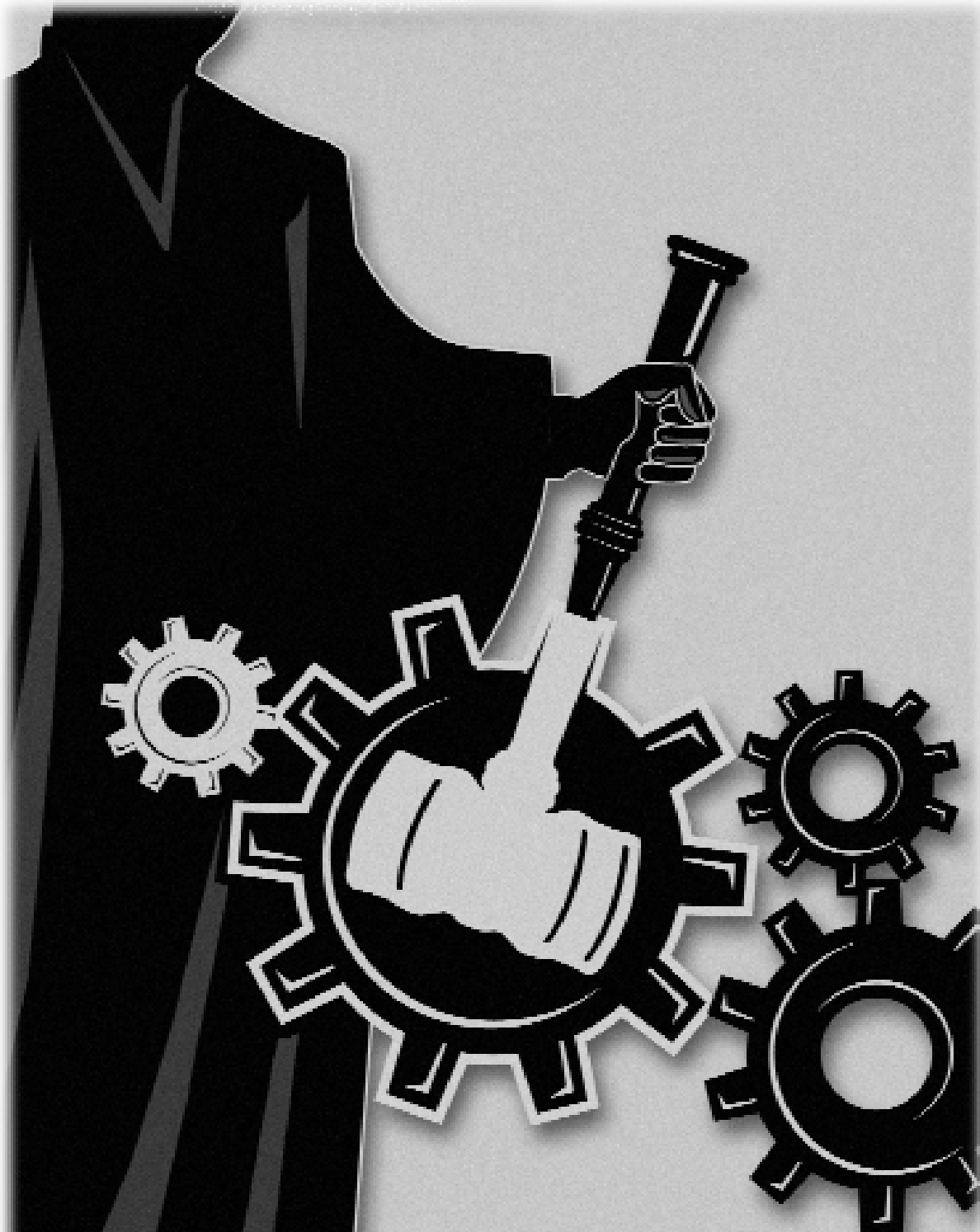
## Responses to Objective

- **None reported.**

## Future Steps

- **None reported.**





PERFORMANCE REPORTS:

**PERFORMANCE OF THE  
DISTRICT COURTS**

# PERFORMANCE OF THE DISTRICT COURTS

## INTRODUCTION

The Board of the Louisiana District Judges Association adopted the Strategic Plan of the District Courts in November of 1999. The Supreme Court of Louisiana approved the Plan together with the plans of the Supreme Court and the Courts of Appeal on December 31, 1999. At the time of adoption, the Strategic Plan of the District Courts contained five goals, twenty-three objectives, and seventy-four strategies.

To plan and guide the implementation of the Strategic Plan of the District Courts, the Louisiana District Judges Association established a Committee on Strategic Planning chaired by Judge Robert H. Morrison, III, and consisting of Judge Michael Bagneris, Judge Mary Hotard Becnel, and Judge Durwood Conque. The Committee met several times with the Judicial Administrator of the Supreme Court to develop and monitor an implementation plan consisting of the following elements:

1. distribution to each district judge of a copy of the plan and a letter from the Chair of the Committee on Strategic Planning listing FY 2001-2002 priorities and urging serious attention and action;
2. regular, periodic meetings of the Committee on Strategic Planning to monitor and facilitate further planning and implementation;
3. regular briefing of the Board of the Louisiana District Judges Association on the Committee's progress;
4. meetings with the Louisiana Court Administrators Association to brief the district court administrators on the strategic plan and to enlist their help with the plan's implementation;
5. development and distribution of the 2002-2003 Survey of Chief Judges on Judicial Performance.

Currently, the Committee on Strategic Planning is chaired by Judge Mary Becnel. All forty-seven chief judges of the district courts responded to the Survey of the Chief Judges. In most cases, the chief judges of the responding courts answered both the objective and open-ended questions included in the Survey. In some cases, the chief judges elected only to answer the objective questions. In answering the open-ended questions, most of the chief judges provided lists of activities that they either were using or planned to use to address the objectives. Sometimes, the chief judges simply indicated that their responses to certain objectives were part of the regular, ongoing activities of their courts. In other cases, the chief judges responded to the open-ended questions by indicating that their courts were either already in compliance with the objective or would take steps to be compliant in the coming year.

The information comprising the "Intent of Objective" sections of this Report was derived primarily from the District Court Performance Standards with Commentary 1990. The goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan of the District Courts were based on the adopted Performance Standards of the District Courts (Cf. Louisiana Supreme Court Rules, Part G, General Administrative Rules, Section 10.) The information presented in the "Responses to Objective" and "Future Steps" sections of the Report was derived from the responses of each District Court to a Survey of Chief Judges, which was prepared by the Office of the Judicial Administrator of the Supreme Court and disseminated to the district courts during the fall of 2002.



Because the city and parish courts have developed and are in the process of implementing their own strategic plan, the term “trial courts” will be changed in this report and later in the 2005-2009 strategic plan to “district courts.” The term district courts will henceforth include, for the purpose of strategic planning and performance reporting, the forty general jurisdiction district courts, the Orleans Civil District Court, the Orleans Criminal District Court, the East Baton Rouge Family Court, and the four juvenile courts – the Caddo Parish Juvenile Court; the East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court; the Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court; and the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court.

## DISTRICT COURT OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 To conduct judicial proceedings that are public by law or custom openly.
- 1.2 To encourage responsible parties to make court facilities safe, accessible, and convenient.
- 1.3 To give all who appear before the court reasonable opportunities to participate effectively without undue hardship or inconvenience.
- 1.4 To ensure that all judges and other district court personnel are courteous and responsive to the public and accord respect to all with whom they come into contact.
- 1.5 To encourage all responsible public bodies and public officers to make the costs of access to district court proceedings and records – whether measured in terms of money, time, or the procedures that must be followed – reasonable, fair, and affordable.
- 2.1 To encourage timely case management and processing.
- 2.2 To provide required reports and to respond to requests for information promptly.
- 2.3 To promptly implement changes in law and procedure.
- 2.4 To enhance jury service.
- 3.1 To faithfully adhere to laws, procedural rules, and established policies.
- 3.2 To ensure that the jury venire is representative of the jurisdiction from which it is drawn.
- 3.3 To give individual attention to cases, deciding them without undue disparity among like cases and upon legally relevant factors.
- 3.4 To ensure that the decisions of the court address clearly the issues presented to it and, where appropriate, to specify how compliance can be achieved.



- 3.5 To ensure that appropriate responsibility is taken for the enforcement of court orders.
- 3.6 To ensure that all court records of relevant court decisions and actions are accurate and preserved properly.
- 4.1 To maintain the constitutional independence of the judiciary while observing the principle of cooperation with other branches of government.
- 4.2 To seek, use, and account for public resources in a responsible manner.
- 4.3 To use fair employment practices.
- 4.4 To inform the community of the court's structure, function, and programs.
- 4.5 To recognize new conditions or emerging events and to adjust court operations as necessary.

### Objective 1.1

To conduct judicial proceedings that are public by law or custom openly.

#### Intent of the Objective

The general intent of the objective is to encourage openness in all appropriate judicial proceedings. The courts should specify proceedings to which the public is denied access and ensure that the restriction is in accordance with the law and reasonable public expectations. Further, the courts should ensure that their proceedings are accessible and audible to all participants, including litigants, attorneys, court personnel, and other persons in the courtroom.

#### Responses to the Objective

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that its dockets are posted outside courtrooms. It also has an informational officer present on the courtroom floor to assist participants and to direct them to the right locations. All of the 1<sup>st</sup> JDC's proceedings are open to the public, except domestic cases involving child custody. A court calendar is provided to attorneys, clerks, district attorneys and law enforcement departments.

- **2<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 2<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that it was in the process of installing a sound system with assistive listening devices for the hearing impaired in the Bienville courthouse.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 3<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it publishes its court schedules in its local court rules and that it posts copies of these schedules outside all courtrooms. In addition, copies of the schedules are furnished to attorneys, clerks, law enforcement personnel, child welfare personnel. The Court also reports that its proceedings are open to the public, except for juvenile hearings and domestic hearings when requested by either attorney.
- **4<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 4<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that several actions were taken in FY 2002-2003 to address the objective. A bailiff and signs were provided outside the juvenile courtroom to explain to the public why juvenile proceedings were closed. The schedules of hearing officers, which were previously internal, were made available on the Court's website and at the judges' reception area. The judges' receptionist was sent to a training seminar on reception procedures. A Spanish language course was made available to the judges on CD-Rom. The Court assigned liaison





personnel to the YMCA SAFE Task Force to provide assistance to victims of domestic violence.

- **5<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 5<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it is in the process of implementing a website to provide court schedules, calendars, and other information.
- **6<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 6<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it has sought and received cost estimates for assistive listening devices and has improved audio systems for a jury in one of three courtrooms. The Court reports that it will promptly consider acquisition of similar equipment in the other two courtrooms after appropriate evaluation. Action has been taken to update jury subpoenas and witness subpoenas with notice to persons needing enhanced audio assistance.
- **7<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 7<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that all proceedings are open to the public except those required by law to be closed. Both courtrooms are amplified. Annual court calendars are distributed to all courthouse agencies.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that juvenile adjudication hearings are closed to the public in accordance with the Louisiana Children's Code. All other proceedings are open to the public. It reports that the sound systems are monitored in each of the courtrooms on a regular, ongoing basis and that improvements are made as needed. In addition, individual judges will make accommodations when requested. The Court reports that its publication of court schedules is a regular, ongoing activity. The court calendar is distributed annually to the clerks of court, district attorney, sheriffs, detention facilities and members of the local bar. Revisions to the calendar are also distributed on an ongoing basis. Division E and Division G maintain websites that provide general information about the Court and the court docket.
- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its proceedings are open to the public. Restrictions on openness are only imposed on an individual case basis upon the request of litigants and in

accordance with law. The Court reports that its personnel are trained to address and explain the need for closed hearings for any judicially approved closed session. Bulletin boards are updated daily/weekly by each division of court to inform litigants of the schedule of all proceedings and to provide other general information.

- **26<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 26<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that all proceedings are open to the public except those required by law to be closed. In the instances where proceedings are closed, signage explaining the reason for closed proceeding is placed in the hallway adjacent to those courtrooms. Annual court calendars are disseminated to all departments. Signage and language interpreters are made available upon request.
- **32<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 32<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that its judges routinely explain why and when closed proceedings are necessary to bailiffs and the public. Listening devices were previously installed in the jury boxes of each courtroom to assist those with hearing disabilities to participate in the jury process. The court administrator handles other information requests concerning access to the courthouse and the other facilities and services available for those who have disabilities.
- **34<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 34<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its court purchased microphones and speakers for the main courtroom and one for smaller courtroom.
- **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.** The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court reports that its schedules are posted on bulletin boards outside of various courtrooms. The holiday schedule is posted on the website.

## Future Plans

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it will continue to add services at its information desk, which currently provides docket information, directions, and other assistance to visitors. The Court also plans to update its website.



- **2<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 2<sup>nd</sup> JDC states that, if the assisted hearing sound system installed in Bienville Parish proves cost effective, it intends to implement the system in Claiborne and Jackson Parishes.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its court is developing a plan to acquire real time court reporting equipment for court reporters. The Court plans to develop a proposal to automate the court calendar and develop a resource list and standby system to obtain signage and language interpreters. It also plans to obtain hearing assistance equipment when needed. The Court will implement a general court rule providing for ADA accessibility and compliance, including placement of the ADA accommodation language on its juror subpoenas.
- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that the new parish campus, presently under construction, will have a centralized, security controlled entrance for access to the court's building, the Jefferson Parish Administration building, and the District Attorney's building. The campus will include a centralized public directory to assist all persons entering the campus through the new entry process.
- **26<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 26<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will upgrade the sound systems in the courtrooms to improve audibility.

## Objective 1.2

**To encourage responsible parties to make court facilities safe, accessible, and convenient.**

### Intent of Objective

The objective presents three distinct aspects of court performance - the security of persons and property within the courthouse and its facilities; access to the courthouse and its facilities; and the reasonable convenience and accommodation of the general public in court facilities. In Louisiana, local governments are generally responsible, under the provisions of R.S. 33:4713, 4714, and 4715, for

providing suitable courtrooms, offices, juror facilities, furniture, and equipment to courts and other court-related functions and for providing the necessary heat and illumination in these buildings. They are also responsible, by inference and by subsequent interpretation of these statutes, for the safety, accessibility, and convenience of court facilities. District courts and judges, therefore, do not have direct responsibility for the facilities in which they are housed. However, the intent of Objective 1.2 is to encourage district courts and judges to work with responsible parties to make court facilities safe, accessible, and convenient.

### Responses to the Objective

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that the renovation of the ground floor of the courthouse is near completion. The renovated area will provide a new courtroom next to a prisoner holding facility. The Court also reports that court security and safety were upgraded in several ways. Court security was upgraded to include another entrance. Panic alarms were installed in every courtroom. A new fire alarm system was completed during 2003 and will be tested and fully implemented in 2004. Walk-through detectors were established on the first floor at the public entrance. A new security x-ray was installed for packages and parcels. Secure parking and a basement entrance for judges was established. The Court also reports that ADA compliance is of primary importance. It, therefore, conducted an ADA accessibility audit that has identified areas needing attention by each host agency.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 2<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that it purchased DRAGON software in 2002-2003 to provide real-time, voice-recognition transcription in Claiborne Parish. As of this report, the court reporters were still being trained in the use of the software, and the software was still adjusting to understand their voices.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 3<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it has built a wheel-chair accessible courtroom on the



ground level of the courthouse. The new courtroom has Braille signage, an amplified sound system, good acoustics, new recording equipment, a separate and secure holding facility allowing no contact between the prisoners and the public, restrooms for male and female prisoners, a new jury deliberation room, separate seating for the jury, a bullet-proof shield built into the judge's bench, a security door to protect the judge's chambers, new furniture, and equipment for conducting and transcribing court proceedings. The Court also reports that all courtrooms are now ADA-accessible and that employees have been trained in new mail-opening procedures and in ways to handle bomb and other security threats.

- **4<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 4<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that handouts are made available to the public at the judges' reception area for protective orders, evictions and traffic fines/court costs. All court schedules and many court forms are available on the Court's website. CPR and first-aid training were made available to all court staff. Emergency supply/information and anti-terrorism kits were developed and strategically placed in all sections of the Court. The Court has finished construction on a secure parking area for the judges. The basement entry is a secure port for deliveries and prisoner transportation.
- **5<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 5<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it is attempting to schedule a security audit with the U.S. Marshall's office. It conducts ongoing discussions with bailiffs, courtroom personnel and jurors regarding security measures. The Court also conducts ongoing discussions with bailiffs, courtroom personnel, jurors and other persons using court facilities regarding accessibility.
- **7<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 7<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that new chairs in one courtroom were purchased for the use and convenience of the jurors in the jury room during deliberation and breaks. One courthouse is an old building in a state of disrepair with no dedicated maintenance millage. The judges have encouraged the local funding authority to seek a

maintenance tax for renovation and repair of the building. Other attempts in the past have failed, but a maintenance tax millage is going to be on the ballot soon for this courthouse. Security is provided by personnel in the sheriff's office on a case-by-case basis at the request of the judge.

- **12<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 12<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it had meetings with the sheriff to discuss security issues.
- **15<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 15<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it consulted with federal marshals on security standards for employee access. The consultations have resulted in tighter security measures.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that the maintenance and development of security/emergency procedures are a regular, ongoing activity of the Court. The judges continue to meet periodically with the district attorney, sheriffs, clerks of court, parish government representatives, and other courthouse agencies in an attempt to identify and address current and future security needs. There are walk-through metal detectors located on the second floor of the Iberia Parish Courthouse, on the sixth floor of the St. Martin Parish Courthouse, and by the large courtroom in St. Martin Parish. Deputy sheriffs monitor the detectors, when court is in session. An x-ray machine is utilized periodically in the St. Martin Parish courthouse, and the courthouse maintains one main point of entry for the public. Accessibility is a regular, ongoing activity of the Court. The judges continue to work with local officials to bring the Court's physical facilities into compliance with the ADA.
- **22<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 22<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that the new St. Tammany Justice Center, which was occupied by the Court and other agencies in May/June 2003, has enabled the Court to address several strategic objectives. New security systems having metal detectors and security cameras are now in place. Emergency evacuation plans have been developed and fire drills implemented. All



courtrooms have ADA disability lifts for judges and witnesses; and a disability elevator has been added on the outside of the courthouse. Two monitors were installed in the courthouse lobby to provide information to the public on court schedules. A room, containing video monitors, a kitchen, and other conveniences for the jury pool has been included in the new facility.

- **23<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 23<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it commissioned the services of the Federal Marshall's Office to conduct a security audit of the facilities in Gonzales, Louisiana. As a result of that audit, steps are being taken to improve the security of the facilities. The Court also engaged in discussions with local law enforcement to implement new security measures, and discuss other ways to improve security. In addition, the Court has begun to utilize voice mail to ensure that the public has access to the Court when phone lines are busy or when staff is away from their desks.
- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it has signed an inter-governmental agreement with the Jefferson Parish Administration to provide security for all entrances to the Salvatore Liberto Building which houses the commissioners of the 24<sup>th</sup> JDC and the Court's administrative staff. The Agreement provides for walk-through metal detectors, x-ray machines, and handheld metal detectors. Access to the Gretna Courthouse Annex building is controlled by Gretna Police security personnel using the same equipment. The clerk of court's central computer and MIS department, support staff, and fifteen divisions of Court are located in the Annex building. Court security is notified of any potential safety issues when cases are to be heard or when verdicts are rendered in criminal and domestic matters. All building entrances have been equipped with wheelchair ramps and handrails by the parish, since all court buildings are owned, managed, and maintained through the governing authority – Jefferson Parish. The Jefferson Parish Citizens With Disabilities Department ensures that all Jefferson Parish facilities are ADA compliant. In addition, Braille signs have been installed in

court buildings by the parish. A TDD telephone is available for public use in the clerk of court's office. Each courtroom is equipped with a court reporting system and a sound system including microphones, speakers and amplifiers to ensure proceedings are audible to all litigants and support personnel. By request of the Jefferson Parish President's Office, the Court has worked with the parish to reduce security overtime costs. Security will be provided on Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to no later than 7:00 p.m. The only exceptions will be capital cases and those instances in which a jury has been deliberating for a substantial period of time before 7:00 p.m. and the Court believes extended hours will result in a verdict. The various sections of court are working to coordinate schedules whenever possible, and stopping trials at a reasonable hour to prevent jurors deliberating past 7:00 p.m. The Jefferson Parish Criminal Justice Agency has installed electronic evidence presentation systems in three divisions of the Court for testing and utilization assessments. The equipment includes the following: computer with evidence presentation software, DVD; evidence presenter (ELMO); cassette player/recorders (micro & standard); touch panels – for the judge and the witness; monitors – for attorneys, large screen monitor for jurors and general public; and a web camera. The Jefferson Parish Department of General Services has established emergency procedures for the safe evacuation of any parish building. Court security has been trained to assist with emergency procedures and evacuations. The court building has been equipped by the parish governing authority with a fire safety system including a public address system to notify occupants of potential problems and instructions.

- **26<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 26<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that the court administrator continues to conduct sensitivity training of court personnel on ADA issues. The Bossier Parish courthouse is currently under renovation and construction, and steps are being made to address safety and security issues during this period.



- **29<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 29<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it worked with courthouse officials to implement an evacuation plan of the facilities in the event of emergency. The Court also participated with the Emergency Operations Center of St. Charles Parish in a practice fire drill for the entire courthouse. (This will now be an annual exercise).
- **31<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 31<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it has continued the renovation of its courtroom, a renovation begun in 2000. In December 2000, a new audio sound system was installed. Since then, a digital recording system was installed to assist the court reporter. In late 2003, a PowerPoint system was installed that allows the use of DVD/VHS recordings with a laptop computer.
- **33<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 33<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it received bids on courthouse security equipment.
- **34<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 34<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it commissioned a security audit and installed card-access-only doors and a security station with a metal detector manned by police officers.
- **36<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 36<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that the sheriff's office and the Court jointly sponsored security seminar training for the Court's bailiffs. It also supervised a security audit of court facilities by the newly trained bailiffs to identify security needs.
- **40<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 40<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it began scheduling additional east bank court dates for the convenience of east bank residents. However, at this time, the additional scheduling has been limited by the facilities available to the Court.
- **East Baton Rouge Parish Family Court.** The East Baton Rouge Family Court reports that it continues to plan for the development of a new courthouse facility in conjunction with the 19<sup>th</sup> JDC. Funding is forthcoming and sites are currently under study.
- **East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court.** The East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court reports that the Court adopted a "Weapons and Workplace Violence Policy" which is published in the Court's recently adopted Personnel Manual. All juvenile court employees must sign a statement that they have read and understand the policy. All employees have a copy of the policy in their Personnel Manual. The Court provided safety training sessions focusing on fire safety, hostages, bomb and terrorist threats, and self-defense tactics for all court employees. In collaboration with the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office, the Department of Juvenile Services, and the City-Parish Department of Public Works, the Court upgraded and reinforced security measures that were already in place. Written procedures were circulated to all employees detailing specific instructions to be undertaken when the panic alarm is engaged during a courtroom emergency.
- **Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court.** The Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court reports that it developed additional procedures for dealing with emergencies.
- **Orleans Parish Civil District Court.** The Orleans Parish Civil District Court reports that the most significant improvement was made to Courtroom #315-A. The renovation was funded through the City of New Orleans Capital Projects Administration and allows the Court to accommodate a witness, juror, staff member or attorney with mobility impairments. The judges of the Court all agreed at an en banc meeting to allow any judge to try a case in this accessible environment whenever the case has a party or an attorney with a disability that requires such accommodation. The judge would swap courtrooms for the duration of the trial with the judge who regularly occupies courtroom #315-A. Other improvements included the construction of a unisex ADA-accessible restroom on the first floor, the installation of directional signage to the ADA-accessible restrooms in the building, and the addition of two handrails on the Loyola Avenue main entrance to the building. The



Court has also accommodated scores of hearing-impaired citizens with sign language interpreters, the most frequent of whom are the small claims pro se litigants in First City Court and the domestic relations litigants in Civil District Court. It has also facilitated and coordinated foreign language interpreters in accordance with the Uniform Rules from the Supreme Court. In addition, the Court, after working with the city for over two years, was able to restore and increase several designated disability parking spaces previously removed by the Office of Homeland Security. The new spaces will allow vans to unload on either side.

- **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.** The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court reports that it retained the federal marshal to conduct a security audit of the district courthouse. The Court also conducted periodic surveys of the opinions of jurors and court personnel regarding security, accessibility, and other aspects of the building. The Court implemented and made its employees aware of emergency procedures previously approved by the judges en banc as part of the Court's emergency preparedness plan. The Court has made ongoing efforts to maintain telephone courtesy and accuracy. The Court reports that ADA policies and procedures are continually addressed and monitored. It also reports that the City of New Orleans has funded the installation of new fire alarms and air conditioning systems for the building and has a pending capital outlay project to waterproof and seal the courthouse.

## Future Plans

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it will continue to upgrade security to the judges' offices and to courthouse facilities.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 2<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that, if the real-time reporting system installed in Claiborne Parish proves cost effective, it intends to implement the system in Bienville and Jackson Parishes as well.
- **4<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 4<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that, in conjunction with the Policy Jury, it will upgrade courthouse signage for ADA compliance and standardization.
- **5<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 5<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it plans to arrange for a security audit and an ADA audit in the coming year.
- **14<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 14<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it plans to provide greater security in the main courthouse and at the Family Court building in the coming year.
- **15<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 15<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it is working with the Lafayette Consolidated Government and other courthouse tenants to obtain funding for much-needed capital improvements and for the maintenance of the courthouse structure.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will continue to work with its parish governments, district attorney, sheriffs, and clerks of court to identify security needs, and to develop and implement a security plan for each courthouse that will address: evacuation procedures for emergencies caused by fire, severe weather conditions and bomb threats; emergency preparedness training for employees; and the installation of panic alarms on the judges' benches to signal directly to the sheriff's office in the event of a courtroom emergency. The Court also reports that it will conduct an ADA compliance audit in at least one of its parishes, identify and address ADA needs, compile a resource directory to enable the Court to respond effeciently to requests for accommodation, and communicate the availability of reasonable accommodation to court users.
- **17<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 17<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it plans to obtain financial assistance from other agencies to enhance courthouse security and to pay for related costs in order to free court funds for needs more directly related to judicial functions.



- **23<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 23<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it has hired an administrator who will participate in courthouse security seminars. The Court will continue to implement mechanisms to ensure the safety of courthouse staff and visitors.
- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that, in cooperation with Jefferson Parish, it is in the planning stages of major renovations to courtrooms, chambers and offices. The district attorney has completed a new building and Jefferson Parish is in the construction phase of a new administration building. The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC building, Jefferson Parish Administration building and the district attorney's building will utilize a single common entrance to provide the utmost safety to the public. The entrance will feature enhanced security including the use of magnetometers and trained security personnel. All buildings and the common entrance meet with ADA standards and requirements as determined and designed by the Jefferson Parish governing authority's architects. The Court's renovations will include a secure holding facility for prisoners, new jury deliberation rooms, larger elevators and bulletproof shields for the bench and witnesses. Security buzzers and closed circuit television systems will also be installed.
- **26<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 26<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it is presently in Phase One of its courthouse renovations in Bossier Parish. The police jury and court will strive to make the transition as convenient as possible for the public and court personnel.
- **31<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 31<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it will improve facilities for jurors outside of the courtroom. The Court hopes, if funds are available, to renovate the grand/petit juror deliberation room. It also hopes to acquire and update space for a second courtroom for use by visiting judges. In cases of recusal, but also in connection with the Ward II Juvenile Court, the extra courtroom would allow the regular docket to proceed while Ward II Juvenile Court and/or recusal matters are being heard.
- **33<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 33<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it will continue to upgrade courthouse security.
- **36<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 36<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will seek funding from the local governing authority to make improvements in courtroom security.
- **East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court.** The East Baton Rouge Juvenile Court intends to finalize and coordinate its emergency evacuation plans with the Department of Juvenile Services. Floor wardens will be appointed and trained to execute emergency evacuation procedures safely and effectively. Employees will also be trained in these procedures. In 2004, the front entry doors and all exterior doors of the Court's facilities will be replaced to comply with ADA requirements. Access to the Court from the Department of Juvenile Services will be reconstructed to eliminate non-secure public access to the court facility. The Court also plans to continue developing, implementing and maintaining those policies and procedures that will ensure employee safety and a more secure working environment.
- **Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court.** The Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court reports that it will commission a security audit of the new Jefferson Parish Juvenile Justice Complex.
- **Orleans Parish Civil District Court.** The Orleans Parish Civil District Court intends to develop a new civil district court building. The Court reports that it has outgrown its current facility. In addition, the old building greatly hinders the Court's ability to keep up with and take advantage of new technologies. There are not enough phone lines for current staff and electrical outlets for lawyers to plug in and use their laptop computers. The building's wiring is inadequate. There is no secure place set aside for jurors to privately deliberate. There is also not enough space to handle the number of jurors needed for big cases, like class action lawsuits. In addition, the current building does not have an adequate humidity-controlled environment to protect the



important documents housed in the Mortgage and Conveyance offices.

- **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.** The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court intends to secure space for two new courtrooms.

### Objective 1.3

To give all who appear before the court reasonable opportunities to participate effectively without undue hardship or inconvenience.

### Intent of the Objective

Objective 1.3 focuses on how a district court should accommodate all participants in its proceedings, especially those who have disabilities, difficulties communicating in English, or mental impairments. Courts can meet the objective by their efforts to comply with the "programmatic requirements" of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and by the adoption of policies and procedures for ascertaining the need for and the securing of competent language interpreters.

### Responses to the Objective

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that, by February 2004, there will be two functional courtrooms that will fully comply with ADA standards. Because the district consists of a cross-section of various nationalities, the Court reports that it has established procedures to have qualified interpreters available for the various nationalities that might appear in court. A list of interpreters and sign language experts has been compiled by the Court and is used when necessary for hearing and language-impaired witnesses and jurors. The Court reports that it uses both sign-language capability and real-time reporting to assist persons with hearing disabilities. It also uses real-time reporting for persons lacking sign-language capability. The Court reports that it makes assistive listening devices available for persons needing assistance but not requiring a sign-language interpreter, and that it has a courtroom equipped with special audio-listening devices specifically designed to assist individuals with hearing problems. The design of the device allows for free movement of court personnel throughout the courtroom.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 3<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it has compiled a list of court certified interpreters for those who speak other languages and those who are cognitively impaired. The Court reports that, when needed, it pays for the cost of such interpreters through the Judicial Expense Fund.
- **5<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 5<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it has developed a list of interpreters for persons speaking a foreign language or who are speech-impaired.
- **6<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 6<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it has established a pool of English speaking interpreters.
- **15<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 15<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it expanded its pool of language interpreters.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it provides language interpreters when needed.
- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that certified interpreters (sign and foreign language) are accessible and appointed through the same agency that the administrative office of the United States Courts for the eastern district of Louisiana utilizes. Upon approval by any division of court, the administrative staff and clerk of court staff coordinate and schedule all court appearances. The Court utilizes a Jefferson Parish contract with the Deaf Action Center for certified deaf interpreters.
- **26<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 26<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it continues to provide language interpreters as needed.
- **30<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 30<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it met en banc with representatives of the local bar to discuss making the docketing procedure more user-friendly for the public.





- **32<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 32<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that translators are made available through the judicial administrator's office, district attorney's office, and indigent defender board in order that participants in the judicial process who do not speak English may be heard.
- **East Baton Rouge Parish Family Court.** The East Baton Rouge Parish Family Court reports that it provides sign language services to the disabled free of charge.
- **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.** The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court reports that its judges and personnel regularly attend civility and professionalism training. The Supreme Court Code of Professionalism is displayed in various courtrooms and in the judicial administrator's office. The Court's Public Problem Resolution Process is channeled through the judicial administrator's office. Informal surveys are conducted to get juror opinions of courtesy and responsiveness. Ongoing efforts are made to survey the general public regarding the courtesy and responsiveness of court personnel as a means of improving customer service. The Court's judges participate in judicial training throughout the state. The Louisiana Court Administrators Association offers continuing education for judicial training once per year in Lafayette. Judge-to-judge exchanges are a regular, ongoing activity of the Court. The Administrators Association encourages exchanges through networking with other administrators in the country. Judges attend seminars at the judicial college in Reno, NV, and other places in the country where they exchange ideas and gain guidance from colleagues located in other jurisdictions. The Court partners with the University of New Orleans (Curriculum for International Visitors) to host visitors from other countries.

## Future Plans

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it will continue to provide facilities that comply with ADA standards and that it will continue to

improve security for the public and court employees.

- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will develop a resource list of certified sign and language interpreters and will disseminate the list to court personnel in all three parishes.
- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that, in cooperation with Jefferson Parish, it is in the planning stages of major renovations to courtrooms, chambers and offices. The National Center for State Courts and the architects have ensured that the building, chambers and offices will meet all ADA standards and requirements. In addition, an audit of ADA compliance will be conducted, and the Court has a contract with the National Center to oversee the plans of the parish architect to assure that these measures meet all required standards.
- **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.** The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court intends to continue to address ADA issues and problems. It also intends to provide ADA personnel training to its staff.

## Objective 1.4

**To ensure that all judges and other district court personnel are courteous and responsive to the public and accord respect to all with whom they come into contact.**

## Intent of the Objective

The intent of Objective 1.4 is to make courts more accommodating, courteous, and user-friendly. The Objective is intended to remind judges and all court personnel that they should reflect the law's respect for the dignity and value of the individuals who serve, come before, or make inquiries of the court including litigants, defendants, lawyers, witnesses, jurors, the general public, and one another.



## Responses to the Objective

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it continues to take steps to ensure that court personnel are courteous and responsive to litigants and the general public. It also reports that many of its judges serve as instructors on professionalism and ethics at local bar-sponsored seminars and that its judges continue to participate in local, state, and national education programs.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** In its 2001 comprehensive strategic report, the 2<sup>nd</sup> JDC reported on its efforts to increase collegiality among the lawyers and judges of the district and to provide training sessions for lawyers and law enforcement personnel. In 2002-2003, the 2<sup>nd</sup> JDC continued these efforts.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 3<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it continues to ensure the courtesy and responsiveness of its court personnel and judges. It reports that it has provided courtesy training to court personnel. It also reports that the Supreme Court's Code of Professionalism is posted in all courtrooms and in the judges' chambers.
- **4<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 4<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it has continued its Judicial Ride-Along program.
- **5<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 5<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it has maintained an ongoing dialogue regarding civility and professionalism. The Court has published the Code of Professionalism, in conjunction with the court's schedule and calendars, and has distributed these materials to the clerks of court, sheriffs and attorneys using the court system. The Court has maintained an ongoing dialogue with the local bar by using Bench/Bar Conferences, user surveys, and the Court's public problem resolution process. In addition, the judges have continued to mentor each other and other elected judges as needed.
- **6<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 6<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that the judges have presented seminar lectures on

professionalism and participated in law school freshman orientation programs on professionalism. It reports that the Supreme Court's Code of Professionalism is displayed in all courtrooms.

- **7<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 7<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its judges continue to stress to their staff the importance of being courteous and accommodating to the individuals who visit the courtroom. In-house training for minute clerks was conducted relative to the preparation of minute entries using correct ASFA language.
- **10<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 10<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that all of its judges attended professionalism training. The Code of Professionalism continues to be displayed prominently. The Court's Division A judge serves as mentor for a recently elected judge in another district; and all judges receive continuing legal education.
- **12<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 12<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it conducted staff meetings to discuss ways to show courtesy and respect to the public.
- **15<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 15<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it established a process for resolution of public complaints. The Court's judges act as mentors for other district court judges.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it is a regular, ongoing activity of the Court to ensure that court personnel are courteous and responsive. Judges participate in the Inn on the Teche and the American Inn to promote ethics and professionalism for the bench and the bar on a regular, ongoing basis. The Supreme Court's Code of Professionalism is displayed in some of the judges' chambers. Judges address and participate in judicial training and judicial exchanges of information on a regular, ongoing basis. The Court reports that its judges attend various training programs such as national Drug Court training conferences, National Judicial College courses, and training conferences



sponsored by the Louisiana Judicial College. Its judges participate in regional, state and national judiciary associations and attend meetings to network and exchange ideas with other judges and visit individual courts to view and experience first hand the initiatives of other courts.

- **22<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 22<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that its judges are assisting local attorneys in forming Inns of the Court in the district.
- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it has obtained videos for on-site/in-house training as provided from the Judicial Administration of the Supreme Court. It implemented a hands-on training class for employees and one-on-one training for judges in general computer skills (Windows XP), word processing (WordPerfect, MS Word), e-mail (MS Outlook), spreadsheets (MS Excel), presentation software (PowerPoint). A computer training room has been set up and equipped with individual work stations, electronic white board, projector and wireless access to the 24<sup>th</sup> JDC network. Its judges, law clerks, hearing officers, commissioners and court reporters attend annual conferences and CLE seminars. Judges have attended seminars as participants and lecturers. Under the court's policies, all requests/complaints must be submitted in written form and presented to the chief judge who will address the matter or refer it to the appropriate agency. Judges and the staff of the Intensive Probation Drug Court Program have attended Drug Court conferences and training in 2002 and 2003. Forms are available to litigants and attorneys in domestic matters. These forms include the 24<sup>th</sup> JDC Domestic Rule XIII relative to "Procedures for Support," "Mediation-Visitation or Custody," "Affidavit of Non-Covenant Marriage," "Joint Custody Parental Contract," etc. Court security personnel are required to attend updated training sessions and courtesy training. Law clerks have attended seminars on Westlaw given by West representatives. Court employees are instructed by the clerk of court's MIS department on the use of the electronic criminal and civil docket

management systems. Newly elected judges attend courses provided by the National Judicial College. Existing judges may also register for courses.

- **25<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 25<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it displayed the Code of Professionalism in prominent places throughout its courthouse.
- **26<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 26<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its judges and court personnel regularly attend training, and exchanges of information are addressed as part of the Court's regular ongoing activities. Court personnel are offered computer and technology training and are regularly sent to conferences and classes as part of their mandatory continuing education.
- **29<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 29<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that all of its judges attend several seminars that encompasses professionalism and ethics in the course of the calendar year.
- **32<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 32<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that its judges, in particular the chief judge, will address any problems concerning the judicial process or employees. In those situations where a complaint has been made concerning an individual judge, the chief judge provides that individual with the address and phone number of the Judiciary Commission of the Louisiana Supreme Court.
- **33<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 33<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it continued telephone courtesy training.
- **36<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 36<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its judges participated as professionalism education instructors on panels at judicial conferences to support the goal of judicial training in professionalism.
- **Caddo Parish Juvenile Court.** The Caddo Parish Juvenile Court reports that its judges participated in continuing education, ethics and professionalism training, and provided professional training for its employees.



- **East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court.** The East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court reports that it conducted a “Court Users Opinion Survey” to evaluate court services. All of its receptionists attended a telephone skills/customer service training, entitled “The Outstanding Receptionist.” All juvenile court employees attended “Excellence in Customer Service,” a customer service training workshop developed and implemented by the City-Parish Training Facility specifically for the juvenile court employees.
- **Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court.** The Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court reports that it formalized a Public Problem Resolution Process.
- **Orleans Parish Juvenile Court.** The Orleans Parish Juvenile Court reports that it provided courtesy training to the receptionists and telephone answering staff.

## Future Plans

- **4<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 4<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will display the Code of Professionalism in the courthouse and on its website.
- **7<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 7<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it plans to implement an extensive juror exit survey regarding courtesy, responsiveness, and other matters relating to its staff.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will establish a Public Problem Resolution Process and conduct periodic surveys of jurors, court personnel, attorneys, and litigants regarding court security, accessibility, courtesy, responsiveness and overall court performance.
- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that the Code of Professionalism will be posted in all courtrooms and in the judges’ chambers. It also plans to discuss and resolve at its en banc meetings the training topics and programs to be

developed in 2004 and 2005. In addition, the Court is considering having its hearing officers trained and certified in divorce issues and other domestic matters.

- **26<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 26<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its court reporters will be given an opportunity for training in real-time reporting.
- **East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court.** The East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court intends to identify and train employees to meet the needs of the disabled. It will also conduct another ADA sensitivity training session for all juvenile court employees.

## Objective 1.5

**To encourage all responsible public bodies and public officers to make the costs of access to district court proceedings and records – whether measured in terms of money, time, or the procedures that must be followed – reasonable, fair, and affordable.**

## Intent of the Objective

Litigants and others face five main financial barriers to effective access to the district court: fees and court costs; third-party expenses (e.g. deposition costs and expert witness fees); attorney fees and costs; the cost of time; and the cost of regulatory procedures, especially with respect to accessing records. Objective 1.5 calls on courts to exercise leadership by working with other public bodies and officers to make the costs of access to district court proceedings and records reasonable, fair, and affordable. The means to achieve the objective include: actions to simplify procedures and reduce paperwork; efforts to improve alternative dispute resolution, in forma pauperis filings, indigent defense, legal services for the poor, legal clinics, pro bono services and pro se representation; and efforts to assist the victims of crime.



## Responses to the Objective

### General Responses

- **Pro Se Assistance through Clerk of Court.** Twenty district courts said they worked with their clerks of court to provide pro se assistance. (3rd JDC; 5th JDC; 7th JDC; 9th JDC; 10th JDC; 11th JDC; 12th JDC; 14th JDC; 17th JDC; 25th JDC; 26th JDC; 30th JDC; 31st JDC; 32nd JDC; 36th JDC; 37th JDC; 40th JDC; Family Court of East Baton Rouge Parish; the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court; and the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court).
- **Pro Se Assistance through Local Bar.** Ten district courts said that they worked with their local bar associations to provide pro se assistance. (1st JDC; 10th JDC; 20th JDC; 21st JDC; 27th JDC; 32nd JDC; 34th JDC; Caddo Parish Juvenile Court; Family Court of East Baton Rouge Parish; and the Orleans Parish Civil District Court).

### Responses of Individual Courts

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it continues to support the local bar's Lawyer Referral Service and its Pro Bono Program. The Court reports that it works with Northwest Legal Services, the local agency furnishing quality civil legal services to financially disadvantaged persons, and that it fully supports the district indigent defender office. With respect to the latter, the Court reports that it has done everything possible to provide additional funding for the office including the use of probation fees and other charges when appropriate. The Court also reports that it has established an information desk on the 1st floor of the courthouse and has hired two information clerks to assist the public with court-related matters. The Court reports that it has also purchased pamphlets on various legal topics that are distributed from the information clerks' kiosk.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 3<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that indigent criminal defendants are regularly appointed counsel and that, in Ruston, a Domestic Abuse

Resistance Team provides free legal assistance to victims of domestic abuse. The Court also reports that it has worked with its clerks of court to provide assistance to pro se litigants.

- **4<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 4<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that the 4<sup>th</sup> judicial district attorney has established a Victims Assistance Program. It also reports that court personnel provided instructional handouts for the public on evictions, protective orders, traffic fines, and court costs.
- **5<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 5<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it met with the Indigent Defender Board and the attorneys who regularly provide indigent defense in criminal cases to evaluate the quality of indigent defender services. The Court also reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide assistance to pro se litigants.
- **7<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 7<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its judges meet regularly with the Indigent Defender Board regarding policies and procedures that help the Board to defend financially disadvantaged defendants. Pro se protective orders are facilitated through the clerk of court.
- **9<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 9<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it worked with the clerk of court and the local bar to provide information to pro se litigants.
- **10<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 10<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it worked closely with the area legal aid office to provide services to the financially disadvantaged. The Court also reports that it worked with its clerk of court to adopt the uniform in forma pauperis filing application and to provide pro se assistance. It reports that it worked with its local Indigent Defender Board to improve the availability and quality of indigent defender services and that it adopted a local rule requiring appointed indigent defenders to have first contact with an incarcerated client within a specified time period. In addition, it reports that it met with the district attorney victim assistance officer to improve communication between victims and the court system.



- **11<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 11<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it worked with its clerk of court to provide information to pro se litigants.
- **12<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 12<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it worked with its clerk of court to provide information to pro se litigants.
- **14<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 14<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it worked with its clerk of court to provide information to pro se litigants and that the Court hired a paralegal to handle “jail mail”, a strategy that sped up response time considerably. The Court also reports that a Task Force was formed to determine the best method of delivering legal representation to indigent defendants. The Task Force used information from Dr. Mie Kirth’s study of representation under the American Bar Association’s “Project Gideon” and from the Task Force’s own survey. As a result of its study, the Task Force found that there were far fewer cases handled by each P.D.O attorney than initially believed. The Task Force created a form for indigent defendants to complete in accordance with H.B. 1732. It also started a fee collection process. In addition, meetings were set up in each division of Court between the ADA and the P.D.O. to check the number of cases they thought were active. The Task Force also determined that the P.D.O. needed more investigative and clerical staff.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its judges meet with the Indigent Defender Board on an ongoing basis to improve and monitor the availability and quality of indigent defender services. Its judges receive written reports from the Indigent Defender Board regarding services provided. The judges maintain a Juvenile Docket Coordinator program in Iberia and St. Martin Parishes and expanded the program into St. Mary Parish. The coordinator maintains a resource list of attorneys for appointment to ensure representation of children and parents. The juvenile docket coordinator also coordinates pre-trial conferences (Parent Legal Orientation

Conferences) conducted by Indigent Defense attorneys to advise participants of the nature and consequences of the proceedings and maintains a DWI Victim Impact Panel.

- **17<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 17<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it worked with its clerk of court to provide information to pro se litigants.
- **20<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 20<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it worked with its local bar to provide information to pro se litigants.
- **21<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 21<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it worked with its local bar to provide information to pro se litigants.
- **23<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 23<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it has designated a location in the Gonzales facility as the Victim’s Assistance room. This room is available to victims and their families to help them feel safer and to offer them a more comfortable setting.
- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that Jefferson Parish provides payment for language and hearing impaired interpreters for jurors, witnesses, criminal defendants, and others. The Indigent Defender Board is appointed to provide free legal assistance to financially disadvantaged defendants. Financially disadvantaged litigants who meet established criteria are granted in forma pauperis status. They must submit an application for approval. The Court provides persons representing themselves a list of lawyer referral services as well as legal assistance clinics and pro bono projects if necessary. The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC has instituted a domestic court support collection system that assists pro se litigants in the collection of child support and spousal support. The Court has established a committee to update the local Domestic Court Rules to better accommodate litigants in domestic cases. Additionally, delinquent payers are placed into a court collection system to monitor their payments.



- **25<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 25<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it worked with its clerk of court to provide information to pro se litigants.
- **26<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 26<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it worked with its clerk of court to provide information to pro se litigants.
- **27<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 27<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it worked with its clerk of court and local bar to provide information to pro se litigants. It also reports that it established a pro bono fund to assist indigent litigants in civil cases.
- **29<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 29<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it provided pro se litigants with the names of agencies offering legal services for needy litigants.
- **30<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 30<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it worked with its clerk of court to provide information to pro se litigants.
- **31<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 31<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it worked with its clerk of court to provide information to pro se litigants.
- **32<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 32<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that it worked with its clerk of court and local bar to provide information to pro se litigants.
- **34<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 34<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it modified forms to apply for in forma pauperis status and increased funding to the district IDB to ensure service in the face of a budget shortfall. The Court also reports that it worked with its local bar to provide information to pro se litigants.
- **36<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 36<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it worked with its clerk of court to provide information to pro se litigants. It also reports that its staff has been instructed on community resources that are available in the area for indigent civil and criminal litigants.
- **37<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 37<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it worked with its clerk of court to provide information to pro se litigants.
- **40<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 40<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it worked with its clerk of court to provide information to pro se litigants.
- **Caddo Parish Juvenile Court.** The Caddo Parish Juvenile Court reports that it assumed a leadership role in assuring effective civil legal assistance for the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren initiative. The Court also contributed significant direct funding to the local IDB and maintained a high quality private attorney panel with expertise in the Child-In-Need-of-Care case representation of parents. It also continued its support and facilitation of pro se representation for petitioners in domestic violence/protective order cases.
- **Family Court of East Baton Rouge Parish.** The Family Court of East Baton Rouge Parish reports that it worked with its clerk of court and local bar to provide information to pro se litigants.
- **Juvenile Court of East Baton Rouge Parish.** The Juvenile Court of East Baton Rouge Parish reports that it assisted pro se litigants in pleadings. It also made referrals to the “Thirst for Justice Program”, a program of the Baton Rouge Bar Association’s Pro Bono Project.
- **Orleans Parish Civil District Court.** The Orleans Parish Civil District Court reports that it worked with the local bar to provide information to pro se litigants.
- **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.** The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court reports that it worked with its clerk of court to provide information to pro se litigants. It also reports that it will appoint indigent defenders to assist pro se litigants.



- **Orleans Parish Juvenile Court.**

The Orleans Parish Juvenile Court reports that, prior to this fiscal year, six public defenders and one supervising attorney had to share a one-room office. There was no space to meet with juveniles and their parents in private. Following an internal review of space utilization within the Court, a two-room office suite was provided to the public defenders, allowing space for a full-time receptionist and for private meeting space with clients.

### Future Plans

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it will focus on improving the quality of representation provided to indigent defenders in the coming year.
- **14<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 14<sup>th</sup> JDC will solicit grant funding to meet some of the needs of indigent representation.

### Objective 2.1

To encourage timely case management and processing.

### Intent of the Objective

The American Bar Association, the Conference of Chief Justices, and the Conference of State Court Administrators have recommended that all courts adopt time standards for expeditious case management at the district court level. Such time standards, according to their proponents, were intended to serve as a tool for expediting case processing and reducing delay. The Louisiana Supreme Court adopted aspirational time standards in 1993 for itself, the courts of appeal, and for the general civil, summary civil, and domestic relations cases at the district court level. At the Supreme Court and intermediate appellate court levels, the adopted time standards are measured with the assistance of automated case management information systems and are reported in the Annual Report of the Supreme Court and as performance indicators in the judicial appropriations bill. At the district court level,

however, the time standards cannot be measured for the district courts as a whole, or for most individual courts, due to the low level or of automation of the systems operated by the clerks of court. Time standards are also imbedded in the Louisiana Children’s Code in the form of maximum time limits for the holding of hearings in Child-in-Need-of-Care (CINC) cases and other types of juvenile cases. However, these mandated time standards also cannot be monitored or measured efficiently at the present time due to the lack of automation in the district court system. For these reasons, Objective 2.1 focuses on strategies for developing interim manual case management systems and techniques while automated case management information systems are being developed. The Objective also focuses on timeliness in the sense of the punctual commencement of scheduled proceedings.

### Responses to the Objective

#### General Responses

- **Improvement of Docketing and Scheduling.** Twenty-one district courts said that they had improved docketing and scheduling. (1st JDC; 3rd JDC; 4th JDC; 5th JDC; 6th JDC; 7th JDC; 8th JDC; 15th JDC; 17th JDC; 18th JDC; 21st JDC; 23rd JDC; 25th JDC; 26th JDC; 27th JDC; 28th JDC; 30th JDC; 31st JDC; 33rd JDC; Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court; and the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court).
- **Improvement of Manual System of Case Processing.** Eleven said that they had improved their manual system of case processing (2nd JDC; 3rd JDC; 5th JDC; 8th JDC; 12th JDC; 13th JDC; 17th JDC; 18th JDC; 22nd JDC; 23rd JDC; and the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court).
- **Implementation of Pre-Trial Conferences.** Thirteen said that they had implemented pre-trial conferences (1st JDC; 4th JDC; 5th JDC; 6th JDC; 8th JDC; 9th JDC; 11th JDC; 13th JDC; 15th JDC; 18th JDC; 23rd JDC; 28th JDC; and the 34th JDC).





- **Installation of an Automated Case Management Information System.** Five said that they had installed an automated case management information system (4th JDC; 8th JDC; 19th JDC; 23rd JDC; and the Family Court of East Baton Rouge Parish).
- **Reduction of Cases Under Advisement.** Seventeen said that they had taken steps to reduce cases under advisement (2nd JDC; 5th JDC; 6th JDC; 7th JDC; 8th JDC; 11th JDC; 17th JDC; 18th JDC; 23rd JDC; 25th JDC; 29th JDC; 31st JDC; 33rd JDC; 34th JDC; 35th JDC; 38th JDC; and the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court).
- **Encouragement of Alternative Dispute Resolution.** Twenty-two said that they had encouraged alternative dispute resolution (1st JDC; 2nd JDC; 4th JDC; 6th JDC; 7th JDC; 10th JDC; 11th JDC; 17th JDC; 18th JDC; 21st JDC; 23rd JDC; 25th JDC; 26th JDC; 27th JDC; 29th JDC; 31st JDC; 32nd JDC; 34th JDC; 35th JDC; 36th JDC; Caddo Parish Juvenile Court; and the Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court).

### Responses of Individual Courts

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that more civil and criminal jury weeks were scheduled to move cases. Court calendars were provided to attorneys, district attorneys, sheriffs and clerks. Pre-trial conferences are routinely held by all civil sections to expedite case management. Judges and administrators are encouraged to attend case management seminars to improve their skills. In addition, the Court reports that it has generally improved its docketing and scheduling and has encouraged alternative dispute resolution.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 2<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that it improved its manual system of case processing, took steps to reduce cases under advisement, and encouraged alternative dispute resolution.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 3<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it improved its docketing and scheduling processes and its

manual system of case processing. It continues to use a pre-trial conference system to expedite cases.

- **4<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 4<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it assisted in the drafting, passage and implementation of House Bill 1564 (amending LSA R.S.46:236.5) allowing hearing officers to conduct pre-trial settlement conferences and to recommend interim orders in family and domestic cases. The Court hired a second hearing officer to accommodate the increase in case processing. The Court reports that it developed a manual system to track all cases taken under advisement and that it installed an automated case management system for civil and criminal cases. The new system allows cases to be scheduled and tracked. It also allows private notes to be kept, and searches to be made by all fields. Judges and staff share an online calendar to facilitate docketing. With the assistance of the Supreme Court, the 4<sup>th</sup> JDC went online with the CMIS website and has certified their court personnel to perform background checks on criminal defendants. The Court also developed an extensive database to maintain records on all district child support cases. Each judge's office provides a courtroom technologist to ensure child support orders are entered into the system correctly, and implemented and recorded properly. The Court expanded its wireless network in both parishes and installed additional wireless printers and copy machines to courtrooms. In addition, the Court placed its family domestic rules and forms on its website. Hard copies and electronic copies of these rules were provided to local attorneys. The Court also took the following actions to reduce delays and improve case management in FY 2002-2003: it improved its docketing and scheduling; implemented pre-trial conferences; and encouraged alternative dispute resolution.
- **5<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 5<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved docketing and scheduling, improved the manual system of case processing, implemented pre-trial conferences and took steps to reduce cases under advisement.



- **6<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 6<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved docketing and scheduling, implemented pre-trial conferences, took steps to reduce cases under advisement, encouraged alternative dispute resolution and, in general, took action to improve and expedite case management and processing.
- **7<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 7<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved docketing and scheduling, took steps to reduce cases under advisement, and encouraged alternative dispute resolution. In addition, the judges used the bench books and time lines supplied by the Judicial Administrator of the Supreme Court to ensure that Child-in-Need-of-Care cases and cases relating to the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) were docketed in a timely manner.
- **8<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 8<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved docketing and scheduling, improved the manual system of case processing, implemented pre-trial conferences, installed an automated case management information system and took steps to reduce cases under advisement. The Court also reports that it has both manual and automated controls over its docketing process.
- **9<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 9<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it implemented pre-trial conferences, developed a Fathering Court, and initiated domestic court reform in FY 2002-2003 to reduce delays and improve case management.
- **10<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 10<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it continually worked in all areas in FY 2002-2003 to eliminate delays and improve case management. It also took special steps to encourage alternative dispute resolution.
- **11<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 11<sup>th</sup> JDC implemented pre-trial conferences, took steps to reduce cases under advisement, and encouraged alternative dispute resolution.
- **12<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 12<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved the manual system of case processing.
- **13<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 13<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved the manual system of case processing and implemented pre-trial conferences.
- **14<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 14<sup>th</sup> JDC added an additional petit jury week for each judge as a means of expediting cases.
- **15<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 15<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved docketing and scheduling and implemented pre-trial conferences.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it maintained its criminal case allotment system whereby cases are allotted to specific judges for one year. This procedure has enabled better case management by the judiciary, reduced the time between arrest and arraignment, and reduced the time between arrest and case disposition. The Court maintained juvenile court dockets assigned to one judge in each parish, an initiative that has resulted in continuity of judicial oversight and improved proficiency. Its judges conduct periodic review of domestic violence cases on an ongoing basis, which requires in-court status conferences with the parties. They also conduct periodic review of certain domestic relations cases with the parties on an ongoing basis, especially in contested custody-visitation cases. The Court also reports that it maintained the Family Court program in St. Mary and Iberia Parishes and expanded the program to St. Martin Parish in March 2003. The Family Court hearing officers conduct intake procedures and conferences between involved parties and attorneys in all matters concerning divorce, child custody and visitation, child support, spousal support, use and occupancy of the home and of movables, community property, and petitions for protective orders. The hearing officers make recommendations for the continued development and expansion of the program. The Court also maintained a program to reduce delays in Child-In-Need-of-Care cases through a Juvenile Docket Coordinator in Iberia, St. Martin and St. Mary Parishes. The Juvenile Docket Coordinator



coordinates Parent Legal Orientation Conferences to advise participants of the nature and consequences of the proceedings and maintains a resource list of attorneys for appointment to ensure representation of parents and children. The coordinator also communicates with attorneys, clients and caseworkers to reduce delays and maintains data in a juvenile court management database to monitor and track cases.

- **17<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 17<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved docketing and scheduling, improved the manual system of case processing, took steps to reduce cases under advisement, and encouraged alternative dispute resolution.
- **18<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 18<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved docketing and scheduling, improved the manual system of case processing, implemented pre-trial conferences, took steps to reduce cases under advisement and encouraged alternative dispute resolution.
- **19<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 19<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it began installation of an automated case management information system to reduce delays and improve case management.
- **20<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 20<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that delays are not a problem in the district.
- **21<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 21<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it improved docketing and scheduling and encouraged alternative dispute resolution. It also reports that many of its judges were able to schedule additional civil week dates.
- **22<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 22<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that it improved the manual system of case processing and that it made changes in its felony arraignment procedure to shorten the time between arrest and arraignment.
- **23<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 23<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that each division of the Court has a manual case management system. Some divisions have sent

secretaries to seminars to learn about automated case management and have begun to implement the same. In addition, the Court reports that it improved docketing and scheduling, implemented pre-trial conferences, took steps to reduce cases under advisement, and encouraged alternative dispute resolution.

- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its criminal commissioners perform statutory duties under R.S.13:717. The criminal commissioners handle arraignment/status hearings, bonds and warrants, worthless check court arraignments and hearings, first appearance, jail arraignments and hearings, probable cause affidavits, and stay-away orders. Defendants are personally served with notices to appear in commissioner court upon release from jail for a status hearing 45 days after release. Also, the surety is personally served at the time of the defendants' release. The defendant is arraigned at the status hearing if the district attorney accepts the charges. If the district attorney refuses the charges, the individual is informed of the refusal and the sureties are released of their bond obligations. The criminal commissioners set bonds and sign arrest, seizure and search warrants, eliminating interruptions to the judge in his daily duties. Bonds are immediately set using a bond range chart to provide consistency in the setting of the bond. The criminal commissioners are on-call Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 4:40 p.m. to sign seizure, arrest and search warrants. An arrested person is brought before a committing magistrate within 72 hours of arrest pursuant to the Louisiana Code of Criminal Procedure 230.1. If the defendant qualifies for the appointment of a public defender, the 24th Judicial District Indigent Defender Board is notified in writing immediately. Criminal commissioners arraign defendants in the Jefferson Parish Correctional Facility, eliminating the need to transport prisoners. Once the bill of information or indictment is filed and allotted, the clerk sets an arraignment for the next day. Motions to Reduce Bonds, Writs of Habeas Corpus, and "701" Motions are set and heard within 24 to 48 hours after filing. Preliminary examinations are set and



heard within two weeks. The criminal commissioners issue criminal stay-away orders as a condition of bail to defendants who meet certain criteria. Stay-away orders are also issued to all persons accused of stalking. Original orders are filed in the Court's records. Copies are mailed to the victim, faxed immediately to the Louisiana Supreme Court's Protective Order Registry, hand delivered to the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office, personally served on the defendant while he/she is before the commissioner, attached to the defendant's jail records, and sent to the Jefferson Parish District Attorney's Office. The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC clerk of court has established an automated case management and docket information system. This system expedites the exchange of information through a shared database, retains case information on computer, and provides a means for tracking specific events in each case record. The Jefferson Parish Community Justice Agency facilitates the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement for the criminal justice network system. The ongoing agreement was entered into by and between the Parish of Jefferson, Jefferson Parish Clerk of Court, Jefferson Parish District Attorney, the 24<sup>th</sup> JDC and the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office on the 1st day of January 2003. Under the agreement, the parish has a general commitment to the safety, health and welfare of its respective citizens and through its Community Justice Agency manages the criminal justice integrated computer network system. All these agencies are cooperating to integrate all systems and to create case management policies and reporting systems for all participating entities. Hearing officers are used to expedite domestic matters dealing with child support and support related issues. Matters are set within 30 days of filing Act 964 of 2003 of the legislative session expanded the scope and authority of domestic hearing officers to allow a more expeditious process for dealing with domestic matters. The judges en banc in August 2003 approved the increase in the number of domestic hearing officers from 1 to a total of 4. The Court has established a committee to update the local Domestic Court Rules. The committee meets to discuss and propose potential changes in

rules to the en banc judges. The committee consists of a district court judge, the commissioners, hearing officers, and members of the local bar association. The committee is subdivided into 4 subcommittees whose goals are to expedite the process for hearing all domestic matters and provide a legal forum to resolve pending issues without the costs of lengthy trials involving numerous experts and additional legal expenses. The Domestic Rules Committee is creating and formalizing form judgments that, upon settlement of their case issues, will allow litigants to have a judgment prepared on site with the hearing officer and presented to the judge for signature. An efficiency study was conducted by Bobby Marzine Harges for the 24<sup>th</sup> JDC on "How to Serve the Public Through Commissioners."

- **25<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 25<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved docketing and scheduling, took steps to reduce cases under advisement, and encouraged alternative dispute resolution. It also updated and revised both its manual and automated case management systems. The Court also reports that it has taken steps to insure that child abuse and neglect cases are heard and disposed of within the required time frames and has developed a system with the district attorney to ensure compliance with all other aspects of ASFA.
- **26<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 26<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it has improved the docketing system, encouraged alternative dispute resolution, and added additional jury terms. One judge per week is scheduled a "split" week whereby he divides time between Bossier and Webster parishes to address the demands of the docket in each parish.
- **27<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 27<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved docketing and scheduling and encouraged alternative dispute resolution.
- **28<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 28<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved docketing and scheduling and implemented pre-trial conferences. In addition,



the Court reports that it continued its efforts to encourage communication between and among all parties doing business with the Court. The Court believes that open communication is vital to effective case management. Communication insures that all cases proceed as scheduled without harmful delays and costs. Delays caused by late reports, not properly disseminated information, filing errors, and other human errors could be lessened by proper communication between and among all parties.

- **29<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 29<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that all divisions of Court allow attorneys to pre-clear civil rule dates in order to avoid conflicts in their schedules (thereby avoiding continuances). Also, the selection of civil and criminal jury trial dates and bench trial dates with all counsel present has resulted in fewer continuances and the closure of more cases. The Court also reports that it took steps to reduce cases under advisement and to encourage alternative dispute resolution in FY 2002-2003.
- **30<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 30<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved docketing and scheduling.
- **31<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 31<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it improved docketing and scheduling and encouraged alternative dispute resolution. It also reports that it reduced the number of cases under advisement, as well as the length of time that any case remained under advisement.
- **32<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 32<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that it adopted a yearly sitting schedule that determines those dates upon which civil and criminal cases may be set. The district court judges routinely give additional jury weeks to the district attorney's office subject to the civil docket in order to handle felony criminal cases not disposed of during the regular felony weeks. Furthermore, each division of Court has a system of pre-trial conferences in both civil and criminal cases to expedite the judicial process. Most juvenile abuse and neglect cases have been handled through the

juvenile court at the City Court of Houma. However, the district court judges did attend CLE training concerning the scheduling of abuse and neglect cases. In addition, the Court reports that it encouraged alternative dispute resolution.

- **33<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 33<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it improved docketing and scheduling, maintained punctual commencement of court proceedings, and took steps to reduce cases under advisement in FY 2002-2003. It also reports that it obtained an additional judgeship in 2003.
- **34<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 34<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that, at its en banc meetings, judges have discussed all issues to ensure the timely hearing and disposition of cases. It also reports that no central reporting system can be implemented without sufficient funds. In addition, the Court reports that it implemented pre-trial conferences, took steps to reduce cases under advisement, and encouraged alternative dispute resolution.
- **35<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 35<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it took steps to reduce cases under advisement and encouraged alternative dispute resolution.
- **36<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 36<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it encouraged alternative dispute resolution and increased the responsibilities of its hearing officers with respect to pre-trial hearings on partitions and other authorized domestic proceedings.
- **37<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 37<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it added court days to the calendar and that it started hearings earlier in the day.
- **38<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 38<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it took steps to reduce cases under advisement and provided more criminal court days to the calendar.
- **39<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 39<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it did not address this area in FY 2002-2003.



- **40<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 40<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it continued to implement its system of scheduling pre-arranged court dates presented to defendants at the time of arraignment and guaranteeing trials within 120 days.
- **Caddo Parish Juvenile Court.** The Caddo Parish Juvenile Court reports that it continued ASFA compliance with improvements in Continued Custody Order forms, which more effectively protects children and clarifies the rights and responsibilities of parents and obligations of OCS. The Court also continued to comply with the Supreme Court's requirements regarding continuances avoidance and reporting. It also reports that it modified child support case processing to limit dates for necessary appearances by parties and support enforcement personnel. In addition, the Court encouraged alternative dispute resolution.
- **Family Court of East Baton Rouge Parish.** The Family Court of East Baton Rouge Parish reports it expanded its automated case management system and continued to use the SoftDoc software program, while studying new court software programs.
- **Juvenile Court of East Baton Rouge Parish.** The Juvenile Court of East Baton Rouge Parish reports that it improved its docketing and scheduling system. It also reports that it expedited non-support matters by issuing subpoenas and preparing judgments in-house through the Court's automated case management system. Previously, the district attorney prepared these documents. Judgments and minute entries are now prepared by the minute clerk through the automated system immediately after each hearing. In addition, all minute clerks attended the "Juvenile Minutes Seminar" sponsored by the Louisiana Clerks of Court Association and the Louisiana Supreme Court. The seminar focused on the content of juvenile minutes.
- **Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court.** The Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court reports development and implementation of effective case management techniques for Child-in-Need-of-Care

cases and non-support cases. In addition, it undertook a self-study in key areas of performance such as case processing time and compliance with applicable time standards for all case types. It also reports that it initiated a pilot program of mediation in Child-In-Need-of-Care cases.

- **Orleans Parish Civil District Court.** The Orleans Parish Civil District Court reports that it has addressed delay reduction and more effective case management through several means over the years and that it is the Court's policy to constantly seek methods to reduce delays and improve case management.
- **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.** The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court reports that it is a regular and ongoing activity of the Court to develop and implement case management by improving docketing and scheduling, improving the manual system of case management, taking steps to reduce cases under advisement, and maintaining checklists, docket masters and other manual tools to track timeliness of cases. It also reports that it has developed a pilot automated case management information system to be implemented by June 2004. An Information Technology Committee comprised of judges and administrators has been created to guide the system. Through the system, the Court hopes to improve the certainty of trial dates, monitor the frequency with which cases scheduled for trial are actually heard when scheduled, improve punctual commencement of court proceedings and discover and analyze ways to encourage and facilitate timely rendition of judges' judgments.
- **Orleans Parish Juvenile Court.** The Orleans Parish Juvenile Court reports that the Court established mandatory monthly meetings of all court section case managers to improve the coordination of case handling. Information sharing between sections of Court, a systems review, and the development of new procedures have been adopted to remedy continuances due to uncoordinated case handling. The case managers hold a meeting while the judges have their monthly en banc



meeting. The Court's information systems director chairs the meeting.

## Future Plans

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it is looking into the possibility of implementing a case management system for civil filings in order to track cases more effectively. The Court will also attempt to comply with the suggested guidelines adopted by the Louisiana Supreme Court Committee on Delay Reduction.
- **4<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 4<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will implement new features in the Case Management System including receiving case information from the clerk of courts criminal and civil sections and the ability to generate reports and statistics. The Court also plans to store digitally recorded audio and scanned documents/evidence from the courtrooms with the case. In addition, the Court will implement intranet and VPN technologies to allow total integration of local and remote computers. It also plans to upgrade at least one courtroom to state of the art evidence presentation and record preservation technology.
- **5<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 5<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it plans to initiate development of an automated case management system in the coming year.
- **6<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 6<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will continue to evaluate automated case management information systems as to need, cost, and feasibility.
- **14<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 14<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it plans to speed up criminal trials by scheduling more cases per petit jury weeks and by doubling the size of the priority list.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will expand the Family Court Program into St. Martin Parish, develop a proposal to implement a case management system, and look for ways to improve case management.
- **23<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 23<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it will continue to work towards a more automated system of case management.
- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC has developed a committee to reorganize the domestic docket through the following process: 1) commissioner study; 2) en banc study on domestic efficiency; 3) agree to re-organization; 4) create split commissioners; 5) create four hearing officer positions; 6) form bench/bar rules committee; 7) work with clerk of court to prepare computer program; and 8) write rules of court.
- **26<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 26<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that an additional judgeship takes office January 1, 2004, and additional court dates are added to the court calendar.
- **28<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 28<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will continue to encourage communication between litigants.
- **36<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 36<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will enhance the computer capabilities of the misdemeanor probation office of Court to more effectively track fine and fee collection and other compliance issues related to probationers.
- **37<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 37<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it established additional court days and jury weeks to expedite cases.
- **East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court.** The East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court reports that a new ASFA minute clerk position will be created. The ASFA minute clerk will attend and record all CINC proceedings and will be responsible for preparing and processing all ASFA-related court documents in accordance with ASFA compliance requirements. All other minute clerks will be cross-trained to serve in a back-up capacity at CINC hearings in the absence of the ASFA minute clerk and to meet ASFA requirements in delinquency proceedings.



- **Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court.**  
The Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court reports that it will undertake a self-study in key areas of performance such as case processing time and the compliance with applicable time standards for all case types.
- **The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.** The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court intends to implement an automated case management information system and to continue its ongoing efforts to enhance minute entry standardization and automation.

### Objective 2.2

To provide required reports and to respond to requests for information promptly.

#### Intent of the Objective

As public institutions, district courts have a responsibility to provide mandated reports and requested legitimate information to other public bodies and to the general public. Objective 2.2 emphasizes that the district courts' responses to these mandates and requests should be timely and expeditious.

#### Responses to the Objective

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it uses administrative staff and law clerks to assist them in responding to reports and requests in a timely manner.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it is a regular, ongoing activity of the Court to provide required reports and to respond to requests for information promptly.
- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that monthly financial reports are prepared and distributed to each judge. An annual report of court revenues and expenditures is also prepared. This report includes all revenues and expenditures from all agencies (i.e. Supreme Court, State of Louisiana, Jefferson Parish, Clerk

of Court, Sheriff's Office, etc.). An Annual Commissioners' Evaluation report is prepared and filed with the 24<sup>th</sup> JDC Judicial Administrator's Office pursuant to R.S. 13:717(H). Hearing officers answer any written requests for information on domestic matters on a daily basis.

- **29<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 29<sup>th</sup> JDC reports it has developed a master calendar, which lists the various reports required (and the date due of each) for the calendar year. This assists the chief judge in planning for upcoming reports and flagging upcoming deadlines.
- **East Baton Rouge Parish Family Court.**  
The East Baton Rouge Parish Family Court reports that the Court answers numerous requests for information on a timely basis.
- **Orleans Criminal District Court.**  
The Orleans Criminal District Court reports that providing required reports and responding to requests for information promptly is a regular and ongoing activity. Grant reporting and Supreme Court Drug Court Reporting is done in a timely fashion.

#### Future Plans

- **None Reported.**

### Objective 2.3

To promptly implement changes in law and procedure.

#### Intent of the Objective

Tradition and formality can obscure the reality that both the substantive and procedural laws are subject to change. Changes in statutes, case law, and court rules affect what is done in the courts, how it is done, and those who conduct business in the courts. District courts should make certain that mandated changes be implemented promptly and correctly.





## Responses to the Objective

### General Responses

- **ASFA Compliance.** Thirty-four courts reported that they had taken various actions to ensure compliance with the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) and the provisions of the Louisiana Children's Code relating to Child-in-Need-of-Care (CINC) cases. (2nd JDC; 3rd JDC; 4th JDC; 5th JDC; 6th JDC; 10th JDC; 11th JDC; 12th JDC; 15th JDC; 16th JDC; 17th JDC; 18th JDC; 20th JDC; 21st JDC; 22nd JDC; 23rd JDC; 25th JDC; 26th JDC; 27th JDC; 28th JDC; 29th JDC; 30th JDC; 31st JDC; 32nd JDC; 33rd JDC; 34th JDC; 35th JDC; 36th JDC; 37th JDC; 40th JDC; Caddo Parish Juvenile Court; East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court; Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court; and the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court). Four courts, having juvenile jurisdiction, said that they did not address this issue in FY 2002-2003. (7th JDC; 13th JDC; 38th JDC; and the 39th JDC).

### Responses of Individual Courts

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it has weekly meetings to deal with problems in judicial administration. Those attending these meetings consider ways to implement changes in law and procedure.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 2<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that it held an informal seminar with the lawyers and minute clerks handling CINC cases to assure compliance with ASFA deadlines. The Court also reports that it has adopted and promulgated a zero-continuance policy with respect to CINC cases. It also reports that it is having financial and management difficulty in addressing the requirements specified in *Pope v. Louisiana*, 792 So. 2d 713 (La. 2001) relative to pro se prisoner writs. Because there is a state prison, the David Wade Correctional Center (DWCC), and a large parish prison, housing hundreds of DOC prisoners, the Claiborne Parish Detention Center (CPDC), the number of prisoner suits filed in

Claiborne Parish increased substantially after the Pope decision. The suits were filed pro se as pauper suits, except by one DWCC inmate, and usually name between 3 and 10 defendants. The statutes applicable to prison litigation, Correction Administrative Remedy Procedure Act (CARPA), LSA-R.S. 15:1171 et seq., and the Prison Litigation Reform Act (PLRA), LSA-R.S. 15:1181 et seq., both require pre-filing judicial screening and, because the 2nd JDC does not have a law clerk, the screening is done by the Division A judge as the primary duty judge for Claiborne Parish. Because the cases not accepted for filing require a written reason for judgment, the increase in work for the Division A judge was between 10 and 30 hours a week from the date Pope was decided until the amendments to CARPA and PLRA were enacted in Act. 89. Those amendments have decreased the time necessary for judicial screening. In order to respond to the increased work load, the 2nd JDC judges have developed a process in which the Division A judge does all the pre-trial screening and written reasons, with the Division B and C judges hearing all cases that go forward to court proceedings. Additionally, because these suits are so costly to the Claiborne Parish Clerk of Court, the 2nd JDC prepares and pays for all service copies of the pre-filing judgments. The 2nd JDC also pays for all transcriptions of court proceedings in prisoners' suits. The 2nd JDC is aware of no legislative or judicial effort to alleviate the time and financial costs associated with the increase in prison litigation and, thus, has no strategies to address these problems, other than as described here.

- **3<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 3<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it took several actions to ensure compliance with ASFA and the provisions of the Louisiana Children's Code relating to Child-In-Need-of-Care (CINC) cases. It used the approved checklist from the bench. It had its employees remind lawyers of their court dates, and it added additional juvenile days to the court calendar.
- **4<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 4<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it exceeded ASFA requirements by the



implementation of “best practices”. It also customized ASFA courtroom minute checklists for local use. It continues to provide local supplemental funding for FINS. The Court has hired a director to restructure FINS and all staff members are employees of the Court. The court’s FINS offices were relocated within the courthouse. An “Impossible Case Clinic” was developed through FINS to rehabilitate previously considered incorrigible juvenile clients. The Court developed and implemented a Truancy Assessment and Service Center (TASC) to serve as an early intervention program addressing problems with children and families within the Court to deter the need for adjudication. A TASC Advisory Board was developed to ensure community participation and legal compliance within the operations of the Court’s Truancy Assessment and Services Center. The Court created a technology committee to evaluate and implement new technology into the courtrooms. The committee attended a court technology conference and established a plan to address three major categories: record preservation, evidence presentation, and case management.

- **5<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 5<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it used the benchbooks provided by the Judicial Administrator of the Supreme Court and conducted quarterly reviews en banc to ensure timely compliance with ASFA and the Louisiana Children’s Code.
- **6<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 6<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its judges attended training, adopted time guidelines, and met with appropriate supervisors and staff members of appropriate state agencies to effectively implement the ASFA requirements. The Court also cooperated and assisted in the organization of a CASA program.
- **7<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 7<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its judge is working with local school boards to form partnerships for the expeditious handling of truancy cases and behavior problems in the schools. Fine and bond schedules are updated regularly. The Court’s judges attended seminars

concerning ASFA compliance and are working closely with the local Office of Community Services (OCS) to ensure ASFA compliance. The Court reports a district wide meeting was held between both judges, the Supreme Court representatives, the OCS representatives, the clerk of court representatives, the judge’s office representatives and the district attorney’s office representatives to implement policies and procedures concerning ASFA compliance. The district attorney’s office, at the encouragement of the judges, now sets the answer hearing at the continued custody hearing.

- **8<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 8<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it adopted new forms to help ensure compliance with ASFA and Louisiana Children’s Code requirements.
- **10<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 10<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that all judges are notified of changes in law and procedure as the Court becomes aware of them, and those changes are promptly implemented. All judges with juvenile jurisdiction and staff with juvenile responsibilities were ASFA trained by staff from the Supreme Court, and ASFA procedures and requirements were fully implemented. The Court also trained a minute clerk in ASFA procedures and met with the district attorney and the Office of Community Services to ensure compliance. The Court also reports that its FINS program was thoroughly reviewed and changes were made to improve services and accountability. In addition, the Court teamed with the Boys and Girls Club of Natchitoches to create a CASA program, which serves the needs of both. The Court also met with representatives of the Natchitoches Parish School Board, the FINS program and the district attorney to improve truancy programs, including truancy court.
- **11<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 11<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that the DeSoto Parish FINS program has been revamped with a new FINS officer and a new panel of committee members. The FINS officer is also participating in quarterly meetings with other northwest regional FINS officers. The group



shares ideas and collaborates on issues such as data collection and recording, new software development, and assessment tools. One officer has been appointed to be a liaison with the LA FINS association. The Court reports that truancy cases continue to be handled through the FINS program, with collaboration from the DeSoto Parish School Board and the DeSoto Parish Sheriff's Office School Resource Officer program. Truancy Court is continuing on a regular basis and beginning in September 2003, repeat truancy offenders were petitioned to juvenile court with a majority placed on supervised probation with the parish juvenile probation officer. Special conditions include community service for both the parent and child and a monthly probation supervision fee. The Court also reports that its judges attended and conducted ASFA compliance meetings and seminars.

- **12<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 12<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it continues to use the benchbooks provided by the Judicial Administrator of the Supreme Court to ensure compliance.
- **15<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 15<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its judges attended the mandatory ASFA training sessions and that it scheduled meetings of judges, district attorneys, OCS workers, and other interested parties to discuss ASFA compliance.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that changes in the law and legal proceedings are addressed through regular and special en banc meetings. The Court continues to take steps to ensure compliance with the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act and the Louisiana Children's Code. Child dependency cases have been consolidated into a specialized division. A Juvenile Docket Coordinator monitors and tracks child dependency cases in Iberia and St. Martin parishes. The juvenile docket coordinator coordinates parent legal orientation conferences to advise participants of the nature and consequences of the proceedings. The coordinator maintains a resource list of attorneys to ensure proper representation of parents and children in child dependency cases

and communicates regularly with attorneys, clients and caseworkers to reduce delays. The coordinator also maintains data in a juvenile court management database to monitor and track cases, and continues to work to improve the manual case management system. All judges of the Court completed the mandatory ASFA training. The Court reports that the judges meet regularly with FINS intake officers and the FINS committee to monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of the FINS program and to continue to improve services.

- **17<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 17<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its judges attended the ASFA training sessions. It also reports that its judges and its district attorney were given the ASFA compliance materials supplied by the Judicial Administrator of the Supreme Court.
- **18<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 18<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it met with representatives from the Office of Community Services (OCS), the district attorney's office and the clerk's office to ensure timely compliance with ASFA requirements.
- **20<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 20<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it is studying ways to revise its rules to ensure compliance with all ASFA requirements.
- **21<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 21<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it obtained permission from the Supreme Court to assign CINC and other juvenile cases to one section of Court. The Court believes that the specialized section will expedite CINC hearings and help the Court to better comply with all ASFA requirements.
- **22<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 22<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that it continues to dedicate an employee to monitor CINC case processing and to advise the Court on needed corrective actions.
- **23<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 23<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that its judges and staff attended the mandatory ASFA compliance seminar provided by the Judicial Administrator of the Supreme Court. It also



reports that it has created timelines for tracking ASFA compliance.

- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that all levels of the Court have adopted increases in jury fees. Its Court has instituted the collection of fees initiated by the sheriff as required per statute. It has imposed the crime stopper fees pursuant to Act No. 50 of the 2002 Legislative Session and the new juror fee cost pursuant to Act No. 1031 of the 2003 Legislative Session.
- **25<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 25<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it continues to work with the district attorney to ensure correct pleadings and orders and to ensure proper enforcement.
- **26<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 26<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it regularly discussed the Louisiana court rules and its amendments at en banc meetings. The judges helped to educate members of the bar regarding the state court rules. The Court also reports that it used the checklists developed by the Supreme Court in its Child-in-Need-of-Care cases and that it sponsored a special training regarding ASFA requirements and compliance methods for the members of the facilitation teams in Bossier and Webster Parishes. In addition, a hearing officer was hired to preside over all non-adjudicated juvenile matters.
- **27<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 27<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it has addressed the issue of ASFA compliance and is satisfied that it is in full compliance.
- **28<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 28<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it has followed all guidelines to ensure ASFA compliance.
- **29<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 29<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its central staff law clerk monitors all legislation and reviews new laws as they are passed. When a bill that impacts the court system is enacted into law (e.g., the increase in juror compensation which was passed in 2003), the law clerk drafts the appropriate memo to the judges and, if required, prepares the appropriate en banc order to implement the changes at the local level. The

Court also reports that it held a workshop with its court staff, the personnel of the district attorney's office, and the minute clerks to review the requirements of ASFA. It also developed a checklist to be maintained in each case file.

- **30<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 30<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it conducted conferences with the Vernon Parish Office of Family Services to ensure compliance with ASFA.
- **31<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 31<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it is now using Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) to assist children in CINC cases and to help the Court attain compliance with ASFA requirements.
- **32<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 32<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that its judges meet at least once a month. At these meetings, administrative, personnel, employee, and other issues are discussed, which may include recent legislation, legal issues, any matter pertaining to docketing or expediting the trial process, or any other issue that would improve the performance of the judiciary. In addition, the judges will meet with the district attorney, indigent defender board, clerk of court, sheriff and Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government personnel on a regular basis to discuss issues that may be occurring. These individuals are given an opportunity to address any problems that may arise in order that our legal system can operate on a more efficient basis.
- **33<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 33<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it provides expedited access for truancy-related matters. It also continued its support for its recently established CASA program and attended ASFA-related training seminars.
- **34<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 34<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that all judges attended the mandatory ASFA judicial education sessions. It also reports that it modified CINC case procedures to assure compliance and worked with the district attorney to ensure that the mandatory CINC and ASFA timelines were met.



- **35<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 35<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it is in compliance with ASFA and that ASFA compliance is addressed at each removal and custody hearing.
- **36<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 36<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it continued support for its newly established CASA program by participating in the training of CASA workers. It also worked with representatives of the parish school board and the district attorney to develop better procedures for earlier and effective intervention in truancy cases. The Court also continued its manual monitoring of pending CINC cases to check ASFA timeline compliance in every case.
- **37<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 37<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it has implemented a CASA program and attended the ASFA training sessions. It also continues to work with its FINS officer to improve FINS.
- **38<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 38<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its judges attended the ASFA training sessions and are more aware of the requirements.
- **40<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 40<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it is in the process of restructuring its FINS and probation programs in order to better serve the needs of the Court and the public.
- **Caddo Parish Juvenile Court.** The Caddo Parish Juvenile Court reports that it initiated a comprehensive, outside professional study of FINS and Diversion programs to assure effective services and meaningful outcomes. It also reports that it improved its continued custody order form to help assure more complete protection for the child, and to more clearly delineate the rights and responsibilities of parents and the obligations of OCS in CINC cases.
- **East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court.** The East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court reports that prompt implementation of changes in law and procedure is a regular,

ongoing activity of the Court. Its judges, court personnel and representatives of all agencies essential to successful implementation of the ASFA process attended the ASFA audit follow-up site visit sponsored by the Louisiana Supreme Court, Court Improvement Program. It was determined at that time that the Court had been successful in attaining ASFA compliance goals set by the Court's Facilitation Team and would take the necessary steps to ensure continued compliance. The Court also reports that all of its minute clerks attended the "Juvenile Minutes Seminar" sponsored by the Clerks of Court Association and the Supreme Court.

- **Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court.** The Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court reports that it supported and facilitated efforts to promote and expand the CASA program in its jurisdiction and supported and facilitated efforts to maintain the Truancy Assessment and Services Center in the jurisdiction. It also reports that it complied with all orders of the Supreme Court relating to ASFA compliance and participated in the mandatory training. It also has maintained an active dialogue with OCS regarding ASFA compliance.
- **Orleans Parish Juvenile Court.** The Orleans Parish Juvenile Court reports that all judges participated in an on-site review of the Court's implementation of ASFA sponsored by the Judicial Administrator of the Louisiana Supreme Court and the American Bar Association, as a follow-up to an ASFA implementation-planning meeting conducted two years ago. One of the results was to insure uniform language in all orders rendered. The Court reports that following a site visit to the Court's off-site FINS office by the chief judge and deputy chief judge, the Court established a partnership with Baptist Community Ministries (BCM) to sponsor an independent "top-down" programmatic and operational audit of the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court FINS program. BCM brought in social work and public administration specialists from the LSU School of Social Work to conduct the audit and prepare a report with recommendations to make the FINS



program effective. The changes are being implemented as recommendations are made by the audit.

- **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.** The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court reports that tracking changes in the law and legal procedures is a regular, ongoing activity of the Court. Administrators and law clerks regularly inform judges of changes. Trends and new conditions are identified and considered to suggest a need for adjustments in the operations of the Court, e.g., electronic case management, specialty courts, alternatives to incarceration, and responsive verdict changes in the legislature.

## Future Plans

- **11<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 11<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that FINS will add several new committee members and new service providers. The FINS officer will continue to work with other regional FINS officers and will receive training at the annual FINS Conference and Governor's Conference on Juvenile Justice. The Court intends to continue its Truancy Court and its probation efforts to deter truancy. It will also establish a system of notification between the school system and the Court to enable earlier response by the Court to individual truancy cases.
- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that "A Management and Organizational Assessment of the 24<sup>th</sup> JDC" study was completed by the National Center for State Courts and adopted en banc November 15, 2003. The evaluation by the NCSC is ongoing. The chief judge will appoint judges to one of four standing committees that will advise on administrative matters and the implementation of any changes. The administrative roles have been broken into the following committees: Financial, Facilities & Securities; Commissioner/Hearing Officers; Technology and Court Service. Under ongoing discussion en banc, the Court has adopted one of the several recommendations as reported on page 18 of the National Center for State Courts'

report: The judges of the 24<sup>th</sup> JDC through local rule and/or with the approval of the Louisiana Supreme Court should empower the chief judge to extend his/her term in office to at least three years. Further, the district judges en banc should expand the powers of the chief judge to utilize a new committee structure, headed by judges, and supported by the judicial district administrator and administrative supervisors. The new committee will develop and propose policies for improving the operations of the Court. Once the Court's management team begins to work with the judicial district administrator, the judge chairpersons, and the administrative supervisors, it is expected that there will be improved communication and court staff morale, but also decision-making. Policy determination will be proactive and beneficial to the 24<sup>th</sup> JDC. The NCSC will also recommend decision-making and communication techniques for obtaining en banc approval of all structural recommendations.

- **28<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 28<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will continue to monitor and implement changes in law.
- **34<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 34<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that a committee of law clerks will be formed to review all changes in law and report the same to judges.
- **Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court.** The Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court reports that it will refine the procedure for tracking changes in law and procedure, notifying necessary parties of changes, and implementing changes uniformly and systematically. It will engage in ongoing efforts to identify trends and anticipate new conditions that might require adjustments in court operations.
- **Orleans Parish Juvenile Court.** The Orleans Parish Juvenile Court reports that it will establish the position of court attorney as the Deputy Judicial Administrator in charge of developing and implementing a system to track all changes in law and legal procedure in order to notify all judges of said changes, and for



implementing changes uniformly and systematically. The Court will complete its independent-external audit conducted by Baptist Community Ministries and the LSU School of Social Work of the Court's FINS program and will review and implement all recommendations made for the improvement of the program. The Court will seek the support of the Louisiana District Judges Association and the Louisiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges to encourage the courts of appeal to modify their rules on the publication of heretofore unpublished juvenile case opinions in order to bring about a proper understanding of the current state of juvenile law – one that reflects the ever growing, but unpublished, body of case law in this area.

## Objective 2.4

**To enhance jury service.**

### Intent of the Objective

Jury service is one of the most important civic duties in our nation. And yet, many citizens do their best to escape this obligation either because they do not understand its importance or because they find jury service mystifying, intimidating, or inconvenient. The judicial system has an obligation to educate jurors and to make their service as convenient and efficient as possible. Fortunately, the judicial system has developed a broad range of innovative techniques and tested methodologies for addressing this need effectively. The intent of this objective is to encourage the use of these techniques and methodologies in a systematic and strategic manner.

### Responses to the Objective

#### General Responses

- **Exit Surveys of Jurors.** Twelve district courts said that they had conducted exit surveys of jurors. (4th JDC; 5th JDC; 7th JDC; 11th JDC; 14th JDC; 16th JDC; 17th JDC; 18th JDC; 23rd JDC; 25th JDC; 34th JDC; and the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court).

- **Improvement in Conveniences in the Jury Room.** Twenty said they had improved conveniences in the jury room. (1st JDC; 2nd JDC; 5th JDC; 7th JDC; 8th JDC; 11th JDC; 17th JDC; 18th JDC; 19th JDC; 22nd JDC; 25th JDC; 26th JDC; 27th JDC; 31st JDC; 33rd JDC; 34th JDC; 35th JDC; 36th JDC; 37th JDC; and the Orleans Criminal District Court).
- **Installation of an Automated System for Notifying Jurors.** Nine said that they had installed an automated system for notifying jurors of cancellations and postponements. (1st JDC; 3rd JDC; 5th JDC; 8th JDC; 15th JDC; 18th JDC; 23rd JDC; 31st JDC; and the 38th JDC).
- **Inclusion of the ADA Accommodation Language in the Jury Summons.** Nine said that they had included the ADA accommodation language in their jury summons. (1st JDC; 7th JDC; 14th JDC; 16th JDC; 19th JDC; 26th JDC; 36th JDC; 38th JDC; and the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court).
- **Improved Meals of Jurors.** Sixteen said that they had improved the meals of jurors. (1st JDC; 4th JDC; 11th JDC; 12th JDC; 13th JDC; 15th JDC; 16th JDC; 17th JDC; 18th JDC; 21st JDC; 26th JDC; 31st JDC; 33rd JDC; 34th JDC; 35th JDC; and the 36th JDC).
- **Provided Information on Jury Service.** Sixteen said that they had provided information on jury service. (1st JDC; 3rd JDC; 5th JDC; 12th JDC; 14th JDC; 15th JDC; 17th JDC; 18th JDC; 19th JDC; 22nd JDC; 27th JDC; 33rd JDC; 36th JDC; 38th JDC; 40th JDC; and the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court).
- **Made Changes to the Venire Selection Process.** Eight said that they had made changes to the venire selection process. (3rd JDC; 10th JDC; 11th JDC; 13th JDC; 22nd JDC; 29th JDC; 31st JDC; and the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court).



- **Implementation of Other ADA Improvements.** Seven said that they had implemented other ADA improvements. (1st JDC; 2nd JDC; 11th JDC; 15th JDC; 19th JDC; 22nd JDC; and the 33rd JDC).

## Responses of Individual Courts

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that its court has a full-time jury coordinator whose job is to notify potential jurors and process their responses in an orderly and quick fashion. This is done using jury questionnaires and automated telephone communication systems. Through these systems, jurors are processed quickly and are notified of changes both by phone and mail. The Court provides parking for all jurors to assist them in their jury service. The jury coordinator uses the Court's updated and self-produced jury orientation video to inform jurors and improve the comfort and morale of jury pools. The Court has also applied ADA standards in the jury orientation and selection process.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 2<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that it installed comfortable seating in the jury box and at the counsel table in Bienville Parish. It also addressed the comfort of jury accommodations in Jackson Parish and implemented ADA improvements with respect to juries.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 3<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it installed an automated system for contacting jurors regarding cancellations and postponements. It also reports that it provided information on jury service and made changes to the venire selection process.
- **4<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 4<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it conducted exit surveys of jurors and improved juror meals. It also reports that it provided juror certificates for jury service.
- **5<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 5<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it conducted exit surveys of jurors, improved

conveniences in the jury room, installed an automated system for contacting jurors of cancellations and postponements, and provided information on jury service.

- **6<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 6<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it provided information on jury service.
- **7<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 7<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that jurors are called in for jury trials for criminal matters on Tuesday, so that pre-trials can be held on Monday, which can sometimes mean a jury trial is not held and jurors can be called off for the next day. Jurors are mailed a Certificate of Appreciation for serving on a jury in the district. The Court also reports that it conducted exit surveys of jurors, improved conveniences in the jury room, and included the ADA accommodation language in the jury summons.
- **8<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 8<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved conveniences in the jury room and installed a new automated system for contacting jurors of cancellations and postponements.
- **10<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 10<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it began studying a plan to limit jury service to one week. The Court made special efforts to keep jury pools continually informed of the progress of the docket while they're waiting to be called for jury selection. Pool members were continually informed that their presence and willingness to serve were important, and that they were appreciated. The Court reports that it remains particularly sensitive to the morale of jury pools and is careful to provide for changes in conditions and procedures to accommodate the jury pools so that their service is the least burdensome possible.
- **11<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 11<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it conducted exit surveys of jurors, improved conveniences in the jury room, improved the meals of jurors, made changes to the venire selection process, and implemented ADA improvements relating to juries. The Court also





reports that it maintained and improved its automated system for contacting jurors of cancellations and postponements.

- **12<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 12<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved jurors' meals, provided information on jury service, and used various media to contact jurors regarding settlements and/or cancellations.
- **13<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 13<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved the meals of jurors and made changes to the venire selection process.
- **15<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 15<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it conducted exit surveys of jurors, included the ADA accommodation language in the jury summons, and provided information on jury service.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it maintained the Jury Pool procedures from which petit and civil jurors may be chosen. Its judges continue to monitor and improve procedures for selecting and impaneling jurors and for jury questionnaires to eliminate unqualified persons. The Court reports that its judges meet with Jury Commissioners periodically regarding commissioner authority in accordance with Supreme Court Rules and statutory provisions. Its judges also conduct juror exit questionnaires for feedback regarding jury service and send appreciation letters to jurors after service. The Court distributes a public information jury booklet to jurors in St. Martin Parish. All three clerks of court in the district maintain a voice mail system which allows jurors to call in prior to reporting for service, and which provides a message confirming that they must report, or confirming that they are released from duty.
- **17<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 17<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it conducted exit surveys of jurors, improved conveniences in the jury room and jurors' meals, and provided information on jury service.

- **18<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 18<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it conducted exit surveys of jurors, improved conveniences in the jury room, installed an automated system for contacting jurors regarding cancellations and postponements, improved the meals of jurors, and provided information on jury service.
- **19<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 19<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved conveniences in the jury room, included the ADA accommodation language in its jury summons, provided information on jury service, and implemented other ADA improvements. In addition, the Court developed an extensive jury video that is played each week for the orientation of the jury panel.
- **21<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 21<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it improved the meals of jurors.
- **22<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 22<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that it improved conveniences in the jury room (e.g. video monitors and a kitchen), provided information on jury service, made changes to the venire selection process, and implemented ADA-related improvements.
- **23<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 23<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it began to issue questionnaires to jurors at the end of their service inquiring as to their comfort and soliciting their comments. It also reports that it installed an automated system for contacting jurors regarding cancellations and postponements.
- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that free covered parking is provided for all jurors in a conveniently located parking garage.
- **25<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 25<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it conducted exit surveys of jurors and improved conveniences in the jury room.
- **26<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 26<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that a call-in telephone service was provided for jury instructions. A refrigerator and microwave were placed in the jury deliberation room in Bossier



and Webster parishes, and refreshments were provided for each jury term. The Court also reports that it included the ADA accommodation language in the jury summons and improved the meals of jurors.

- **27<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 27<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved conveniences in the jury room and provided information on jury service.
- **28<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 28<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it is working with its clerk of court to update jury venire lists and addresses.
- **29<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 29<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its jury venire pool was modified in 2003 to exclude those who resided in the parish for less than a year. (By not having lived in the parish for a year, they would have reported for jury duty not knowing they did not meet the legal requirements, resulting in their missing a day of work unnecessarily.) Exit survey questionnaires were formulated in 2003 for use with jury trials commencing in 2004.
- **30<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 30<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that Division B implemented a pilot project in criminal cases to provide the prosecution and defense with juror questionnaires to assist them in their voir dire.
- **31<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 31<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it improved conveniences in the jury room, installed an automated system for contacting jurors of cancellations and postponements, improved the meals of jurors, and made changes to the venire selection process.
- **32<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 32<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that it acquired additional office space to accommodate the jury venires but needs funding from the parish government to complete the necessary repairs that would make the space functional. Upon completion of the repairs, the Court intends to provide educational programs for viewing by prospective venires.

- **33<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 33<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it improved conveniences in the jury room and jurors' meals, and implemented various ADA-related improvements.
- **34<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 34<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it conducted exit surveys of jurors, improved conveniences in the jury room, and improved the meals of jurors.
- **35<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 35<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved conveniences in the jury room and improved jurors' meals.
- **36<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 36<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it developed a local procedure for implementing new legislation allowing petit jurors to defer service to a later jury term. It also reports that improved conveniences in the jury room and jurors' meals, included the ADA accommodation language in the jury summons, and provided information on jury service.
- **37<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 37<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved conveniences in the jury room and conducted exit surveys of jurors.
- **38<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 38<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it installed an automated system for contacting jurors regarding cancellations and postponements, included the ADA accommodation language in the jury summons, and provided information on jury service.
- **40<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 40<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it has regularly spoken to civic/public groups regarding the importance of jury service. It also reports that it is currently considering a program encouraging and allowing jurors to donate their jury service compensation to the Parish for the improvement of jury facilities and services.
- **Orleans Parish Civil District Court.** The Orleans Parish Civil District Court reports that it has addressed the issue of jury enhancements in previous years and continues to do so on a daily basis.



- **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.**

The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court reports that it conducted juror exit surveys, improved conveniences in the jury room, included the ADA accommodation language in its jury summons, provided information on jury service, and made changes to the venire selection process. The Court reports that it uses public service announcements to encourage jury service and has investigated successful strategies other jurisdictions use for improving jury service. The Court also reports that it has developed and implemented a juror orientation video, that it provides regular and ongoing docket information to jurors, and that it conducts a monthly survey on sensitivity to jury morale.

### Future Plans

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it will study ways of identifying problems of jurors to further enhance morale among prospective jurors. The Court will continue to look for ways to limit in-house waiting time for jurors.
- **4<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 4<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will update the jury instruction film.
- **6<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 6<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will study the feasibility of modified jury service, including one-day service in the coming year. The Court will consider the adoption of a rule allowing inconvenienced prospective jurors to serve an alternate jury term.
- **7<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 7<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it plans to implement juror exit surveys during 2003-2004.
- **17<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 17<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it plans to update its juror and lawyer surveys as a means of identifying areas needing improvement.
- **37<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 37<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it plans to implement a jury exit survey in the coming year.

### Objective 3.1

**To faithfully adhere to laws, procedural rules, and established policies.**

### Intent of the Objective

This objective is based largely on the concept of due process, including the provision of proper notice and the provision of a fair opportunity to be informed and heard at all stages of the judicial process. Fairness should characterize the court's compulsory process and discovery. Courts should respect the right to legal counsel and the rights of confrontation, cross-examination, impartial hearings, and jury trials. The objective requires fair judicial processes through adherence to constitutional and statutory law, case precedents, court rules, and other authoritative guidelines, including policies and administrative regulations. Adherence to law and established procedures contributes to the court's ability to achieve predictability, reliability, and integrity. It also greatly helps to ensure that justice "is perceived to have been done" by those who directly experience the quality of the court's adjudicatory process and procedures.

### Responses to the Objective

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it is divided into criminal, civil and family law sections. Periodically, judges of a section will meet with practicing attorneys to hear and resolve any problems that might be causing tension between the attorneys and the courts. Every effort is made to keep the practice of law at the highest professional level. In addition, all the judges meet each week and discuss the business of the Court. In these meetings the judges discuss new procedural rules and new laws that have been enacted. They also establish policies of the Court to ensure the orderly process of justice.
- **4<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 4<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that wireless Internet access for attorneys was installed in several courtrooms to allow in-court legal research. Wireless network access was made available for the judges in all courtrooms to allow in-court legal research.



- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it is a regular, ongoing activity of the Court to faithfully adhere to laws, procedural rules, and established policies.
- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC encourages each individual's right to legal counsel and provides impartial hearings and jury trials. The Court has established a Bench/Bar Liaison Committee to create and adopt new rules and policies for domestic cases. The Court meets with members of the bar to obtain input on court procedures, judges' performance, and related topics. The Court has contracted with the National Center for State Courts to study and submit recommendations for the restructuring of court management.
- **26<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 26<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it adheres to laws, procedural rules and established policies as regular ongoing activities of the Court.
- **34<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 34<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that each year judges present a CLE program for the parish Bar Association and one session is devoted to addressing problems perceived by attorneys.
- **East Baton Rouge Parish Family Court.** The East Baton Rouge Parish Family Court reports that it has completed implementation of a new "Policies and Procedures Manual" for all employee classifications.
- **East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court.** The East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court reports that its Court adopted a new Personnel Manual establishing policies and procedures for fair and consistent Human Resources practices. The Personnel Manual includes: an Equal Employment Opportunity/Non-Discrimination Policy; a policy prohibitive of harassment, sexual or otherwise; a complaint procedure to report allegations of discrimination or harassment; and a policy upholding compliance with the ADA. The Manual also includes: a Drug-Free Workplace Policy; a Weapons and Workplace Violence Policy; policies relative to computer, electronic, telephonic communications and Internet access

and usage; an Employee Code of Conduct; and a policy addressing compensation, employee leave, and disciplinary action. The Court formed a Rules Revision Committee wherein the juvenile court judges, representatives from the district attorney's office, the public defender's office, clerk of court, office of community services, various juvenile court staff, and local attorneys all worked together to update and revise the local court rules. The recommendations of the Committee were adopted by the Court and submitted to the Louisiana Supreme Court for publication in 2004.

### Future Plans

- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will take steps to foster interaction between the bench and the bar to encourage and obtain feedback regarding procedures, rules and policies and the overall operation of the Court.
- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that the renovated court building will include a large attorney conference room.
- **Orleans Parish Civil District Court.** The Orleans Parish Civil District Court intends to organize public attorney focus groups or panels to solicit and provide feedback on the Court's faithful adherence to laws, procedural rules and established policies.

### Objective 3.2

**To ensure that the jury venire is representative of the jurisdiction from which it is drawn.**

### Intent of the Objective

Courts cannot guarantee that juries will always reach decisions that are fair and equitable. Nor can courts guarantee that the group of individuals chosen through the voir dire is representative of the community from which they are chosen. Courts can, however, provide a significant measure of fairness and equality by ensuring that the methods employed to compile source lists and to draw the venire provide jurors who are representative of the total adult population of the jurisdiction. Ideally, all individuals



qualified to serve on a jury should have equal opportunities to participate, and all parties and the public should be confident that jurors are drawn from a representative pool.

### Responses to the Objective

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it utilizes a random computer process provided by the clerk of court.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 3<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it made changes to its venire process.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its jurors are selected using a random computer process.
- **22<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 22<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that it merged the driver's license list with the voter registration list in Washington Parish to improve the representativeness of jury venires.
- **26<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 26<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that jurors are selected by a random computer process, which uses annually updated lists.
- **32<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 32<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that it is currently reviewing the random allotment system. It is anticipated that some changes will take place to better comply with recent legislation.
- **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.** The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court reports that it is a regular and ongoing activity to ensure that the selection of the prospective jurors from the jury lists is random.

### Future Plans

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it will continue to improve the venire process to excuse, prior to their appearance, jurors not qualified to serve by use of guidelines set by law.

### Objective 3.3

**To give individual attention to cases, deciding them without undue disparity among like cases and upon legally relevant factors.**

### Intent of the Objective

This objective upholds the standard that litigants should receive individual attention without variation due to the judge assigned or the legally irrelevant characteristics of the parties. To the extent possible, persons similarly situated should receive similar treatment. The objective further requires that court decisions and actions be in proper proportion to the nature and magnitude of the case and to the characteristics of the parties. Variations should not be predictable due to legally irrelevant factors, nor should the outcome of a case depend on which judge within a court presides over a hearing or trial. The objective relates to all decisions, including sentences in criminal cases, the conditions of bail, the amount of child support, the appointment of legal counsel, and the use of court-supervised alternatives to formal litigation.

### Responses to the Objective

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it uses a standardized bail bond schedule for certain crimes to hasten processing defendants through the Court. Each day, every criminal defendant who has been arrested and is in jail appears by television monitor in front of the Court. There, the Court advises them of their charge, appoints an attorney, sets bond, and sets a future court date.
- **7<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 7<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it continues to use a standardized felony bail bond schedule, which is periodically updated.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it provides integrity, fairness and quality in all matters before the Court. It also maintains a uniform bond form order for written bond orders.



- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports the Court meets with members of the bar to obtain input on court procedures, judges' performance, and related topics. Bonds are immediately set using a bond range chart to provide consistency in the setting of the bond. For domestic matters, the child support guidelines are followed as well as any applicable civil code articles and revised statutes. The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC has implemented court-supervised alternatives to formal litigation. The judges monitor a Misdemeanor Probation Program. Participants meet regularly with a probation coordinator who makes recommendations to the judges. The Court continues to work closely with the Intensive Probation Drug Court Program as an alternative sentence for non-violent offenders with substance abuse problems. As part of this program, meetings are held regularly with a judge, program staff, and participants.
- **26<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 26<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it has adopted a standardized bail bond schedule for certain offenses.

### Future Plans

- **34<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 34<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will attempt to set more uniform bond amounts between divisions.

### Objective 3.4

**To ensure that the decisions of the court address clearly the issues presented to it and, where appropriate, to specify how compliance can be achieved.**

### Intent of the Objective

An order or decision that sets forth consequences or articulates rights but fails to tie the actual consequences resulting from the decision to the antecedent issues breaks the connection required for reliable review and enforcement. A decision that is not clearly communicated poses problems both for the parties and for judges who may be called upon to interpret or apply the decision. This

objective implies that dispositions for each charge or count in a criminal complaint, for example, is easy to discern, and that the terms of punishment and sentence should be clearly associated with each count upon which a conviction is returned. Noncompliance with court pronouncements and subsequent difficulties of enforcement sometimes occur because orders are not stated in terms that are readily understood and capable of being monitored. An order that requires a minimum payment per month on a restitution obligation, for example, is clearer and more enforceable than an order that establishes an obligation but sets no time frame for completion. Decisions in civil cases, especially those unraveling tangled webs of multiple claims and parties, should also connect clearly each issue and its consequences.

### Responses to the Objective

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it uses pre-trial conferences to clarify legal issues and enhance the movement of cases through the system.

### Future Plans

- **None Reported.**

### Objective 3.5

**To ensure that appropriate responsibility is taken for the enforcement of court orders.**

### Intent of the Objective

Courts should not direct that certain actions be taken or prohibited, and then allow those bound by their orders to honor them more in the breach than in the observance. This objective encourages courts to ensure that their orders are enforced. The integrity of the dispute resolution process is reflected in the degree to which the parties adhere to awards and settlements arising out of them. Noncompliance may indicate misunderstanding, misrepresentation, or a lack of respect for or confidence in the courts. Obviously, courts cannot assume total responsibility for the enforcement of all of their decisions and orders. The responsibility of the courts for enforcement varies from



jurisdiction to jurisdiction, program to program, case to case, and event to event; however, all courts have a responsibility to take appropriate action for the enforcement of their orders.

## Responses to the Objective

### General Responses

Several courts reported that they had taken action in FY 2002-2003 to ensure timely enforcement of arrest warrants, summons, and subpoenas.

- **Improved Service of Process.** Five courts reported that they had improved service of process. (17th JDC; 27th JDC; 38th JDC; Caddo Parish Juvenile Court; and the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court).
- **Created a Manual-Tracking Program.** One court said that it had created a manual tracking program to ensure timely enforcement of arrest warrants, summons, and subpoenas. (3rd JDC).
- **Improved Address Lists.** Eight courts said that they had improved their address lists. (11th JDC; 14th JDC; 17th JDC; 27th JDC; 28th JDC; 38th JDC; Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court; and the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court).
- **Improved Enforcement.** Ten courts said that they had improved enforcement. (10th JDC; 11th JDC; 14th JDC; 17th JDC; 27th JDC; 30th JDC; 35th JDC; Caddo Parish Juvenile Court; Orleans Parish Criminal District Court; and the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court).
- **Automated Tracking Program.** Two courts said that they had created an automated tracking system. (17th JDC; and the 19th JDC).
- **Coordinated with Other Jurisdictions.** Two courts said that they coordinated with other districts to ensure timely enforcement of arrest warrants, summons, and subpoenas. (9th JDC; and 11th JDC).

## Responses of Individual Courts

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that its judges conduct conferences with probation officers to review probation compliance of the defendant and to review probation officer's files to assure requirements are being followed.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 3<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it created a manual program for tracking arrest warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **4<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 4<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its Misdemeanor Probation department continues to monitor court dates and conditions of probation for compliance. It has established a computer link to the clerk of court's criminal records to make this data available to the judges and Misdemeanor Probation personnel.
- **7<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 7<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that a misdemeanor probation program was implemented in March 2003 under the supervision of the judge's office to ensure fair and complete enforcement of its orders.
- **8<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 8<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it reviews bench warrants periodically from a list.
- **9<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 9<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it coordinated with other jurisdictions to ensure timely enforcement of arrest warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **10<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 10<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it coordinated with the sheriff to achieve more comprehensive service of process.
- **11<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 11<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved its address lists, improved enforcement, and coordinated with other jurisdictions to ensure timely enforcement of arrest warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its judges maintain direct contact with domestic abuse counselors to ensure participation by those



so ordered and to maintain direct contact with providers of driving improvement/substance abuse evaluations and treatment to ensure compliance by DWI defendants. Its judges conduct conferences with probation officers to review defendants' probation compliance, to review probation officer files to ensure compliance, or to order revocation hearings. The Court's judges authorize hearing officers to conduct probation review hearings to monitor misdemeanor and felony probationers as a means for better compliance with probation obligations. Its judges work in cooperation with the sheriffs, law enforcement agencies, clerks of court, district attorney, probation and parole officers and others to remedy the growing number of outstanding warrants and handle failure to appear warrants. They continue to work with sheriffs and the district attorney to monitor the collections and disbursement of fines and forfeitures. Its judges maintain procedures whereby the Department of Corrections probation office provides a written report to the judges within thirty (30) days of sentencing, notifying the Court when the probationer has been signed up, and who the assigned probation officer is. Upon notification, judges may then schedule probation review hearings.

- **17<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 17<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved service of process, improved its address lists, improved enforcement, and created an automated tracking program to ensure timely enforcement of arrest warrants, summons, and subpoenas. It also reports that each of its bailiffs has an ARMS system in the courtroom and one keeps records on fines due in any division. It also reports that the jury subpoena lists are constantly purged and updated.
- **19<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 19<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it installed an automatic tracking program to ensure the timely enforcement of arrest warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that meetings are held regularly with the judges, drug

court staff, and drug court clients regarding the clients' levels of participation and status in the program. The Misdemeanor Probation coordinator makes recommendations to the judges regarding participants' status. The judges continue to work in cooperation with the sheriff, clerk of court, district attorney, probation and parole, and other agencies to handle warrants, attachments, and compliance with court orders. The judges also continue to work in cooperation with the sheriff, clerk of court, district attorney, parish administration, misdemeanor probation, and drug court to monitor the collection and distribution of fines and forfeitures.

- **26<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 26<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its drug court judge meets regularly with offenders, probation officers, counselors, defense attorneys, and prosecutors regarding compliance with court orders and the progress of the offenders through the drug court program. In addition, the Court reports that it coordinated with other agencies within the district to ensure timely enforcement of arrest warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **27<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 27<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved service of process and improved address lists to ensure timely enforcement of arrest warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **28<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 28<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that improved address lists to ensure timely enforcement of arrest warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **30<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 30<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved enforcement.
- **32<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 32<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that it discusses these problems at judges' meetings and through communications with the sheriff, the clerk of court, the district attorney, and other appropriate agencies.
- **34<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 34<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it met with the sheriff's process servers to improve service reporting and timeliness.





- **35<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 35<sup>th</sup> JDC reports it improved enforcement. It also reports that its sheriff's office is very efficient and that problems are addressed on an as-needed basis.
- **36<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 36<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that, through the budgeting process, it monitored enforcement effectiveness of fine and court cost collections with the office of probation and parole.
- **38<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 38<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it improved service of process and improved its address lists.
- **Caddo Parish Juvenile Court.** The Caddo Parish Juvenile Court reports that it improved service of process and the enforcement of arrest warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **Orleans Parish Juvenile Court.** The Orleans Parish Juvenile Court reports that following an internal programmatic review of the Court's operations, the Court's Traffic Division conducted an inventory of all outstanding unpaid fines and fees and implemented a system to insure collections of these funds. Further, the Court revised the procedure for the issuance and follow-up of levied fines in order to maintain collections on a current basis.
- **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.** The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court reports that it is part of its regular and ongoing activities to determine the level of compliance with court orders relating to fines, court costs, restitution and other orders relating to probationers. Data entries are compiled and reports are generated from this information. The Court reports that it improved service of process and the enforcement of warrants, summons, and subpoenas. In addition, it reports that its judges and administrators, together with various criminal justice agencies, participate in an ongoing effort to develop and implement electronic subpoenas and arrest capias. The Court also has ongoing meetings with the sheriff's

personnel regarding the execution of arrest warrants. In addition, a team of field agents has been funded by the City of New Orleans to execute arrest warrants for specialty courts.

### Future Plans

- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will continue to address the issue in its regular, ongoing operations to ensure that appropriate responsibility is taken for the enforcement of court orders.
- **34<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 34<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will circulate a questionnaire to attorneys for confidential responses to the Court.

### Objective 3.6

**To ensure that all court records of relevant court decisions and actions are accurate and preserved properly.**

### Intent of the Objective

Equality, fairness, and integrity in district courts depend in substantial measure upon the accuracy, availability, and accessibility of records. This objective recognizes that other officials may maintain court records. Nevertheless, the objective does place an obligation on courts, perhaps in association with other officials, to ensure that records are accurate and preserved properly.

### Responses to the Objective

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that an archival procedure has been established for securing and retrieving out-of-date records that may be necessary in the future.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it developed a policy on lawyers checking out court files.
- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that the Court and clerk of court have established a computer link for the judges and staff to access the computerized court records in their chambers and on the bench as well as in the Jefferson



Parish Correctional Facility for use by the criminal commissioners.

- **38<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 38<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it met with its clerk of court to discuss ways to meet the objectives of the strategic plan.
- **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.** The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court reports that the court administrators are participants in the Supreme Court Task Force to identify problems and open lines of communications. The court reports that it is a regular and ongoing activity to standardize minute entries among sections and electronically transmit information to the sheriff and clerk. Currently, there are 12 of 13 sections using the standardized and automated minute entry application. New minute clerks in the building are trained in the same fashion. In addition, weekly meetings with minute clerks, the chief deputy judicial administrator and programmer are conducted.

### Future Plans

- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC will continue to address this issue in its regular, ongoing operations to ensure that all court records of relevant court decisions and actions are accurate and preserved properly.
- **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.** The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court intends to secure better storage for court reporter notes and tapes.

### Objective 4.1

**To maintain the constitutional independence of the judiciary while observing the principle of cooperation with other branches of government.**

### Intent of the Objective

The judiciary must assert and maintain its independence as a separate branch of government. Within the organizational structure of the judicial branch of government, district courts should establish their legal and organizational boundaries,

monitor and control their operations, and account publicly for their performance. Independence and accountability support the principles of a government based on law, access to justice, and the timely resolution of disputes with equality, fairness, and integrity; and they engender public trust and confidence. Courts must both control their proper functions and demonstrate respect for their co-equal partners in government.

### Responses to the Objective

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that the Court works closely with the parish authority in monitoring budget matters and in planning and improving courthouse structures and facilities. This has resulted in a cooperative attitude in providing better jury facilities, new court offices, and new courtrooms.
- **4<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 4<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it continues its annual meeting with legislators to encourage a working relationship between the judiciary and legislature on legislative matters that affect the administration of justice.
- **7<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 7<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that that judges and representatives of the Court meet regularly with representatives of the clerk's office, the district attorney's office, the indigent defender's office and law enforcement agencies. Cooperation and communication are on a regular and ongoing basis.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its judges participate in local Council of Government meetings and periodically host meetings with legislators to promote better judicial/legislative relations. Its judges participate in the Supreme Court's Chamber-to-Chamber program with legislators and members of the area's Chamber of Commerce. Its judges communicate and cooperate on a regular, ongoing basis with parish governments, the district attorney, clerks of court and sheriffs.



- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that the Court cooperates with the legislative and executive branches of government on all matters related to judicial resources. The judges communicate regularly with the sheriff, district attorney, parish administration and council, Louisiana Supreme Court, indigent defender board, local bar associations, and other law enforcement agencies.
- **26<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 26<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its judges and administrator meet on a monthly basis with representatives of the clerk's office, district attorney's office, indigent defender board, law enforcement agencies, chamber of commerce, and mayors and city officials.
- **29<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 29<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it works in collaboration with the district attorney, the IDB, probation and parole, and the local parish government (which funds the Drug Court Coordinator) in maintaining a viable Drug Court program. By having all entities pool their resources for a common goal, the court reports that it is helping those afflicted with substance abuse problems to become productive members of society. The Court works closely with St. Charles Parish Public Schools in its implementation and administration of many programs, including Court School (for students on probation or who have been expelled from regular school), Safe Schools Program (a pre-trial diversion program for students who are involved in fights at school), A.D.A.P.T. (Alternative Discipline - A Positive Approach, whereby students are placed in an alternative school setting when suspended and are required to come to court after a third suspension from school), the Job Shadow Program (whereby students come to court to shadow a professional involved with the court system), and H.O.S.T.S. (Held One Student To Succeed, whereby court personnel tutor students at a nearby school).
- **Orleans Parish Juvenile Court.** The Orleans Parish Juvenile Court reports that, in January 2003, the Court began to meet on a

regular basis with Orleans Parish District Attorney Eddie Jordan to review the operation of the juvenile justice system in Orleans Parish. D.A. Jordan has now met with the Court on a near monthly basis. This regularized communication has been a forum to resolve policy and procedural problems.

- **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.** The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court reports that the Court has worked diligently to ensure open lines of communication with the legislature through judicial ride along programs, participation in committee hearings in Baton Rouge and providing information to legislators and judges regarding bills that affect the judicial process. It reports that its communication, coordination and cooperation with the legislative branches on all matters relating to judicial resource needs is a regular and ongoing activity of the Court.

## Future Plans

- **Orleans Parish Juvenile Court.** The Orleans Parish Juvenile Court reports that it will seek to establish a system of regular meetings with the major stakeholders in the Orleans Parish juvenile justice system, including the Superintendent of the New Orleans Police Department, the Orleans Parish Criminal & Civil Sheriffs, the Youth Study Center, the Office of Youth Development and the Office of Community Services. The Court hopes that representatives of these important agencies will join the Court and the Orleans Parish District Attorney's Office in an already-established meeting forum.
- **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.** The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court plans to continue its active participation in the legislative process.



## Objective 4.2

To seek, use, and account for public resources in a responsible manner.

### Intent of the Objective

Effective court management requires sufficient resources to do justice and to keep costs affordable. This objective requires that a district court responsibly seek the resources needed to meet its judicial responsibilities, that it uses those resources prudently (even if the resources are inadequate), and that it properly accounts for the use of the resources.

### Responses to the Objective

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it has hired a financial coordinator to work closely with the parish governing authority on financial matters. This has resulted in a spirit of cooperation and better coordination of financial resources. The local governing body maintains the Court's Judicial Expense Fund. Proper accounting procedures are utilized and the account is audited yearly. Expenditures made from the Judicial Expense Fund are in accordance with accepted procurement procedures. For many years, the Court has utilized a hearing officer to expedite paternity and child support matters in conjunction with our Family Law judges. Broadening the authority of hearing officers will result in elected judges being able to devote more time and effort to complex and pressing matters.
- **4<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 4<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that a record retention plan has been adopted through the Secretary of State's Office, Division of Archives, Records Management and History. The Court reports that all accounts are audited under the new GASB regulations. A private certified public accountant continues to provide monthly budget reports and variance reports for court funds and ensures that proper accounting procedures and financial controls are in place. The Court continues to use less than the allowed number of law clerks. The Court attends annual budget meetings with the police jury and adheres to state

travel spending and property regulations in its use of locally generated funds. The Court's financial software was upgraded.

- **7<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 7<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that a misdemeanor probation program was implemented to provide additional funds. The judge's office, in conjunction with the district attorney's office, reviewed the law library shared by the two offices and made changes to the books and other legal materials ordered to save money for both offices.
- **15<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 15<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it restructured staff toward better communication among various divisions. It contracted with an accountant to streamline fiscal policies. The Court revised procedures for Boykinizations, resulting in 60% lower transcript costs charged to the Criminal Court Fund.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it maintains policies and guidelines for the expenditure of judicial expense funds. Its judges and court administrator meet periodically with a certified public accountant to develop and implement policies and procedures for establishing better accounting and financial controls over the judicial expense fund. It maintains written fixed asset inventory procedures for the management of fixed assets. The Court's chief judge appointed a Finance Committee of judges to work with the court administrator on an ongoing basis to monitor the fiscal budgets and to update and implement fiscal policy, as needed.
- **23<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 23<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that the Court has entered into cooperative endeavor agreements with the clerks of court and district attorney to share costs for courier services. Additionally, the Ascension Parish Clerk of Court has made its computer system available to the Court to allow for more efficient research and to reduce the need for transporting records.



- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that the Court is funded primarily through the Jefferson Parish General Fund and follows the procedures and guidelines set forth by the parish administration for the use of said funds. Annual meetings are scheduled with the parish president and council to discuss the Court's needs. Reports are sent to the Parish Research & Budget department. Policies and guidelines for the Judicial Expense Fund are determined by the judges en banc and overseen by the chief judge. Monthly financial reports are prepared and distributed to each judge. Financial reports are audited annually by a certified public accountant with periodic consulting on procedures and evaluation of new computer programs. As required by statute, the Court advertises a Request for Proposals for a fiscal agent to handle the Court's funds in the most cost-effective manner.
- **26<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 26<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it retains a certified public accountant to conduct annual audits. The Court adheres to state travel, spending and property regulations regarding the use of public funds, and maintains an inventory of fixed assets.
- **East Baton Rouge Parish Family Court.** The East Baton Rouge Parish Family Court reports that it is installing additional camera surveillance to enhance security.
- **East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court.** The East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court reports that all accounting procedures and financial practices were revised to ensure proper internal controls within the Court's financial structure. A certified public accounting firm audits all accounts annually under the direction of the Court. Payroll functions previously outsourced are now performed in-house.
- **Orleans Parish Juvenile Court.** The Orleans Parish Juvenile Court reports that with the support of Mayor Ray Nagin's Chief Administrative Office and the New Orleans City

Council, the Court was able to secure funding for six part-time law clerks, one being assigned to each judge. The Court was able to retain the new law clerks by entering a partnership with local law schools to secure junior and senior law students interested in this part-time work. Previously, the Court had only one full-time attorney to serve all six judges and handle legal matters for the Court itself. The Court reviewed its Westlaw contract and determined that the Court could provide automated legal resources to all judges at a cost savings in place of the traditional hardcopy book format.

- **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.** The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court reports that it makes ongoing and regular efforts to maintain a sufficient number of highly qualified staff to support and facilitate judicial adjudicative and administrative functions. There is a vital need for funding of support staff - secretaries for judges and judicial administration, facility maintenance personnel, case monitors to execute court orders and enforce the safety of the community, and case managers for Drug Treatment Court, Domestic Violence Monitoring Court and Mental Health Court. In addition, the Board of the Jury Commission needs proper staffing. The Court regards the maintenance of proper legal resources to facilitate judicial process and administrative functions as a regular and ongoing activity of the Court. It also regards the development of general guidelines for managing judicial expense funds as a regular and ongoing activity of the Court. The Judicial Expense Fund is properly managed by the Judicial Administrator as reflected in the annual audit submitted to the state. The Court reports that the Judicial Administrator periodically contacts personnel of the Judicial Administrator's Office of the Supreme Court regarding financial issues. The Court also employs a part-time CPA and full-time bookkeeper who are currently working to develop common approaches to accounting and financial controls. The Court has implemented an automated accounting system to ensure performance, accountability and accuracy.



## Future Plans

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it will continue to look for ways to control and eliminate costs of operation.
- **15<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 15<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will establish a court services manager position to help expand the scope of the Misdemeanor Probation program and oversee other court-related programs (FINS, TASC, and Juvenile Drug Court).
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will review and revise policies and guidelines for the expenditure of judicial expense funds.
- **23<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 23<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it will utilize a hearing officer commencing January 1, 2004, to hear state child support matters and protective orders. This will allow such cases to be heard in a more timely fashion and will also allow district judges to hear other matters in a more timely manner.
- **34<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 34<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will develop a judicial expense fund for courthouse construction and/or renovation.
- **East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court.** The East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court reports that will continue to maintain a close working relationship with the City/Parish government to ensure continued financial support for maintaining efficient court operations and for hiring essential, qualified court personnel.
- **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.** The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court intends to increase its funding methods and sources. It also plans to continue its ongoing effort to develop a 3-4 year budget projection and to continue fine-tuning its automated accounting system.

## Objective 4.3

To use fair employment practices.

### Intent of the Objective

The judiciary is an important and visible symbol of government. Equal treatment of all persons before the law is essential to the concept of justice. Accordingly, the district courts should operate free of bias in their personnel practices and decisions. Fairness in the recruitment, compensation, supervision, and development of court personnel helps to ensure judicial independence, accountability, and organizational competence. Fairness in employment also helps establish the highest standards of personal integrity and competence among employees.

### Responses to the Objective

#### General Responses

All but one district court reported that they had taken actions in FY 2002-2003 to improve employee training and development.

- **Courtesy Training.** Eleven said they provided courtesy training. (1st JDC; 3rd JDC; 5th JDC; 13th JDC; 19th JDC; 21st JDC; 26th JDC; East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court; Orleans Parish Civil District Court; Orleans Parish Criminal District Court; and the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court).
- **Training Videos, CDs, Etc.** Five said they used training videos, CDs, and other audio-visual training materials. (4th JDC; 19th JDC; 26th JDC; Family Court of East Baton Rouge Parish; and the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court).
- **Management Training.** Twelve said they provided management training. (1st JDC; 4th JDC; 11th JDC; 19th JDC; 21st JDC; 22nd JDC; 23rd JDC; 26th JDC; 38th JDC; East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court; Orleans Parish Criminal District Court; and the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court).



- **Technology Training.** Seventeen said they provided technology training. (2nd JDC; 4th JDC; 5th JDC; 9th JDC; 11th JDC; 14th JDC; 15th JDC; 19th JDC; 23rd JDC; 26th JDC; 36th JDC; 38th JDC; Family Court of East Baton Rouge Parish; Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court; Orleans Parish Civil District Court; Orleans Parish Criminal District Court; and the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court).
- **ADA Training.** Five said they provided ADA training. (4th JDC; 19th JDC; 26th JDC; the Family Court of East Baton Rouge Parish; and the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court).
- **Continuing Education and Training.** Thirty-seven courts said they provided continuing education and training opportunities for their employees. (1st JDC; 2nd JDC; 3rd JDC; 4th JDC; 6th JDC; 8th JDC; 9th JDC; 10th JDC; 11th JDC; 14th JDC; 15th JDC; 16th JDC; 17th JDC; 18th JDC; 19th JDC; 20th JDC; 21st JDC; 22nd JDC; 23rd JDC; 26th JDC; 27th JDC; 28th JDC; 29th JDC; 30th JDC; 31st JDC; 32nd JDC; 33rd JDC; 34th JDC; 35th JDC; 36th JDC; 37th JDC; 38th JDC; Caddo Parish Juvenile Court; Family Court of East Baton Rouge Parish; East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court; Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court; Orleans Parish Civil District Court; Orleans Parish Criminal District Court; and the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court).
- **Sent Employees to Conferences.** Thirty-six courts reported they sent their employees to conferences. (1st JDC; 2nd JDC; 3rd JDC; 4th JDC; 6th JDC; 8th JDC; 9th JDC; 11th JDC; 12th JDC; 15th JDC; 16th JDC; 17th JDC; 18th JDC; 19th JDC; 21st JDC; 22nd JDC; 23rd JDC; 25th JDC; 26th JDC; 27th JDC; 28th JDC; 29th JDC; 31st JDC; 32nd JDC; 33rd JDC; 34th JDC; 35th JDC; 37th JDC; 38th JDC; 40th JDC; Caddo Parish Juvenile Court; Family Court of East Baton Rouge Parish; East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court; Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court; Orleans Parish Civil District Court; Orleans Parish Criminal District Court; and the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court).

## Responses of Individual Courts

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that the Court has established personnel committees to deal with employee problems relating to both office personnel and court reporters. In addition, the Court is continuing to develop job descriptions of staff employees and has produced a personnel manual for court reporters. The Court also reports that it took the following steps in FY 2002-2003 to improve employee training and development: it provided courtesy training; it provided management training; it paid for continuing education and training; and it sent employees to conferences.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 2<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that it paid for the continuing education and training of its employees at conferences and other training sessions, especially for training dealing with the law and technology.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 3<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing education, training of its employees at conferences and other training sessions, and that it also provided courtesy training.
- **4<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 4<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it developed, in cooperation with the Supreme Court Human Resources Department, new personnel procedures and a manual to be reviewed and adopted in 2004. All court reporters' furnishings were upgraded to include ergonomically correct furniture, natural keyboards and non-glare flat panel monitors. The Court also reported that it provided the following types of employee training and development opportunities: training videos, CDs, etc.; management training; technology training; and ADA training. In addition, the Court reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training and sent employees to conferences. It also sponsored in-house judicial assistant training on the new rules and procedures associated with the expanded hearing officer program. Computer courses are available for employees. Human Resource training videos are shown monthly for



employees of the Court and a quarterly informational newsletter is published for employees.

- **5<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 5<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it provided courtesy training and technology training to its employees in FY 2002-2003.
- **6<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 6<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training, and sent employees to conferences.
- **8<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 8<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training, and sent employees to conferences.
- **9<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 9<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training, and sent employees to conferences. It also provided technology training.
- **10<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 10<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training, and provided ASFA training.
- **11<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 11<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training and sent employees to conferences. It also provided management training and technology training.
- **12<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 12<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it sent employees to conferences.
- **15<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 15<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it expanded its human resource policies. It also paid for continuing employee education and training, and sent employees to conferences. In addition, the Court reports that it provided technology training.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it is a regular ongoing activity of the Court to use fair employment practices. The Court uses the employment guidelines within the "Vision of

Fairness" manual provided by the Louisiana Supreme Court to ensure that it adheres to fair employment practices. The Court also reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training and sent employees to conferences.

- **17<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 17<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training and sent employees to conferences.
- **18<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 18<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training and sent employees to conferences.
- **19<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 19<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it took several actions in FY 2002-2003 to improve employee training and development. It provided courtesy, ADA, technology and management training. It also used training videos, CDs, etc. The Court paid for continuing education and training and sent its employees to conferences. In addition, its judges voted to declare one day per year "Staff Professional Development Day," a court holiday devoted to training and other professional development.
- **20<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 20<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training.
- **21<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 21<sup>st</sup> JCD reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training and sent employees to conferences. It also reports that it provided courtesy training and management training.
- **22<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 22<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training. It also reports that it provided management training.
- **23<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 23<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training and sent employees to conferences. It also reports that it provided management and technology training.





- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it follows the Jefferson Parish guidelines for employment within the Judicial Pay Plan and that it works continuously with the Jefferson Parish Human Resources Department to evaluate job descriptions and salaries.
- **25<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 25<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it sent employees to conferences in FY 2002-2003.
- **26<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 26<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it adopted a written policy and procedure manual that incorporates federal mandates regarding employment practices. It also reports that it provided courtesy, management, technology and ADA training. The Court also paid for continuing employee education and training, and sent employees to conferences.
- **27<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 27<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training, and sent employees to conferences.
- **28<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 28<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training, and sent employees to conferences.
- **29<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 29<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training, and sent employees to conferences.
- **30<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 30<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training.
- **31<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 31<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training, and sent employees to conferences.
- **32<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 32<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training, and sent employees to conferences.
- **33<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 33<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training, and sent employees to conferences.
- **34<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 34<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training, and sent employees to conferences.
- **35<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 35<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training, and sent employees to conferences.
- **36<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 36<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training, and provided technology training.
- **37<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 37<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training, and sent employees to conferences.
- **38<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 38<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training, and sent employees to conferences. It also provided management training and technology training and had its court reporters attend seminars to upgrade their skills.
- **40<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 40<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it sent employees to conferences.
- **Caddo Parish Juvenile Court.** The Caddo Parish Juvenile Court reports that it revised and updated its human resource policies. It also reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training and that it sent its employees to conferences.
- **Family Court of East Baton Rouge.** The Family Court of East Baton Rouge Parish reports that it took the following actions to improve employee training and development in FY 2002-2003: it provided training videos, CDs, etc; it provided technology training and ADA training; it paid for continuing employee education and training; and it sent employees to conferences. The Court also reports that its employees learned about repairing computers and installing software by working with computer technicians.



- **Juvenile Court of East Baton Rouge.**

The Juvenile Court of East Baton Rouge reports that the Court's newly adopted Personnel Manual promotes fair and consistent human resources policies for all employees. The Personnel Manual endorses fair recruitment, hiring and compensation practices. The Court also encourages human resources management training to ensure that the Court's policies and procedures are in compliance with the law and to keep the HR Director/Judicial Administrator informed and up-to-date on the FMLA, ADA, FLSA and other employment laws. Job descriptions were updated and essential job functions were written for each position as required for ADA compliance. In addition, the Court reports that it provided courtesy training and management training to staff, that it paid for continuing employee education and training, and that it sent employees to conferences.

- **Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court.**

The Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court reports that it reviewed and updated its Employee Manual and that it provided the following training opportunities to its staff: it provided technology training; it paid for continuing employee education and training; and it sent employees to conferences.

- **Orleans Parish Civil District Court.**

The Orleans Parish Civil District Court reports that it provided courtesy training and technology training. It also reports that it paid for continuing employee education and training and sent employees to conferences.

- **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.**

The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court reports that the development, promulgation, and enforcement of fair employment policies as required by law and good human resource management practices is a regular, ongoing activity of the Court. It also reports that in FY 2002-2003 it took the following actions to improve employee training and development: provided courtesy, management, technology and ADA training; purchased and provided training

videos, CDs, etc.; provided continuing employee education and training; and sent employees to conferences.

- **Orleans Parish Juvenile Court.**

The Orleans Parish Juvenile Court reports that it provided courtesy training to its receptionists and telephone operators. It also implemented a daily staff meeting of all department heads and managers chaired by the chief judge, and later by the Judicial Administrator, the purpose of which was to provide a forum for the airing and resolution of problems and conflicts and for future planning. In addition, the Court reports that its staff has been trained in the "Ritetrack" case management and court information system hardware and the digital audio/visual court reporting software.

## Future Plans

- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will develop written employment policies and procedures.

- **28<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 28<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will continue to send its employees to seminars and other training programs.

- **East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court.**

The East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court reports that it will continue to promote the training of court personnel on a routine basis and will continue to provide management training.

- **Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court.**

The Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court reports that it will complete its revision of the Employee Personnel Manual.

- **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.**

The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court intends to cross train personnel in court procedures and to provide ADA personnel training.



## Objective 4.4

To inform the community of the court's structure, functions, and programs.

### Intent of the Objective

Most citizens do not have direct contact with the courts. Information about courts is filtered through sources such as the media, lawyers, litigants, jurors, political leaders, and the employees of other components of the justice system. Public opinion polls indicate that the public knows very little about the courts, and what is known is often at odds with reality. This objective implies that courts have a direct responsibility to inform the community of their structure, functions and programs. The disclosure of such information, through a variety of outreach programs, increases the influence of the courts on the development of the law, which, in turn, affects public policy and the activities of other governmental institutions. At the same time, such disclosure increases public awareness of and confidence in the operations of the courts.

### Response to the Objective

#### General Responses

Several courts report that they took actions in FY 2002-2003 to communicate information to the public about their courts, the law, and the administration of justice.

- **Newsletter.** One court reported that it published and distributed a newsletter. (4th JDC).
- **Visited Classrooms.** Twenty-nine courts said they visited classrooms. (1st JDC; 2nd JDC; 3rd JDC; 4th JDC; 5th JDC; 6th JDC; 7th JDC; 8th JDC; 10th JDC; 11th JDC; 12th JDC; 14th JDC; 15th JDC; 16th JDC; 17th JDC; 21st JDC; 23rd JDC; 25th JDC; 27th JDC; 28th JDC; 29th JDC; 30th JDC; 34th JDC; 35th JDC; 36th JDC; Caddo Parish Juvenile Court; East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court; Orleans Parish Civil District Court; and the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court).

- **Gave Talks.** Thirty-four courts said they gave talks at various forums. (1st JDC; 2nd JDC; 3rd JDC; 4th JDC; 5th JDC; 6th JDC; 7th JDC; 10th JDC; 11th JDC; 12th JDC; 13th JDC; 14th JDC; 15th JDC; 16th JDC; 17th JDC; 18th JDC; 19th JDC; 21st JDC; 25th JDC; 26th JDC; 27th JDC; 28th JDC; 29th JDC; 30th JDC; 32nd JDC; 34th JDC; 36th JDC; 38th JDC; 40th JDC; Caddo Parish Juvenile Court; Family Court of East Baton Rouge Parish; Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court; Orleans Parish Civil District Court; and the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court).
- **Judicial Ride-Along Programs.** Five courts said they participated in judicial ride-along programs. (14th JDC; 16th JDC; 27th JDC; 34th JDC; and the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court).
- **Radio and TV Shows.** Fourteen courts said their judges had appeared on radio and television shows. (9th JDC; 10th JDC; 11th JDC; 16th JDC; 17th JDC; 19th JDC; 32nd JDC; 38th JDC; Caddo Parish Juvenile Court; Family Court of East Baton Rouge Parish; East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court; Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court; Orleans Parish Civil District Court; and the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court).
- **Sponsored a Teen Court Program.** Four courts reported they had sponsored a teen court program. (10th JDC; 14th JDC; 26th JDC; and the Caddo Parish Juvenile Court).
- **Sponsored Tours of the Court.** Thirty-five courts said they sponsored tours of their courts. (1st JDC; 2nd JDC; 3rd JDC; 4th JDC; 5th JDC; 6th JDC; 7th JDC; 10th JDC; 11th JDC; 12th JDC; 14th JDC; 16th JDC; 17th JDC; 18th JDC; 19th JDC; 20th JDC; 21st JDC; 22nd JDC; 25th JDC; 26th JDC; 27th JDC; 28th JDC; 30th JDC; 31st JDC; 32nd JDC; 33rd JDC; 34th JDC; 35th JDC; 36th JDC; 38th JDC; Caddo Parish Juvenile Court; Family Court of East Baton Rouge Parish; East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court; Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court; Orleans Parish Civil District Court; and the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court).



- **Participated in Shadow Programs.**

Sixteen courts said they participated in shadow programs. (1st JDC; 3rd JDC; 4th JDC; 5th JDC; 7th JDC; 9th JDC; 11th JDC; 16th JDC; 17th JDC; 18th JDC; 21st JDC; 26th JDC; 27th JDC; 29th JDC; 34th JDC; and the 37th JDC).

## Responses of Individual Courts

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that community education is provided through jury duty films, notary classes, courthouse and courtroom tours, mock trials, public school shadow programs, public speaking at schools and civic clubs. College students attend court sessions as a requirement of their course work. The Court also participates in various other educational programs. For example, the Court will participate in an upcoming "Recent Developments by the Judiciary" seminar being sponsored by the Shreveport Bar Association. A number of judges of the Court participate in various educational programs sponsored by such organizations as the National Judicial College and the American Academy of Judicial Education. This fall, the Court hosted five judges from Russia who were in the United States to observe our legal system. Those judges toured the court facilities, sat in on trials in progress, reviewed the jury pool set up, and had one-on-one communication with the judges of the 1<sup>st</sup> JDC.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 2<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that, in its 2001 comprehensive strategic report, it reported on its efforts to increase collegiality among the lawyers and judges of the district and to provide training sessions for lawyers and law enforcement personnel. In 2002-2003, it continued those efforts. It also reported that it took other actions to educate the public about the law and the administration of justice. It visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, and sponsored tours of the courts.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 3<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it participated in a job shadowing program with

various schools, sponsored tours of its courthouses, visited classrooms, and made presentations concerning the judicial system to civic groups and other forums.

- **4<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 4<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it continues to retain a publicist to provide newsworthy actions by the Court to the media. The Court reports that it has a newsletter and that it visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, sponsored tours of the courts, and participated in school shadow programs. It also reports that it allowed students from local high schools to sit in on, and observe, court proceedings.
- **5<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 5<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, sponsored tours of the courts, and participated in school shadow programs.
- **6<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 6<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, and sponsored tours of courts.
- **7<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 7<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that during the year, the judges visited classrooms in the local schools. They also gave talks at various forums in the community. Classroom tours of the Court were scheduled. Local students participated in the shadowing program for different personnel in the court system. The mock trial program at the high school was critiqued.
- **8<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 8<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its judges visited classrooms in FY 2002-2003.
- **9<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 9<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its judges appeared on radio and TV shows and participated in shadow programs with the schools.
- **10<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 10<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it took several actions during FY 2002-2003 to educate the public about the Court, the law, and the administration of justice. It visited classrooms,



gave talks at various forums, sponsored a teen court program, and sponsored tours of courts. Its judges also appeared on radio and TV shows and participated in a classroom in the court room program where high school students are invited to attend sessions of criminal court, watch from a jury box, and ask questions of the judge, the assistant district attorney or the defense attorney after the proceeding.

- **11<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 11<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, sponsored tours of the courts, and participated in school shadow programs. It also reports that its judges appeared on radio and TV programs, and sponsored and participated in, "Citizen Appreciation Day" in December 2003.
- **12<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 12<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, and sponsored tours of the courts. It also reports that its judges made many visits to schools to discuss the legal profession.
- **13<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 13<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it gave talks at various forums in FY 2002-2003.
- **14<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 14<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it took several actions in FY 2002-2003 to educate the public about the law and the administration of justice. The Court visited classrooms, gave talks to various forums, participated in Judicial Ride-Along programs, sponsored a teen court program, and sponsored tours of courts.
- **15<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 15<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, and conducted mock trials for the Leadership Excel programs in FY 2002-2003.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its judges visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, participated in Judicial Ride-Along programs, appeared on radio and TV shows, sponsored tours of the courts, and participated in

school shadow programs.

- **17<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 17<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its judges visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, appeared on radio and TV programs, sponsored tours of the courts, and participated in school shadow programs. It also reports the participation of its judges in the Mayor for a Day Program.
- **18<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 18<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it gave talks at various forums, sponsored tours of the courts, and participated in school shadow programs.
- **19<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 19<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it gave talks at various forums and sponsored tours of the courthouses. In addition, its judges appeared on radio and television shows.
- **20<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 20<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it sponsored tours of the courts.
- **21<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 21<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, sponsored tours of the courts, and participated in school shadow programs.
- **22<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 22<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that it sponsored tours of the Court.
- **23<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 23<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it visited classrooms and participated in mock trials at area high schools.
- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that, under the direction of the chief judge, the Court has established a cable access television program titled "You and the Law, Empowering Citizens Through Knowledge." The program consists of 12, one-half hour programs scheduled monthly to inform the public on court issues, procedures, and programs. Hearing officers have appeared on public access television on several occasions to inform the public about various programs offered to



assist them in family and domestic matters. The hearing officers have also appeared to discuss the procedures necessary to seek child support. Also, if litigants cannot afford legal representation, court personnel are available to inform litigants of the agencies and procedures for obtaining representation. The judges and hearing officers have worked with the local law school to provide a CLE program to attorneys on how to present a child support and spousal support claim as well as inform them of current changes in the law. The Court has instituted a "Youth Realization Program" which is a mentoring program funded by a Local Law Enforcement Block Grant. It has a "Court Outreach Program" in which a judge visits classrooms as a motivational speaker and role model. Mock trials are performed using children from the school. The Jefferson Parish Coroner's Office has instituted a "Victims Assistance Program."

- **25<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 25<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, sponsored tours of the courts, and participated in the district attorney's "LEAD" program with all the schools in the district.
- **26<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 26<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it sponsored a teen court and tours of its courthouses. The Court also reports that its judges and administrator continue to speak to civic groups regarding different aspects of the justice system. Additionally, high school students are afforded the opportunity to shadow different court personnel and observe court proceedings.
- **27<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 27<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, sponsored tours of the courts, and participated in shadow programs.
- **28<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 28<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, and sponsored tours of the courts.
- **29<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 29<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums,

and participated in school shadow programs.

- **30<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 30<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, and sponsored tours of the court facilities. It also reports that it met en banc with representatives of the local bar association to generate programs for enhancing the public image of the judicial system.
- **31<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 31<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it sponsored tours of the courts.
- **32<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 32<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that, during the past year, HTV, the local cable television station for Houma/Terrebonne /Lafourche Parish, has conducted a series of interviews of the judges of Lafourche and Terrebonne Parish. The Court's judges also advised the Terrebonne Parish School Board, by letter, that the judges were available to speak to the students and/or school personnel as needed. The names and phone numbers of the judges were furnished to the school board. Also, the district court judges sponsored tours of the Court facilities and made themselves available to speak at various group meetings, such as Rotary Club, Civitan, and Kiwanis.
- **33<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 33<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it sponsored tours of the courts.
- **34<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 34<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, participated in Judicial Ride-Along programs, sponsored tours of the courts, and participated in school shadow programs.
- **35<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 35<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it visited classrooms and sponsored tours of the courts.
- **36<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 36<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, sponsored tours of the courts, and sponsored a



Law Day event featuring educational speakers, recognition of the student moot court team, and a reception for the public.

- **37<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 37<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it participated in school shadow programs.
- **38<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 38<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its judges gave talks at various forums, appeared on radio and TV shows, and sponsored tours of the courts.
- **39<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 39<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it did not address this objective in FY 2002-2003.
- **40<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 40<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it gave talks at various forums and presented the “Color of Justice” program designed to encourage greater minority participation in legal careers.
- **Caddo Parish Juvenile Court.** The Caddo Parish Juvenile Court reports that its judges visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, appeared on radio and TV shows, sponsored a teen court, and sponsored tours of the courts.
- **Family Court of East Baton Rouge Parish.** The Family Court of East Baton Rouge Parish reports that it gave talks at various forums, appeared on radio and TV shows, sponsored tours of the courts, participated in Law Day activities, and maintained and updated its Family Court web page ([www.FamilyCourt.org](http://www.FamilyCourt.org)).
- **Juvenile Court of East Baton Rouge Parish.** The Juvenile Court of East Baton Rouge Parish reports that it has appointed a chairman and formed the Juvenile Court Improvements Committee to seek out funding resources for the construction of a new Juvenile Justice Complex for East Baton Rouge Parish. In order to encourage support for this much-needed cause, the Committee promotes community awareness by educating the public about the essential functions of the Court and the important role the Court plays within the community. The Court made itself available to the community and

conducted various tours throughout the year. The tour groups were often allowed to visit directly with the judges for question and answer sessions. Information about the Court was linked to the City of Baton Rouge’s website. In addition to these activities, the Court reports that it visited classrooms, appeared on radio and TV shows, sponsored tours of the courts, spoke to civic organizations and community forums, and participated in numerous community task forces.

- **Juvenile Court of the Parish of Jefferson.** The Juvenile Court of Jefferson Parish reports that it published and distributed a CASA newsletter and that its judges gave talks at various forums, appeared on radio and TV shows, and sponsored tours of the Court.
- **Orleans Parish Civil District Court.** The Orleans Parish Civil District Court reports that it published and distributed a court newsletter and that its judges visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, appeared on radio and TV shows, and sponsored tours of their courtrooms.
- **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.** The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court reports that it has implemented an organizational and structural chart, which is public record. Media coverage for specialty courts and alternatives to incarceration programs are a continuing effort and goal. A state-of-the-art Drug Testing Lab has been highlighted. Website development is an ongoing and regular activity. The Court has an active relationship with the Community Relations Department of the Supreme Court. Administrators meet regularly with the Supreme Court’s Community Relations Department to discuss ways to inform the community of the Court and its programs. Drug Court and Domestic Violence Court have been highlighted in the media. A new Mental Health Court will be showcased in the very near future. Citywide cleanups, painting of schools, judges in the classroom, and classes of all grades visiting the Court are all part of the Court’s community outreach focus. In addition, the Court reports that



its judges visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, participated in Judicial Ride-Along programs, appeared on radio and TV shows, sponsored tours of the courts, and participated with the Curriculum for International Visitors.

### Future Plans

- **5<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 5<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it plans to confer with experts to develop a website in the coming year.
- **6<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 6<sup>th</sup> JDC plans to conclude its development of a website that will provide court calendars, driving instructions, general jury instructions, and other information to court users.
- **22<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 22<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that it is planning to develop a new court website in the coming year.
- **28<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 28<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will continue to educate the public about the court system by visiting classrooms, speaking at events, and trying to implement a website containing information on dockets, jury service, etc.
- **29<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 29<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it hopes to establish a link with the parish's website in 2004 in order to post information about the court system and to keep the public constantly informed of the Court's structure, functions, and programs.
- **36<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 36<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will sponsor community observance of Law Day with a public information program and reception. Through programs at civic club meetings, the Court will actively inform the public of the physical and space needs of the court building erected in 1913. The Court will continue education outreach in schools by inviting classrooms of students to visit court for informational programs on court functions.
- **37<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 37<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it plans to visit more classrooms in the coming year.

- **38<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 38<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it plans to increase outreach to schools and other community organizations.
- **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.** The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court intends to continue the development of its website, increase its community outreach programs, and enhance positive media attention.

### Objective 4.5

**To recognize new conditions or emerging events and to adjust court operations as necessary.**

#### Intent of the Objective

Effective district courts are responsive to emergent public issues such as drug abuse, child and spousal abuse, AIDS, drunken driving, child support enforcement, crime and public safety, consumer rights, racial, ethnic, and gender bias, and more efficiency in government. This objective requires district courts to recognize and respond appropriately to such emergent public issues. A district court that moves deliberately in response to emergent issues is a stabilizing force in society and acts consistently with its role in maintaining the rule of law and building public trust and confidence.

#### Responses to the Objective

##### General Responses

- **Additional Personal Computers.** Thirty-six district courts said they bought additional personal computers (1st JDC; 2nd JDC; 3rd JDC; 4th JDC; 5th JDC; 6th JDC; 11th JDC; 12th JDC; 13th JDC; 14th JDC; 15th JDC; 16th JDC; 17th JDC; 18th JDC; 19th JDC; 20th JDC; 21st JDC; 22nd JDC; 23rd JDC; 25th JDC; 26th JDC; 27th JDC; 28th JDC; 29th JDC; 31st JDC; 32nd JDC; 33rd JDC; 34th JDC; 36th JDC; 38th JDC; 40th JDC; East Baton Rouge Parish Family Court; East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court; Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court; and the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court).





- **Video-conferencing/Arrestment System.** Nine said they installed video-conferencing/arrestment systems (10th JDC; 11th JDC; 14th JDC; 18th JDC; 21st JDC; 23rd JDC; 26th JDC; 32nd JDC; and the 34th JDC).
- **Electronic Monitoring.** Three said they installed electronic monitoring (23rd JDC; 25th JDC; and the 31st JDC).
- **PowerPoint Software.** Nine said they installed and used PowerPoint software (1st JDC; 4th JDC; 24th JDC; 25th JDC; Caddo Parish Juvenile Court; Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court).
- **Audio-Visual Equipment.** Eight said they installed new audio-visual equipment (1st JDC; 4th JDC; 8th JDC; 18th JDC; 25th JDC; 31st JDC; 33rd JDC; and the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court).
- **Legal Research Software.** Nineteen said they installed legal research software. (1st JDC; 3rd JDC; 4th JDC; 5th JDC; 6th JDC; 7th JDC; 10th JDC; 11th JDC; 13th JDC; 16th JDC; 17th JDC; 19th JDC; 22nd JDC; 23rd JDC; 25th JDC; 33rd JDC; 34th JDC; 38th JDC; and the 40th JDC).
- **LAN System.** Seven said they installed a LAN system (15th JDC; 16th JDC; 17th JDC; 22nd JDC; 23rd JDC; 33rd JDC; and the 40th JDC).
- **Real-time Reporting.** Six said they installed real-time reporting (1st JDC; 13th JDC; 19th JDC; Caddo Parish Juvenile Court; Orleans Parish Civil District Court; and the Orleans Parish Criminal District Court).
- **Email/Internet.** Twenty said they installed e-mail and Internet (1st JDC; 3rd JDC; 5th JDC; 6th JDC; 11th JDC; 12th JDC; 15th JDC; 16th JDC; 17th JDC; 18th JDC; 20th JDC; 23rd JDC; 25th JDC; 27th JDC; 29th JDC; 33rd JDC; 34th JDC; 36th JDC; 40th JDC; and the Orleans Parish Civil District Court).

- **Word Processing Software.** Twenty-six said they upgraded word processing software (1st JDC; 3rd JDC; 4th JDC; 5th JDC; 9th JDC; 10th JDC; 11th JDC; 14th JDC; 15th JDC; 16th JDC; 17th JDC; 18th JDC; 19th JDC; 20th JDC; 23rd JDC; 25th JDC; 27th JDC; 31st JDC; 34th JDC; 36th JDC; 38th JDC; 40th JDC; Family Court of East Baton Rouge Parish; East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court; Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court; and the Orleans Parish Civil District Court).
- **Digital Audio/Video.** One said they installed digital audio/video (the 31st JDC).
- **Automated Security Systems.** Three said they installed automated security systems (6th JDC; 25th JDC; and the 30th JDC).

### Responses of Individual Courts

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it bought additional personal computers, installed and used PowerPoint software, and upgraded its word processing software. It also installed new audio-visual equipment, legal research software, real-time reporting, and e-mail and Internet capabilities.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 2<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that it bought additional personal computers and installed the real-time reporting DRAGON reporting software in one of its parishes.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 3<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it bought additional personal computers, installed legal research software, installed e-mail capabilities, and upgraded its word processing software.
- **4<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 4<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that the Court continually assesses the needs of the community and will respond with various programs and departments to address these issues as it has in the past. The Court also reports that it bought additional personal computers, installed and used PowerPoint



software, installed new audio-visual equipment, installed legal research software, upgraded word processing software, and implemented a third-party monitoring program.

- **5<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 5<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it bought additional personal computers, installed legal research software, installed e-mail and Internet capabilities, and upgraded its word processing software.
- **6<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 6<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it bought additional personal computers, installed legal research software, installed e-mail and Internet capabilities, and installed an automated security system.
- **7<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 7<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that its Division A judge obtained a grant from the Rapides Foundation for the research and development portion of a Juvenile Drug Court. The Court is now in the process of seeking approval as a rural pilot program for a Juvenile Drug Court. In addition, the Court reports that it bought additional personal computers and installed legal research software.
- **8<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 8<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it installed new audio-visual equipment.
- **9<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 9<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it upgraded its word processing software and is in the process of issuing bar-coded nametags for its employees. It also reports that it updated the judges' LAN system enabling other agencies within the courthouse to communicate with the Court without impairing the security of the network.
- **10<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 10<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it installed a video-conferencing/arraignment system and new legal research software. It also upgraded its word processing software. The Court has also teamed with the Boys and Girls Club of Natchitoches to obtain a grant for

funding the implementation of a mentoring program for at-risk children.

- **11<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 11<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it bought additional personal computers, installed a video-conferencing/arraignment system, installed legal research software, installed e-mail and Internet capabilities, and upgraded its word processing software.
- **12<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 12<sup>th</sup> JDC bought additional personal computers, upgraded its recording systems, and upgraded its word processing software.
- **13<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 13<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it bought additional personal computers, installed legal research software, and installed e-mail and Internet capabilities.
- **15<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 15<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it bought additional personal computers, installed legal research software, installed e-mail and Internet capabilities, and maintained its automated security system.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it maintains the Adult Drug Court programs in St. Mary, Iberia and St. Martin parishes, the Juvenile Family Focus Drug Court program in St. Mary and Iberia parishes, the Addictive Recovery Community Home Network program and the Family Court pre-trial conference program in St. Mary, Iberia and St. Martin Parishes. In addition, the Court has also developed a system for allotting felony cases to assigned judges for a one-year period. The juvenile court dockets are also assigned to one judge in each parish. The Court has a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program in Iberia parish. It has also installed a computer network system in St. Mary and Iberia parishes which provides Internet access to judges and staff. The Court has implemented the Re-Entry Drug Court in Iberia Parish and is developing an allotment system of



misdemeanor cases to assigned judges for one year period. The Court reports that it bought additional personal computers, installed legal research software (Westlaw National Law Gold Library and Westlaw Louisiana Civil Library), installed a LAN system in Iberia Parish, installed e-mail and Internet capabilities in Iberia Parish, and upgraded its word processing software. The Court also reports that it installed anti-virus software in every court computer and that it is studying implementing a video-conferencing/arraignment system.

- **17<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 17<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it bought additional personal computers, installed legal research software, installed a LAN system, installed e-mail and Internet, and upgraded its word processing software.
- **18<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 18<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it bought additional personal computers, installed a video conferencing/arraignment system, installed new audio-visual equipment, installed e-mail and Internet capabilities, and upgraded its word processing software.
- **19<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 19<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it made several improvements in its court technology during FY 2002-2003. It bought additional personal computers, installed and used PowerPoint software, installed legal research software and real-time reporting, and upgraded its word processing software. In addition, the Court reports that, in collaboration with its clerk of court, it went live with the first phase of its totally integrated case management software project.
- **20<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 20<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it bought additional personal computers and installed e-mail and Internet capabilities.
- **21<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 21<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it bought additional personal computers and updated its video-conferencing/arraignment system.

- **22<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 22<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that it bought additional personal computers, installed and used PowerPoint software, installed legal research software, installed a LAN system, and upgraded its word processing software.
- **23<sup>rd</sup> JDC.** The 23<sup>rd</sup> JDC reports that it bought additional personal computers, installed video-conferencing, maintained electronic monitoring, maintained legal research software, maintained a LAN system, and maintained its e-mail and Internet system.
- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that the Court uses ad hoc judges appointed by the Supreme Court to hear burdensome cases in order to prevent docket delays. The Court has purchased additional computers and continues to upgrade outdated PC's to current standards. The Court purchased additional servers and upgraded existing servers on the 24<sup>th</sup> JDC network. Computers were installed for attorney/law enforcement use to expedite orders, form, warrants, etc. The Court installed and used PowerPoint software, installed and updated (monthly) its legal research software, and obtained Internet access to Westlaw. The Court continues to maintain a connection between the 24<sup>th</sup> JDC's network, the clerk of court's network, and the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office and has utilized a loop between multiple buildings to prevent interruption. Intrusion Detection software was installed on the LAN to monitor security. The Court also upgraded the e-mail server and installed and implemented secure access to retrieve e-mail through the Internet. It installed computers and firewalls at judges' homes with highly encrypted VLANs to provide 24-hour access to the court network for access to the clerk of court's records as well as the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's records to aid in the setting of bonds, etc. The Court also upgraded its accounting software package, installed new virus protection software on all servers and PC's, implemented hourly updates for servers and



daily updates for PC's, and renewed its connection to Supreme Court's MetroServer. A new Domestic Child Support computer application is being written and an electronic evidence presentation system was installed in three test divisions for the 24th JDC. The equipment includes: A computer with evidence presentation software on a DVD; the evidence presenter (ELMO); cassette player/recorders (micro & standard); touch panels for the judge and witness; monitors for attorneys; large screen monitors for jurors and the general public; and a web camera.

- **26<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 26<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it continues to operate adult drug court in Bossier Parish and juvenile drug courts in Bossier and Webster Parishes. In addition to Teen Court, Youth Serve Community Service Program, Truancy Assessment Center and FINS, the Court has joined efforts with Volunteers for Youth Justice in Shreveport to provide alternative sanctions for status offenders.
- **32<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 32<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that its judges are currently trying to initiate a discussion to determine whether changes in the current juvenile/family court system should be pursued. A meeting with the Bar Association and other interested individuals is in the process of being scheduled. The Court is currently in the process of purchasing the necessary equipment to set up a system of video arraignments with the Terrebonne Parish Criminal Justice Complex. While there is currently one television monitor in place at the courthouse for assisting the magistrate with video arraignments, the purchase of equipment being considered now will involve the installation in each courtroom of the appropriate video equipment to allow the handling of video arraignments in each division of Court. Meetings are currently being held to view the available equipment, prices and legal issues concerning bid laws. The Court's judges meet at least once a month to discuss various issues, and often this requires additional meetings to take place. Frequently, various

judges and public officials are invited to speak to the judges concerning matters of interest, or legal education. They may also bring problems that need to be resolved within the court system to the judges' attention, or advise them of issues that may concern the Court's personnel. The Court will continue to conduct its meetings in the same manner. Currently, the judges are in the process of scheduling meetings with the Bar Association to try to determine whether any changes are desired or necessary in the current juvenile/family court system. Also, meetings are in the process of being scheduled with the new parish government to discuss various financial and funding issues that pertain to the improvements of the recently acquired jury meeting room as well as the funding and salary increases of court reporters. The Court's judges are in the process of purchasing video equipment and having it installed in each courtroom for handling video arraignments. It is hoped that this equipment will be in place by mid-summer 2004. Meetings are currently scheduled in March to view the proposed equipment to be purchased. Once a decision is made on the equipment, it will be necessary to comply with the public bid law. After that requirement is met, the equipment will be purchased and installed.

- **34<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 34<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it has reviewed the parish probation program, including community service and home incarceration, as an alternative to parish incarceration. The Court is actively planning expansion and construction of new courtrooms and chambers, to upgrade the technology available and improve accessibility to the Court. Currently the Court is waiting for legislative funding in a higher priority.
- **38<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 38<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it had its office manager trained in protective order administration.
- **40<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 40<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it has implemented a Drug Court program.



- **Caddo Parish Juvenile Court.** The Caddo Parish Juvenile Court reports that it assumed a leadership role in the Juvenile Justice Commission Advisory Committee's activities and debates leading to recommendations to the Commission and Legislature.
- **East Baton Rouge Parish Family Court.** The East Baton Rouge Parish Family Court reports that the Court has provided all judges with VPN capability whereby each judge can access his office computer from any site in the United States and can perform functions on the office computer as if they are in the office.
- **East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court.** The East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court reports that the Court recently purchased new computers for all departments, and routinely upgrades its courtroom and facility technology. It also reports that its Non-Support Division took an active role in various "Fathering Court" initiatives. In conjunction with the Discovery Program, the Court enhanced FINS services by promoting, financing and providing space for the Program's family strengthening activities. The Court participated in LSU Law School's Juvenile Practice Workshop. Pursuant to Rule XX, Section 6 of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Louisiana, law students were sworn in as law student practitioners. For a six-week period under the supervision of the Public Defender, the student practitioners represented indigent juveniles who were petitioned for delinquency offenses in juvenile court.
- **Orleans Parish Juvenile Court.** The Orleans Parish Juvenile Court reports that the Court instituted meetings between the Domestic Relations Division judges of Civil District Court and the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court to review and improve the process for issuing Protective Orders and to coordinate their issuance between the two courts. This dialog is intended to expand to include other areas of concurrent jurisdiction between the two courts.
- **Orleans Parish Criminal District Court.** The Orleans Parish Criminal District Court reports that it has regular and ongoing activity to develop and implement specialty courts. It has seven (7) successful Drug Treatment Courts in operation and the first, and only, Domestic Violence Monitoring Court and Mental Health Court in the state. During the 2003 legislative session, a study resolution for the feasibility of statewide mental health courts was passed. The state Criminal Justice Legislative Committee will conduct a hearing at the Orleans Criminal District Court before the beginning of the 2004 session. A successful Court Intervention Services Program and a Drug Testing Lab are in operation and there are specialized divisions for collections and community service. The Court has a pilot program for an automated case management system to be implemented by June 2004. It has a standardized minute entry program being operated in 12 of 13 sections. It has a database for drug treatment court statistics. The Court also reports that the improvement of Court intervention services and alternatives to incarceration are regular, ongoing activities.

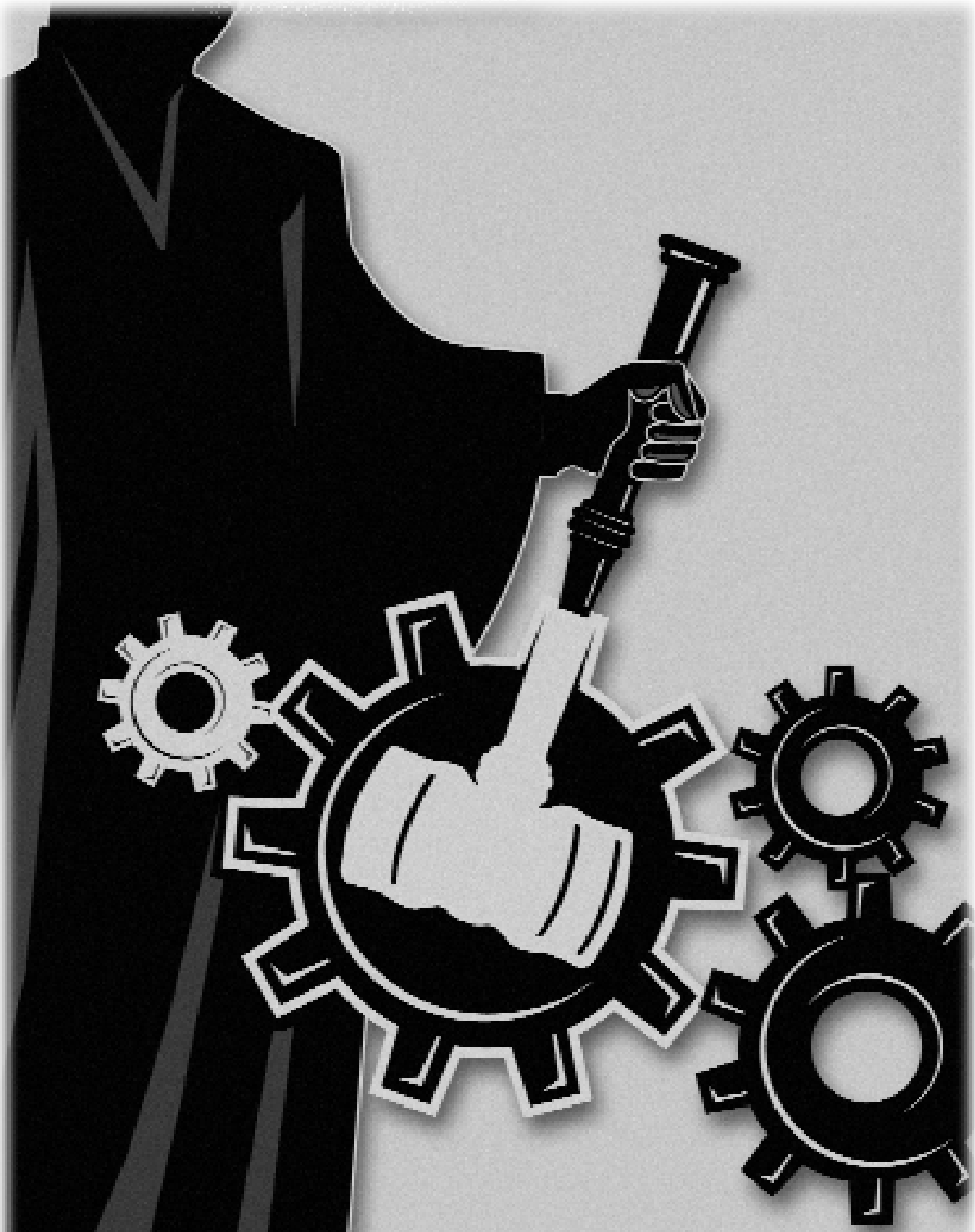
### Future Plans

- **1<sup>st</sup> JDC.** The 1<sup>st</sup> JDC reports that it will continue to update and expand drug court involvement. The Court increased real-time reporting by certifying an additional reporter.
- **6<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 6<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will install equipment in its courtrooms for judges and law clerks to do legal research.
- **16<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 16<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will implement a computer network system in St. Martin parish.
- **17<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 17<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it plans to upgrade its court reporting by expanding real-time reporting through voice mask technology.



- **22<sup>nd</sup> JDC.** The 22<sup>nd</sup> JDC reports that it plans to install a new LINUX server in the coming year.
- **24<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 24<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will have digital audio recording of transcripts.
- **27<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 27<sup>th</sup> JDC plans to meet en banc in the coming year to continue to address the strategic plan and its implementation.
- **28<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 28<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will continue to update its technology.
- **29<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 29<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it has had video-conferencing for magistrate court, real-time reporting, and use of personal computers for a number of years. The judges (or their designated employees) stay abreast of current technologies in order to maintain these services at optimal operating conditions.
- **30<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 30<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will convene periodic en banc meetings and will encourage input from all stakeholders in the court system to formulate and implement strategies that will address the objectives of the strategic plan.
- **34<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 34<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will continue to upgrade computer software and create networking with the sheriff's office to allow complete access to criminal records.
- **37<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 37<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it will improve its computer systems and provide legal research in the coming year. It also plans to create a drug court.
- **38<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 38<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it plans to increase the use of electronic research and automated case management in the coming year.
- **40<sup>th</sup> JDC.** The 40<sup>th</sup> JDC reports that it intends to thoroughly study its local court rules, streamline them, and eliminate the many appendices. It also plans to better address pro se litigation.
- **East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court.** The East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court reports that it intends to work closely with the EBRPSO work release program. It will also assist Tulane University's Director of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in compiling statistical information on time in foster care and recidivism rates in Child-in-Need-of-Care cases.





PERFORMANCE REPORTS:

**PERFORMANCE OF THE CITY  
AND PARISH COURTS**

# PERFORMANCE OF THE CITY AND PARISH COURTS

## INTRODUCTION

The Board of the Louisiana Association of City Court Judges adopted the Strategic Plan of the City and Parish Courts in May of 2002. The Supreme Court of Louisiana approved the Plan in July of 2002. At the time of adoption, the Strategic Plan of the City and Parish Courts contained five goals, twenty-one objectives, and fifty-five strategies.

To plan and guide the implementation of the Strategic Plan of the City and Parish Courts, the Louisiana Association of City Court Judges established a Committee on Strategic Planning chaired by its then president, Judge Paul Bonin. Its current chair is Judge Grace Gasaway. Thus far, the Committee has met once with the Judicial Administrator of the Supreme Court to develop and monitor an implementation plan consisting of the following elements:

1. distribution to each district judge of a copy of the plan.
2. regular briefings of the Board and members of the Louisiana Association of City Court Judges on the progress of the Association and the city and parish courts in implementing the strategic plan.
3. meetings with the Committee on Strategic Planning.
4. development and distribution of the 2002-2003 Survey of Chief Judges on Judicial Performance.

The goals and objectives in the Strategic Plan of the City and Parish Courts are based on the national trial court performance standards as modified by the Louisiana Commission on Performance Standards and Strategic Planning in 2002-2003. The information presented in the “Responses to Objective” and “Future Steps” sections of the Report was derived from the responses of each city and parish court to the Survey of Chief Judges, which was prepared by the Office of the Judicial Administrator of the Supreme Court and disseminated to the city and parish courts during the fall of 2003.

All fifty-two of the chief judges of the city and parish courts responded to the Survey of the Chief Judges. In most cases, the chief judges answered both the objective and open-ended questions included in the Survey. In some cases, the chief judges elected only to answer the objective questions. In answering the open-ended questions, most of the chief judges provided lists of activities that they either were using or planned to use to address the objectives. Sometimes, the chief judges simply indicated that their responses to certain objectives were part of the regular, ongoing activities of their courts. In other cases, the chief judges responded to the open-ended questions by indicating that their courts were either already in compliance with the objective or would take steps to be compliant in the future.





## City Court Objectives

- 1.1 To conduct judicial proceedings that are public by law or custom openly.
- 1.2 To encourage responsible parties to make court facilities safe, accessible, and convenient.
- 1.3 To give all who appear before the court reasonable opportunities to participate effectively without undue hardship or inconvenience.
- 1.4 To ensure that all judges and other court personnel are courteous and responsive to the public and accord respect to all with whom they come into contact.
- 1.5 To encourage all responsible public bodies and public officers to make the costs of access to court proceedings and records - whether measured in terms of money, time, or the procedures that must be followed - reasonable, fair, and affordable.
- 2.1 To encourage timely case management and processing.
- 2.2 To provide required reports and to respond to requests for information promptly.
- 2.3 To promptly implement changes in law and procedure.
- 3.1 To faithfully adhere to laws, procedural rules, and established policies.
- 3.2 To give individual attention to cases, deciding them without undue disparity among like cases and upon legally relevant factors.
- 3.3 To ensure that the decisions of the court address clearly the issues presented to it and, where appropriate, to specify how compliance can be achieved.
- 3.4 To ensure that appropriate responsibility is taken for the enforcement of court orders.
- 3.5 To ensure that all court records of relevant court decisions and actions are accurate and preserved properly.
- 4.1 To maintain the constitutional independence of the judiciary while observing the principle of cooperation with other branches of government.
- 4.2 To seek, use, and account for public resources in a responsible manner.
- 4.3 To use fair employment practices.
- 4.4 To inform the community of the court's structure, function, and programs.
- 4.5 To recognize new conditions or emerging events and to adjust court operations as necessary.



- 5.1 To ensure that the court and the justice it renders are accessible and are perceived by the public to be accessible.
- 5.2 To ensure that the court functions fairly, impartially, and expeditiously, and is perceived by the public to be so.
- 5.3 To ensure that the court is independent, cooperative with other components of government, and accountable, and is perceived by the public to be so.

### Objective 1.1

To conduct judicial proceedings that are public by law or custom openly.

#### Intent of the Objective

The general intent of the objective is to encourage openness in all appropriate judicial proceedings. The courts should specify proceedings to which the public is denied access and ensure that the restriction is in accordance with the law and reasonable public expectations. Further, the courts should ensure that their proceedings are accessible and audible to all participants, including litigants, attorneys, court personnel, and other persons in the courtroom.

#### Responses to the Objective

- **Baton Rouge City Court.** The Baton Rouge City Court reports that the docket is updated daily on its website to provide accurate and current information to the public regarding the matters scheduled for appearances before the Court. Similar information is provided on-site at various locations throughout the courthouse. The Court also reports that traffic citations have been modified to provide information on the website and to provide on-line payment capabilities.
- **Bossier City Court.** The Bossier City Court reports that it posts copies of each docket (with the exception of juvenile matters) each week for use by attorneys and the public. These dockets are also distributed to all agencies within the

courthouse complex. The Court is also in the process of making this information available on a website.

- **Bunkie City Court.** The Bunkie City Court reports that it has strived through the years to be a "people's court". Except for juvenile cases, the Court's proceedings are open. It has kept costs low so that citizens can afford to use the Court in civil matters. The majority of its criminal cases come from people filing charges against others. Its personnel provide forms and help in the filing of civil cases.
- **First Parish Court of Jefferson.** The First Parish Court of Jefferson reports that in 2003 plans were set in motion and monies set in place to purchase new audio systems for all sections of Court. The audio systems include assistive listening devices that will enhance the audibility of proceedings. All subpoenas have included contact information if assistance or accommodation is needed. In 2003, a committee was formed for the First and Second Parish Court to address and create a parish court website. The website is an ongoing project for 2004 and, once completed, the Court will use it to post schedules and provide other information. Currently court docket information is provided on all public agency counters.
- **Franklin City Court.** The Franklin City Court reports that its notices are posted on the bulletin board in the court building.



- **Houma City Court.** The Houma City Court reports that it developed a website containing its court calendar.
- **Lake Charles City Court.** The Lake Charles City Court reports that it provided new assistive listening devices to persons with hearing impairments.
- **Morgan City Court.** The Morgan City Court reports that a special needs requirement notice has been placed on all subpoenas.
- **Natchitoches City Court.** The Natchitoches City Court reports that its schedule is posted in the court foyer.
- **New Iberia City Court.** The New Iberia City Court reports that during the fiscal year 2002-2003, it made some efforts to continue a policy of access to justice.
- **Oakdale City Court.** The Oakdale City Court reports that it has posted its court schedule for the public to view.
- **Rayne City Court.** The Rayne City Court reports that a court schedule is posted in the clerk's office for the public to view.
- **Ruston City Court.** The Ruston City Court reports that it distributed a yearly criminal court schedule to all agencies involved in the criminal justice system. This information is also available to all attorneys and the public at large. Similarly, the Court designates fixed and regular civil trial and motion dates (other than special fixings) a year in advance. This information is available to the public and bar. The Court also has an automated phone system, which provides information about the various offices, their hours of operation, and the Court's subject matter and territorial jurisdiction.
- **Second Parish Court of Jefferson.** The Second Parish Court of Jefferson reports that there is a notice on all subpoenas stating that

assistance will be provided to anyone with a disability. The notice identifies a person to contact and a telephone number. Also, the Court currently posts court dockets on bulletin boards outside of each courtroom, and additional schedules are available in each courtroom. Information on the Court's docket is also provided by telephone upon request.

- **Shreveport City Court.** The Shreveport City Court reports that it provides assistive listening devices to enhance audibility for those who are hearing impaired.
- **Slidell City Court.** The Slidell City Court reports that, upon notice to the Court of a hearing impaired individual, it contacts the Deaf Action Center to advise of dates to arrange assistance. The Court also reports that its calendar is distributed to all agencies.
- **Sulphur City Court.** The Sulphur City Court reports that an amplifier and speakers were donated and installed in the courtroom enabling the public to hear the presiding judge. The Court also built a website that includes its schedule.

## Future Plans

- **Baton Rouge City Court.** The Baton Rouge City Court reports that it will constantly update its website to provide current information to the public and legal community, including pro se litigants. The range of available forms will be expanded to give the public access to all court services. Referral agencies will also be made aware of all available community resources.
- **Houma City Court.** The Houma City Court reports that it will ensure assistive listening devices and other tools for enhancing the audibility of court proceedings are provided as needed.



- **Rayne City Court.** The Rayne City Court reports that it intends to post its calendar in the newspapers, as well as continue posting it in public sites in the courthouse. The Court will have its personnel professionally trained by the phone company through a company seminar on telephone accuracy and courtesy.

## Objective 1.2

### To encourage responsible parties to make court facilities safe, accessible, and convenient.

#### Intent of Objective

The objective presents three distinct aspects of court performance -- the security of persons and property within the courthouse and its facilities; access to the courthouse and its facilities; and the reasonable convenience and accommodation of the general public in court facilities. In Louisiana, local governments are generally responsible, under the provisions of R.S. 33:4713, 4714, and 4715, for providing suitable courtrooms, offices, juror facilities, furniture, and equipment to courts and other court-related functions and for providing the necessary heat and illumination in these buildings. They are also responsible, by inference and by subsequent interpretation of these statutes, for the safety, accessibility, and convenience of court facilities. Courts and judges, therefore, do not have direct responsibility for the facilities in which they are housed. However, the intent of Objective 1.2 is to encourage all courts and judges to work with responsible parties to make court facilities safe, accessible, and convenient.

#### Responses to the Objective

- **Baton Rouge City Court.** The Baton Rouge City Court reports that security at the courthouse is evaluated on a monthly basis. The present cell phone policy is being further restricted within the courthouse due to advancements in video technology on such equipment. The courthouse staff receives constant training by division on telephone courtesy and etiquette. This training is provided internally and through local government resource centers.
- **Bossier City Court.** The Bossier City Court reports that court personnel have had training in how to properly handle emergency and terror situations. Panic buttons have been installed throughout the clerk's office. Metal detectors and surveillance cameras have been installed within the complex. The Court also maintains a list of foreign language interpreters and has access to sign language experts.
- **Denham Springs City Court.** The Denham Springs City Court reports that a security survey of its facility was performed on October 7, 2002 after it contacted the United States Marshal's office. The Court followed some of the recommendations that did not involve the structure of the building, since the building belongs to the city. Together with its Marshal's office and in cooperation with the City of Denham Springs, the Court installed a magnetometer. In addition, its Marshal's office installed closed circuit television for surveillance of the public entrances and holding cells. The Court reports that it maintains a list of attorneys to be appointed by the judge to represent the financially disadvantaged in juvenile and criminal matters and that it established and implemented a records retention schedule in cooperation with an auditor approved by the Secretary of State.
- **First City Court of New Orleans.** The First City Court of New Orleans reports that it has installed new equipment to prevent persons from coming into the Court with forbidden objects. It also developed procedures for dealing with emergencies, and it improved ADA accessibility.
- **First Parish Court of Jefferson.** The First Parish Court of Jefferson reports that two courthouse security audits have been performed, one by the head of security at the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals and the other by Securitas Security System USA, Inc. In 2002, plans were set in motion to accomplish all



objectives laid out in these audits. This is an ongoing process that will carry through 2004. The Court reports that in the latter part of 2003, its security staff was hired and put into place along with some outside contract security services. The staff, along with the Judicial Administrator, will develop and promulgate procedures for dealing with emergencies, and employees will be trained accordingly. All new employees are trained in courtesy and accuracy. Each immediate supervisor handles ongoing monitoring. Additional training is provided as needed. The Court reported that a centralized parish department performed an ADA audit of the Court after renovation and construction of the new section of the building in 1995. All potential problems listed on the audit were addressed and corrected. The Court answered a survey from the Supreme Court in June 2001 on ADA accessibility. In this survey the Court provided information on the audit and steps were taken to assure ADA compliance.

- **Hammond City Court.** The Hammond City Court reports that it coordinated efforts with the Marshal's office as previously noted herein to improve service of process in civil and criminal cases.
- **Houma City Court.** The Houma City Court reports that in October 2002, a security survey was conducted by Mickey Doll of Facility Security Systems and an audit was conducted concerning ADA accessibility.
- **Marksville City Court.** The Marksville City Court reports it acquired a new courtroom facility in FY 2002-03 that complies with ADA requirements, has enhanced security floor plans and has ADA compliant restrooms and other facilities. Court security and staff make special accommodations to insure proper notice to litigants and to facilitate the process of conducting court. During the Court's opening comments, the security and staff are introduced. A brief explanation of their roles in the Court seems to decrease confusion and add a new dimension of professional decorum. These "in-

court" practices seem to have elevated litigants' perception of the Court's integrity. For example, since the implementation of this procedure, many people have said Marksville "runs an organized court" and that the proceedings were "impressive".

- **Morgan City Court.** The Morgan City Court reports that opinion surveys on security are available for all patrons. Emergency exit signs are also posted.
- **Natchitoches City Court.** The Natchitoches City Court reports that it visited other courts to view their security and has continued communication with the city regarding funding for security.
- **New Iberia City Court.** The New Iberia City Court reports that it met with the Marshal's office to discuss plans to make the courtroom safer for employees and the general public. In addition, court personnel attended training sessions designed to make them responsive to the general public.
- **Oakdale City Court.** The Oakdale City Court reports that it has reviewed telephone procedures to ensure courtesy and accuracy and has made modifications to the railing separating counsel's table from the audience to allow access for persons with disabilities.
- **Opelousas City Court.** The Opelousas City Court reports that it only has one court entrance and all individuals entering the building must go through security provided by the City Marshal.
- **Rayne City Court.** The Rayne City Court reports that it has undergone minor renovations to protect court personnel and citizens from defendants addressing the Court. Previously the defendant was situated in close proximity to the clerks and other court personnel. Periodic discussions with court personnel are held to assure continued courtesy and accuracy in answering phones and providing information.



- **Ruston City Court.** The Ruston City Court reports that the ingress and egress of the Court is monitored with a walkthrough metal detector security system. Further, this year a video security surveillance system was installed which monitors all public areas involved in the court system. The Court is accessible to persons with disabilities.
- **Second Parish Court of Jefferson.** The Second Parish Court of Jefferson reports that it provides a list of court-certified interpreters for those who speak other languages. The interpreters are paid by the Judicial Expense Fund. Officers of the Gretna Police Department provide court security and perform bailiff duties.
- **Slidell City Court.** The Slidell City Court reports that it secured a security survey in 2001 by a U.S. Marshals Service (Retired) Court Security Specialist. The Court met with local law enforcement to develop a procedure for prompt notification of emergencies in the courtroom and judge's chamber. All staff received training in proper handling of telephone calls.
- **Sulphur City Court.** The Sulphur City Court reports that it briefed Calcasieu Parish officials on the need for safety. It held a meeting to solicit the public's opinions regarding the safety, accessibility and convenience of the Court. The Court is to be moved to a new facility in 2-3 years and is working with the architect.
- **Thibodaux City Court.** The Thibodaux City Court reports that the clerk's office has installed an Internet site that is connected to the police department. The city police provide security including a metal detector for court sessions.
- **West Monroe City Court.** The West Monroe City Court reports that it installed a security system at the judge's bench in the courtroom.
- **Ville Platte City Court.** The Ville Platte City Court reports that it attended meetings with the

mayor and members of the city council and chief of police to discuss goals, objectives and strategies. It also took action in planning and designing the construction of a new city courthouse, city courtroom, police station and jail. This was not an easy task because many plans were drawn and re-drawn and many heated discussions were held. However, the Court is holding fast to its position that the present court building, courtroom facilities, police station and jail are unsafe and unfit for human use.

- **Zachary City Court.** The Zachary City Court reports that it installed security cameras in the police/court building to assist in the security of its building. It also installed a panic button in the courtroom, judge's chambers and clerk's office.

## Future Plans

- **Denham Springs City Court.** The Denham Springs City Court reports that it will continue to work with its Marshal's office to enhance security procedures. It will also establish a filing system that supports its retention policies and provides for more efficient procedures for the approved destruction of obsolete records. To better its operations, the Court will continue to attend, and send court personnel to attend, conferences and seminars focused on education and training.
- **First City Court of New Orleans.** The First City Court of New Orleans reports that it will work on plans to build a new court building to accommodate the Court and general public.
- **Franklin City Court.** The Franklin City Court reports that it will commission the local law enforcement officials to conduct a security assessment of the court building. Additionally, a questionnaire will be circulated to determine the safety and accessibility of the court building. The Court will implement a program to deal with emergencies in the courtroom. The court building is ADA accessible at the present time.



- **Natchitoches City Court.** The Natchitoches City Court reports that it will implement more security if funding is obtained.
- **Pineville City Court.** The Pineville City Court reports that it will open discussion panels with the prosecutor's office, marshal's office and police department on how to ensure a more efficient courthouse. The Court will also obtain a more advanced security system.
- **Ville Platte City Court.** The Ville Platte City Court reports that it appears the local city government will build its new city courthouse, police station, and city jail in FY 2003-2004. This will enable the Court to have better, safer, more convenient, and more accessible facilities. As of now, the Court has no video cameras for security purposes; no other security checks or devices; no separate restrooms for men, women, employees and the public; no adequate fire protection devices; a courtroom for which the fire marshal has posted a limit of only 38 people (which is much too small); and there are many other deficiencies in the present courthouse building and equipment. It is hoped that the Court will be able to work with the city's architect, engineer, council, and mayor, within its budget, and get the city courthouse and equipment that will meet its needs, the needs of the bar and the needs of the public in FY 2003-2004 and beyond.
- **West Monroe City Court.** The West Monroe City Court reports that it will investigate the installation of a court security system. It will also implement a system to comply with ADA guidelines and will add information to subpoenas in accordance with ADA guidelines.
- **Zachary City Court.** The Zachary City Court reports that it intends to conduct a survey of attorneys who utilize its court in an effort to determine how it may better assist them.

## Objective 1.3

To give all who appear before the court reasonable opportunities to participate effectively without undue hardship or inconvenience.

### Intent of the Objective

Objective 1.3 focuses on how a trial court should accommodate all participants in its proceedings, especially those who have disabilities, difficulties communicating in English, or mental impairments. Courts can meet the objective by their efforts to comply with the "programmatic requirements" of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and by the adoption of policies and procedures for ascertaining the need for and the securing of competent language interpreters.

### Responses to the Objective

- **Alexandria City Court.** The Alexandria City Court reports that witnesses in criminal cases are subpoenaed at 10:00 a.m. rather than at the start of court at 8:30 a.m. to reduce undue hardship by waiting for trials to be called.
- **Baton Rouge City Court.** The Baton Rouge City Court reports that the present waiver of rights and notice forms were updated in the Spanish and Vietnamese languages. The Court also provided a forum whereby all Spanish interpreters were given an opportunity to learn about the Court and their responsibilities as interpreters.
- **Crowley City Court.** The Crowley City Court reports that it overhauled and improved its public address system. It has a Hispanic interpreter on call. Local lawyers help with indigent defense when asked by the Court. It provides victim assistance in juvenile and adult cases.
- **Denham Springs City Court.** The Denham Springs City Court reports that it established an interpreter pool for hearing impaired persons and foreign speaking persons.



- **Eunice City Court.** The Eunice City Court reports that it has several interpreters immediately available for Hispanic defendants not fluent in English.
- **First Parish Court of Jefferson.** The First Parish Court of Jefferson reports that it provides interpreters for all languages and deaf defendants. It is using the private services of the Deaf Action Center and WWTI, Services for Translators and Interpreters. It provides some forms that must be read by defendants in Spanish as well as in English. Forms not in Spanish are interpreted if needed by in-house employees. TDD machines have been installed in the Court for many years. During renovation and construction, proper ADA signage was installed.
- **Houma City Court.** The Houma City Court reports that it continually updates its interpreter pool.
- **Lake Charles City Court.** The Lake Charles City Court reports that it has always provided interpreters for hearing-impaired parties.
- **Leesville City Court.** The Leesville City Court reports that it has determined what languages are spoken in the community and secured the services of interpreters accordingly.
- **New Iberia City Court.** The New Iberia City Court reports that it continued its attempt to hold court costs at a minimum level, allowing the public an affordable venue to address its grievances.
- **Oakdale City Court.** The Oakdale City Court reports that it has identified and located interpreters to assist non-English speaking defendants and witnesses.
- **Opelousas City Court.** The Opelousas City Court reports that it assisted all defendants by providing part-time interpreters for French, Spanish and sign language.
- **Rayne City Court.** The Rayne City Court

reports that it has personnel who are fluent in French and English.

- **Ruston City Court.** The Ruston City Court reports that it maintains a list of qualified interpreters for those who speak other languages. These interpreters are paid by the Court.
- **Second Parish Court of Jefferson.** The Second Parish Court of Jefferson reports that language interpreters are provided by the Court when needed. The courtrooms are accessible to persons with disabilities.
- **Shreveport City Court.** The Shreveport City Court reports that it provides foreign language and sign language interpreters from agencies.
- **Slidell City Court.** The Slidell City Court reports that it has an occasional need for a Spanish interpreter and has two individuals in its interpreter pool.
- **Sulphur City Court.** The Sulphur City Court reports that it has set up a pool of teachers for Spanish interpretation.
- **West Monroe City Court.** The West Monroe City Court reports that it has a Spanish interpreter and a sign language interpreter available.
- **Zachary City Court.** The Zachary City Court reports that it has a list of interpreters that it can contact upon request.

## Future Plans

- **Alexandria City Court.** The Alexandria City Court reports that it will implement Night Traffic Court one day per month to facilitate the working public in attending court.
- **Houma City Court.** The Houma City Court reports that it will develop and implement rules on programmatic participation by non-English speaking persons and persons with disabilities.





- **Natchitoches City Court.** The Natchitoches City Court reports that it will seek interpreters from the community.

#### Objective 1.4

To ensure that all judges and other court personnel are courteous and responsive to the public and accord respect to all with whom they come into contact.

#### Intent of the Objective

The intent of Objective 1.4 is to make courts more accommodating, courteous, and user-friendly. The Objective is intended to remind judges and all court personnel that they should reflect the law's respect for the dignity and value of the individuals who serve, come before, or make inquiries of the court, including litigants, defendants, lawyers, witnesses, jurors, the general public, and one another.

#### Responses to the Objective

- **Baton Rouge City Court.** The Baton Rouge City Court reports that it has adopted a new employee performance evaluation tool for use on a semi-annual basis. The performance evaluation provides an opportunity for the supervisor and staff to discuss, in a positive and encouraging manner, the level of performance of each employee and to recognize areas that need improvement or modification. Areas of exceptional performance are recognized at the Court's Annual Employee Recognition Program that was instituted in 2002. In addition, Division B (Judge Trudy White) has developed a survey form that is available at each open court proceeding. Through the survey form, the public and members of the local bar can comment on the operation of the Court and make any recommendations for improvement.
- **Bossier City Court.** The Bossier City Court reports that employees have been sent to workshops and training sessions. The Code of Professionalism is posted in its office.

- **Crowley City Court.** The judge of the Crowley City Court reports that he has taken, and continues to take, courses in professionalism.
- **First Parish Court of Jefferson.** The First Parish Court of Jefferson reports that judges and staff attend seminars. The Court also has procedures in effect for complaints.
- **Lake Charles City Court.** The Lake Charles City Court reports that both of its judges have participated in professionalism training. Its judges are also active participants in judge-to-judge training.
- **Marksville City Court.** The Marksville City Court reports that it has quarterly meetings with the city police department on issues of "court appearance" and "preparation for court." These meetings have been valuable in adding a dimension of professionalism and expediency to proceedings.
- **Morgan City Court.** The Morgan City Court reports that opinion surveys are available for use by all patrons.
- **Natchitoches City Court.** The Natchitoches City Court reports that it displayed the Code of Professionalism in its foyer. In addition, the judge and clerks attend programs that include training in civility and professionalism.
- **Pineville City Court.** The Pineville City Court reports it extended continuing legal education and judicial training to its employees by having staff attend seminars and conferences.
- **Rayne City Court.** The judge of the Rayne City Court reports that he continually attends professionalism seminars. The judge also attends the seminars in continuing legal education programs presented by the Judicial College.
- **Ruston City Court.** The Ruston City



Court reports that it has provided technology training and management training to its personnel through in-house training and through outside continuing education opportunities. The Code of Professionalism is posted in the courtroom.

- **Second Parish Court of Jefferson.** The Second Parish Court of Jefferson reports that the judges of its Court and some of its personnel attend annual seminars that include training in ethics and professionalism. The Court has adopted a procedure for soliciting and resolving any complaint a member of the public may have with the Court or its employees. The Court displays a copy of the Code of Professionalism on a bulletin board near the entrance to the courtrooms.
- **Shreveport City Court.** The Shreveport City Court reports that it conducted professionalism training for its staff and the Marshal's personnel.
- **Slidell City Court.** The Slidell City Court reports that complaints and problems the public has with the Court or court employees are directed to the clerk of court for resolution.
- **Sulphur City Court.** The Sulphur City Court reports that its judges met periodically with local judges to discuss issues relating to courtesy and responsiveness. The Court's judge attended regular CLE. The Court also instructed clerks to answer questions courteously and to hear complaints.
- **Winnfield City Court.** The Winnfield City Court reports that it instructs all court personnel on a regular basis that the Court exists to serve the public and that all persons, regardless of status, are to be treated with respect.

## Future Plans

- **Bossier City Court.** The Bossier City Court reports that it intends to continue training

personnel in courtesy, accuracy and sensitivity.

- **Franklin City Court.** The Franklin City Court reports that copies of the Supreme Court Code of Professionalism will be on display in the court building and in the courtroom. A user complaint box will be placed in the public's view for voicing problems with court personnel. Additionally, a public problem resolution program will be instituted within the year. The Court will send out questionnaires to obtain responses from court personnel, attorneys and other regular users of the court system.
- **Houma City Court.** The Houma City Court reports that it will devise and implement a formal public problem resolution policy. The Court will also devise and conduct a court users' assessment of courtesy and responsiveness.
- **New Iberia City Court.** The New Iberia City Court reports that it will cooperate with other branches of government in a better manner while maintaining its independence.
- **Oakdale City Court.** The Oakdale City Court reports that it plans to make the Code of Professionalism available to the public in the public library and similar places.
- **Rayne City Court.** The Rayne City Court reports that the Code of Professionalism will be posted for public viewing in the lobby of the courthouse. The Court will continue to seek judicial training and continuing legal education.
- **Zachary City Court.** The Zachary City Court reports that it intends to continue providing services to the public in a courteous and timely manner.

## Objective 1.5

To encourage all responsible public bodies and public officers to make the costs of access to court proceedings and records – whether measured in terms of money, time, or the procedures that must be followed – reasonable, fair, and affordable.



## Intent of the Objective

Litigants and others who use the services of the courts face five main financial barriers to effective access to the court: fees and court costs; third-party expenses (e.g. deposition costs and expert witness fees); attorney fees and costs; the cost of time; and the cost of regulatory procedures, especially with respect to accessing records. Objective 1.5 calls on courts to exercise leadership by working with other public bodies and officers to make the costs of access to court proceedings and records reasonable, fair, and affordable. The means to achieve the objective include: actions to simplify procedures and reduce paperwork; efforts to improve alternative dispute resolution, in forma pauperis filings, indigent defense, legal services for the poor, legal clinics, pro bono services and pro se representation; and efforts to assist the victims of crime.

## Responses to the Objective

### General Responses

Several city and parish courts reported that they had developed or had in place ways to assist pro se litigants.

- **Worked With the Clerk of Court to Provide Information.** Thirty-two courts said they had worked with the clerk of court to provide pro se information. (Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Bogalusa, Bunkie, Crowley, Denham Springs, Eunice, Franklin, Jeanerette, Jefferson- 1st Parish, Jefferson-2nd Parish, Jennings, Kaplan, Lafayette, Marksville, Monroe, Morgan City, Natchitoches, New Iberia, N.O.-1st City, N.O.-2nd City, Pineville, Plaquemine, Port Allen, Rayne, Shreveport, Slidell, Vidalia, Ville Platte, West Monroe, Winnfield, and Winnsboro).
- **Worked With the Local Bar to Provide Information.** Five courts said they worked with the local bar to provide pro se information. (Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Jennings, Leesville, and Marksville).

## Responses of Individual Courts

- **Abbeville City Court.** The Abbeville City Court reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants.
- **Alexandria City Court.** The Alexandria City Court reports all criminal defendants are notified of the availability of a court-appointed attorney through an announcement at the beginning of each criminal court session. The Court also worked with the local bar to provide information on indigent defense and civil legal services to all area attorneys.
- **Bastrop City Court.** The Bastrop City Court reports that it has a small claims division that allows the Court to give some assistance to litigants.
- **Baton Rouge City Court.** The Baton Rouge City Court reports that it worked with the clerk of court and local bar to provide information to assist pro se litigants. The website for City Court was expanded to provide interactive forms for civil and criminal proceedings. These forms are user-friendly and in a language that is familiar to pro se litigants. In addition, the Court updated and expanded its on-site forms for use by pro se litigants in other areas.
- **Bogalusa City Court.** The Bogalusa City Court reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants.
- **Bossier City Court.** The Bossier City Court reports that it works closely with the Indigent Defender Board to ensure that all qualifying defendants have access to their services.
- **Bunkie City Court.** The Bunkie City Court reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to pro se litigants.



It also increased the number of forms available to litigants.

- **Crowley City Court.** The Crowley City Court reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants, and to offer pauper assistance to the public. The Court reports that it has the best indigent defense staff of any city court.
- **Denham Springs City Court.** The Denham Springs City Court reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants.
- **Eunice City Court.** The Eunice City Court reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants.
- **First City Court of New Orleans.** The First City Court of New Orleans reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants. It also worked with the New Orleans Legal Assistance Corporation and conducted informational community seminars. The Court also uses interpreters.

**First Parish Court of Jefferson.** The First Parish Court of Jefferson reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants. It also works with the Jefferson Parish Indigent Defenders Board to improve the availability and the quality of indigent defender services. Its judges will also allow defendants to convert fine and court costs into community service work. The Jefferson Parish District Attorney's Office has a program whereby victim assistance is handled appropriately.

- **Franklin City Court.** The Franklin City Court reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants.

- **Houma City Court.** The Houma City Court reports that as part of the agreement to increase fees, two IDB attorneys are available to help handle the Court's caseload.
- **Jeanerette City Court.** The Jeanerette City Court reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants, upgraded court forms regarding available court ordered programs, and met with IDB support staff and court personnel to discuss an exchange of requests, files and court scheduling of trial dates.
- **Jennings City Court.** The Jennings City Court reports that it worked with the clerk of court and the local bar to provide information to assist pro se litigants.
- **Kaplan City Court.** The Kaplan City Court reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants and to implement policies and procedures to facilitate the clerk's assistance in pro se matters.
- **Lafayette City Court.** The Lafayette City Court reports that it has developed forms to assist in small claims court and has built an office for the public defender in the courthouse to facilitate communication with indigent defenders.
- **Lake Charles City Court.** The Lake Charles City Court reports that it provided free public access to all records, continued to provide the funding to the IDB, and distributed the booklet, "How to Use Lake Charles' City Court".
- **Leesville City Court.** The Leesville City Court reports that it obtained attorneys to represent indigents, worked with the local bar to provide information to assist pro se litigants, and made IDB attorneys available for all delinquency proceedings.



- **Marksville City Court.** The Marksville City court reports that it worked with the clerk of court and the local bar to provide information to assist pro se litigants and provide forms to litigants for small claim filings.
- **Monroe City Court.** The Monroe City Court reports that it worked with its clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants.
- **Morgan City Court.** The Morgan City Court reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants and has regular meetings with the IDB attorney.
- **Municipal City Court of New Orleans.** The Municipal City Court of New Orleans reports that it computerized the clerk's answer desk.
- **Natchitoches City Court.** The Natchitoches City Court reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants.
- **New Iberia City Court.** The New Iberia City Court reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants.
- **Opelousas City Court.** The Opelousas City Court reports that it has always had IDB attorneys to represent defendants in criminal cases (other than traffic). They are also available for all juvenile cases where attorneys are needed.
- **Pineville City Court.** The Pineville City Court reports that it works with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants, and the clerk's office works weekly with the indigent defender attorney assigned to its court. Small claim and eviction instruction packets are available in the clerk's office.
- **Plaquemine City Court.** The Plaquemine City Court reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants.
- **Port Allen City Court.** The Port Allen City Court reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants. Pro se litigants were provided forms to assist them in preparation of small claims matters and to answer claims against them. A "How to Use the City Court" pamphlet was also provided to answer many commonly asked questions.
- **Rayne City Court.** The Rayne City Court reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants. It also worked with the indigent defendant board to improve the availability and quality of the indigent defendant services in its area. The Court reports that it has the ability to have each juvenile represented by counsel, as well as those who are indigent. In addition, an IDO attorney is available at each arraignment session and trial session to help those who are indigent. An IDO attorney is available to answer questions for any pro se litigant. In addition, all pro se litigants also have the benefit of a pre-trial conference to have the law explained to them.
- **Ruston City Court.** The Ruston City Court reports that it provided a handbook to the public for the individual handling of small claims issues, and provides forms for common matters. The Court regularly appointed an IDB to represent financially disadvantaged defendants. The Court also maintained a voice messaging service providing information on court schedules to the IDB and the public.
- **Second City Court of New Orleans.** The Second City Court of New Orleans reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants.
- **Second Parish Court of Jefferson.** The Second Parish Court of Jefferson reports that it



worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants. It collected court costs that were used to assist the indigent defender board in providing legal assistance to those whose financial status qualified them for the board's defense. It also worked with defendants who were unable to pay outstanding fines and costs by converting the fines and costs to community service hours when the Court determined that it was appropriate to do so. Further, it granted in forma pauperis status to anyone who applied and qualified. It also provided some forms through the clerk's office to assist pro se litigants.

- **Shreveport City Court.** The Shreveport City Court reports that the city attorney monitors trial dates and communicates with victims/witnesses regarding trial status.
- **Slidell City Court.** The Slidell City Court reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants. It also worked closely with the indigent defender's office and had two indigent defenders assigned to the Court to provide services for each court date.
- **Sulphur City Court.** The Sulphur City Court reports that it worked with the Southwest Louisiana Bar Association to resolve issues with public defenders, and started a website to give information and forms.
- **Thibodaux City Court.** The Thibodaux City Court reports that the clerk's office provided petition forms for pro se litigants that required only minor amendments to fit the purpose of a pro se petition.
- **Vidalia City Court.** The Vidalia City Court reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants.
- **Ville Platte City Court.** The Ville Platte City Court reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants.

- **West Monroe City Court.** The West Monroe City Court reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants.
- **Winnfield City Court.** The Winnfield City Court reports that it worked closely with the Indigent Defender to make sure that quality representation was provided for indigent criminal defendants. It also worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants.
- **Winnsboro City Court.** The Winnsboro City Court reports that it worked with the clerk of court to provide information to assist pro se litigants.

## Future Plans

- **Hammond City Court.** The Hammond City Court reports that it will continue to work with the Public Defender's office to assure quality representation for all persons, especially juveniles.
- **Marksville City Court.** The Marksville City Court reports that it will attempt to add a deputy clerk to assist pro se litigants.
- **Morgan City Court.** The Morgan City Court reports that it is in the process of forming a pool of interpreters to better serve the needs of the public.
- **Opelousas City Court.** The Opelousas City Court reports that it is attempting to get feedback from the St. Landry Bar Association on the Court's operations.
- **Rayne City Court.** The Rayne City Court reports that it will develop a better method to assist pro se litigants.
- **Winnsboro City Court.** The Winnsboro City Court reports that it intends to do a survey of the attorneys and litigants using the Court to ascertain the need for any court improvements.



## Objective 2.1

To encourage timely case management and processing.

### Intent of the Objective

The American Bar Association, the Conference of Chief Justices, and the Conference of State Court Administrators have recommended that all courts adopt time standards for expeditious case management at the district court level. Such time standards, according to their proponents, were intended to serve as a tool for expediting case processing and reducing delay. The Louisiana Supreme Court adopted time aspirational standards in 1993 for itself, the courts of appeal, and for the general civil, summary civil, and domestic relations cases at the district court level. At the Supreme Court and intermediate appellate court levels, the adopted time standards are measured with the assistance of automated case management information systems and are reported on annually in the Annual Report of the Supreme Court and as performance indicators in the judicial appropriations bill. At the district and city/parish court level, however, the time standards cannot be measured for the courts as a whole or for most individual courts due to the low level of automation or the types of systems operated by the clerks of court. Time standards are also imbedded in the Louisiana Children's Code in the form of maximum time limits for the holding of hearings in Child in Need of Care (CINC) cases and other types of juvenile cases. However, these mandated time standards also cannot be monitored or measured efficiently at the present time due to the lack of automation in the district court system. For these reasons, Objective 2.1 focuses on strategies for developing interim manual case management systems and techniques while automated case management information systems are being developed. The Objective also focuses on timeliness in the sense of the punctual commencement of scheduled proceedings.

### Responses to the Objective

#### General Responses

Several city and parish courts reported that they had taken actions in FY 2002-2003 to reduce delays and to improve case management.

- **Improved Docketing and Scheduling.** Thirty-two courts said they had improved docketing and scheduling. (Ascension, Baton Rouge, Bogalusa, Bossier City, Crowley, Denham Springs, Hammond, Houma, Jeanerette, Jefferson-1st Parish, Jefferson-2nd Parish, Jennings, Kaplan, Lake Charles, Marksville, Monroe, Morgan City, New Iberia, 1st City Court of New Orleans, 2nd City Court of New Orleans, Municipal Court of New Orleans, Traffic Court of New Orleans, Oakdale, Plaquemine, Rayne, Shreveport, Slidell, Sulphur, Ville Platte, West Monroe, Winnfield and Zachary).
- **Improved the Manual System of Case Processing.** Eleven courts said they had improved the manual system of case processing. (Bastrop, Franklin, Jefferson-2nd Parish, Kaplan, Marksville, Monroe, Morgan City, New Iberia, N.O.-2nd City, Rayne, Sulphur).
- **Implemented Pre-trial Conferences.** Nine courts said they had implemented pre-trial conferences. (Alexandria, Bunkie, Houma, Monroe, N.O.-2nd City, Pineville, Slidell, Winnfield, and Zachary).
- **Installed an Automated Case Management System.** Six courts said they had installed and automated case management system. (Jefferson-1st Parish, Lafayette, Lake Charles, New Iberia, Ruston and West Monroe).
- **Took Steps to Reduce Cases Under Advisement.** Eleven courts said they had taken steps to reduce cases under advisement. (Alexandria, Kaplan, Lake Charles, Minden, New Iberia, N.O.-2nd City, Opelousas, New Iberia, West Monroe, Winnfield and Winnsboro).
- **Encouraged Alternative Dispute Resolution.** Five courts said they had encouraged alternative dispute resolution. (Lake Charles, Marksville, Vidalia, Winnfield, Zachary).



## Responses of Individual Courts

- **Alexandria City Court.** The Alexandria City Court reports that its civil cases are set routinely within 90-120 days of setting conference unless there is an objection by attorneys. All court proceedings start at the appointed time unless delayed by parties. All cases under advisement are decided within a 30-day reporting period since 1/1/2003. The Court also implemented pre-trial conferences and took steps to reduce cases under advisement.
- **Ascension Parish Court.** The Ascension Parish Court reports that it improved its docketing and scheduling.
- **Baker City Court.** The Baker City Court reports that its docket is generally current.
- **Bastrop City Court.** The Bastrop City Court reports that it improved the manual system of case processing.
- **Baton Rouge City Court.** The Baton Rouge City Court reports that it modified its docket schedule to provide for the addition of a second criminal daily docket. This procedure will reduce the delay between arraignment and trial.
- **Bogalusa City Court.** The Bogalusa City Court reports that it improved docketing and scheduling.
- **Bossier City Court.** The Bossier City Court reports that it improved docketing and scheduling. Cases are promptly set for trial, usually within 3-4 months from the time of request. Only a few cases are taken under advisement and when a case is taken under advisement, a decision is promptly rendered.
- **Bunkie City Court.** The Bunkie City Court reports that it implemented pre-trial conferences.
- **Crowley City Court.** The Crowley City Court reports that it improved docketing and

scheduling. Trials are prompt, there are few delays, and most cases are completed within 30 days. Child abuse and neglect cases are held expeditiously even if special fixings are required. All indigent defendants, juvenile and adult, are provided appointed representation.

- **Denham Springs City Court.** The Denham Springs City Court reports that it improved docketing and scheduling.
- **Eunice City Court.** The Eunice City Court reports that it has been updating its computer capabilities and increasing information access. The Court has also been diligent in assuring that ASFA is implemented properly by educating its attorneys on proper procedures.
- **First City Court of New Orleans.** The First City Court of New Orleans reports that it improved its docketing, scheduling, case management, and reporting response.
- **First Parish Court of Jefferson.** The First Parish Court of Jefferson reports that, in the middle of 2002, the First and Second Parish Court Case Management System was created and is evolving to this day to further enhance scheduling, tracking of cases, management of continuances, and other functions. The Court has implemented effective case management techniques such as time-certain scheduling, pre-trial conferences, time standards, etc. for reducing delay and expediting case processing. The Court has evaluated the frequency in which cases scheduled for trial are actually heard when scheduled. The Court continually observes and develops techniques for improving the certainty of trial dates. Its judges strive to begin court proceedings on time.
- **Franklin City Court.** The Franklin City Court reports that it improved the manual system of case processing. It presently has an automated information system that is non-functional (the service provider to its program has gone out of business). As a result, the Court is presently





handling case management manually and is in the process of pricing an automated information system to track cases. The Court's personnel recently attended a meeting of courts in a similar position but initial figures for automated programs appear to be too costly at this time. Reports filed manually on civil cases indicate active and timely movement of all such cases.

- **Hammond City Court.** The Hammond City Court reports that it improved docketing and scheduling and implemented a Traffic Violations Bureau. It also coordinated a Facilitation Team to meet periodically and serve as a forum for discussion of court-related issues, such as juvenile issues.
- **Houma City Court.** The Houma City Court reports that it worked with the Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government to develop an expanded version of the AS400 for case management in all departments. The Court began conducting juvenile pre-trial hearings, which helped improve case management and improved docketing and scheduling. It reports that, with the help of pre-trial conferences, very few trials are continued. The Court strictly adheres to the timelines provided by the Louisiana Supreme Court.
- **Jeanerette City Court.** The Jeanerette City Court reports that it improved docketing and scheduling.
- **Kaplan City Court.** The Kaplan City Court reports that it improved docketing and scheduling, improved the manual system of case processing, and took steps to reduce cases under advisement.
- **Lafayette City Court.** The Lafayette City Court reports that it improved its automated case management information system.
- **Lake Charles City Court.** The Lake Charles City Court reports that it improved docketing and scheduling. It previously installed

an automated case management information system, took steps to reduce cases under advisement, and encouraged alternative dispute resolution.

- **Marksville City Court.** The Marksville City Court reports that it improved docketing and scheduling, improved the manual system of case processing, encouraged alternative dispute resolution, and scheduled cases earlier on hearing dates for pre-trial resolution efforts.
- **Minden City Court.** The Minden City Court reports that it took steps to reduce cases under advisement.
- **Monroe City Court.** The Monroe City Court reports that it improved docketing and scheduling, improved the manual system of case processing, and implemented pre-trial conferences.
- **Morgan City Court.** The Morgan City Court reports that it improved docketing and scheduling, improved the manual system of case processing, changed the judge's appointment schedule so that no appointments are scheduled thirty minutes prior to court, and instituted a FINS program.
- **Municipal City Court of New Orleans.** The Municipal City Court of New Orleans reports that it improved docketing and scheduling.
- **New Iberia City Court.** The New Iberia City Court reports that it improved docketing and scheduling, improved the manual system of case processing, installed an automated case management information system, and took steps to reduce cases under advisement.
- **Oakdale City Court.** The Oakdale City Court reports that it improved docketing and scheduling and reviewed its manual and automated case management systems to ensure the docket remains current.



- **Opelousas City Court.** The Opelousas City Court reports that it took steps to reduce cases under advisement. All files in civil, criminal, juvenile and traffic are placed on a court calendar – there are no files placed on the shelf. Every file is given a court date and, if requested in court, reset to another court date. Tracking of all cases is continuous.
- **Pineville City Court.** The Pineville City Court reports that cases are processed and maintained in a timely manner with the help of the new civil and criminal program. Case management techniques have been improved through the use of pre-trial conferences and telephone status conferences. The use of new techniques ensures that all parties involved will have the most satisfactory and timely date possible. The Court also took steps to reduce cases under advisement.
- **Plaquemine City Court.** The Plaquemine City Court reports that it improved docketing and scheduling.
- **Port Allen City Court.** The Port Allen City Court reports that it installed updated software to handle docketing. The software is designed to handle all scheduling of cases as well as track all cases and the payment of fines. In criminal matters, arraignments are typically held within one month and trial the following month. There is no backlog at all with civil cases. The new software is also designed to enable the Court to transmit reports to the Dept. of Public Safety online. To ensure the accuracy and preservation of records, the Court has begun to scan all records and save them to CDs.
- **Rayne City Court.** The Rayne City Court reports that it improved docketing and scheduling and the manual system of case processing. The Court holds special fixings to hear cases at the request of attorneys in an effort to move cases to a speedier conclusion. Additionally, pre-trial conferences are offered. Cases are rarely continued. When a case is set, it is tried unless circumstances necessitate a continuance. The

Court meets with the district attorney and the attorneys appointed to represent parties in abuse and neglect cases on a regular basis inasmuch as most of the attorneys regularly handle indigent cases because they are court appointed. Court procedures are expedited, and cases are moved so that undue delay does not occur.

- **Ruston City Court.** The Ruston City Court reports that it installed a new, modern criminal justice management information system.
- **Second City Court of New Orleans.** The Second City Court of New Orleans reports that it improved docketing and scheduling and improved the manual system of case processing. It also implemented pre-trial conferences and took steps to reduce cases under advisement.
- **Second Parish Court of Jefferson.** The Second Parish Court of Jefferson reports that it has an automated case management information system in place that assists the Court in scheduling cases, tracking cases, and managing continuances. The Court has in place effective case management techniques such as time-certain scheduling, pre-trial conferences, and time standards for reducing delay and expediting case processing. The number of cases processed by the Court has continually increased over the past few years. Therefore, in order to improve the case flow of the Court, it has improved its docketing schedule by straddling the criminal dockets of the two courts on opposite days. This enables the Court to use the district attorney's staff more efficiently by processing more cases on a daily/weekly basis. Also, when necessary, the judges increase the number of days in which criminal dockets are handled and the number of cases that are handled per day in order to expedite the processing of cases. To ensure punctual commencement of court, the judges strive to begin court proceedings on time. The Court has improved docketing and scheduling, improved the manual system of case processing, and increased the caseload on the daily court schedule.



- **Shreveport City Court.** The Shreveport City Court reports that it is in the process of implementing an automated case management system and has improved its docketing and scheduling.
- **Slidell City Court.** The Slidell City Court reports that it improved docketing and scheduling, implemented pre-trial conferences and installed case management software which tracks continuances on an individual case basis. The judge is informed of repeated requests on a case. The software also provides a report for cases under advisement. The child abuse and neglect cases are pre-scheduled according to time guidelines from initial filing to final disposition.
- **Sulphur City Court.** The Sulphur City Court reports that it improved docketing and scheduling, and improved the manual system of case processing. The Court currently uses a manual case processing system and an updated automated computer case management system.
- **Thibodaux City Court.** The Thibodaux City Court reports that arraignment to trial time in criminal cases does not exceed (90) ninety days. Civil trials on the merits do not exceed (60) sixty days from the filing of a motion to the setting for trial.
- **Traffic City Court of New Orleans.** The Traffic City Court of New Orleans reports that it improved docketing and scheduling.
- **Vidalia City Court.** The Vidalia City Court reports that it encouraged alternative dispute resolution.
- **Ville Platte City Court.** The Ville Platte City Court reports that it improved docketing and scheduling.
- **West Monroe City Court.** The West Monroe City Court reports that it improved docketing and scheduling, installed an automated case management information system, took steps

to reduce cases under advisement and installed a new computer program that tracks case scheduling.

- **Winnfield City Court.** The Winnfield City Court reports that it improved docketing and scheduling, implemented pre-trial conferences, took steps to reduce cases under advisement, encouraged alternative dispute resolution and has established a system in place to ensure the timely handling of cases, although the number of cases in its Court is very small (two or three trials per year). Cases are usually docketed for trial within a month or two of the motion to set them. The Court is almost always able to try the case on the scheduled date. The Court always begins promptly at 9:00 a.m. and most required reports are furnished timely. In short, the Court is efficient, well run and responsive to the needs of the public. The Court handles criminal arraignments on one day during the month, and criminal trials on one day during the month. Criminal defendants who plead guilty and who are ordered to pay money into the criminal court fund only have to come to court once, so long as they pay their money in a timely fashion. The Court is well aware that time is important to everyone and will continue to attempt to conduct its proceedings efficiently so time will not be wasted. Civil cases involving rules or motions are set for the next arraignment date and civil cases involving trials are set for the next trial date in most instances. The Court has never had occasion to have to bump a trial to another date because of over docketing. The Court believes that the public perceives the Court to be well run and that its judgments are fair and impartial and it will continue to do what is necessary to maintain that reputation.
- **Winnsboro City Court.** The Winnsboro City Court reports that it took steps to reduce cases under advisement and does not have a problem with delays except when it is necessary to appoint another judge because of the judge's recusal.
- **Zachary City Court.** The Zachary City Court reports that it improved docketing and scheduling,



implemented pre-trial conferences, and encouraged alternative dispute resolution. The Court strives to provide judicial services to the community in a courteous and timely manner, and offers pre-trial diversion programs to first-time traffic and misdemeanor offenders. It also looks for new ways to educate defendants on the dangers of driving under the influence. In 2002, as one of the conditions of probation, it required the defendants to attend the Victim Impact Panel operated by MADD. It also required a Changing by Choice class.

### Future Plans

- **Alexandria City Court.** The Alexandria City Court reports that it will implement a new court computer program to coordinate the efforts of all divisions of the Court.
- **Baker City Court.** The Baker City Court reports that it will continue to work with the software provider to debug the case management system and upgrade to a windows-based system.
- **Baton Rouge City Court.** The Baton Rouge City Court reports that, through partnering with funds available through the Homeland Security Act and local Constable Office, the Court anticipates significant upgrades to its present security system.
- **Rayne City Court.** The Rayne City Court reports that it will continue its manual case management with emphasis on improving a docket master to track timeliness of cases.
- **Shreveport City Court.** The Shreveport City Court reports that it will implement an automated case management system. While the Court can improve scheduling and tracking of cases, it continues to have problems with the availability of subpoena returns and case continuances in criminal and traffic cases. The Court has adequate trial time to hear the majority of cases scheduled on any docket.

### Objective 2.2

**To provide required reports and to respond to requests for information promptly.**

### Intent of the Objective

As public institutions, district courts have a responsibility to provide mandated reports and requested legitimate information to other public bodies and to the general public. Objective 2.2 emphasizes that the courts' responses to these mandates and requests should be timely and expeditious.

### Responses to the Objective

- **First Parish Court of Jefferson.** The First Parish Court of Jefferson reports that it has a system of providing required reports and requests for information prior to deadlines.
- **Crowley City Court.** The Crowley City Court reports that all of its monthly reports are completed in a timely manner.
- **Morgan City Court.** The Morgan City Court reports that it improved its policies and procedures to set a one-week time limit for all requests for information.
- **Second Parish Court of Jefferson.** The Second Parish Court of Jefferson reports that it strives to provide responses to requests for information on a timely basis.
- **Slidell City Court.** The Slidell City Court reports that it strives to meet all deadlines for reports and responds promptly to all requests for information.
- **West Monroe City Court.** The West Monroe City Court reports that its staff has been instructed to provide reports in a timely manner, and is doing so.



## Future Plans

- **Bunkie City Court.** The Bunkie City Court reports that it will have to do a better job of budgeting its time to complete required reports and respond in a more timely fashion to requests for information.
- **Houma City Court.** The Houma City Court reports that it will develop, implement, and maintain a reporting response system.

## Objective 2.3

To promptly implement changes in law and procedure.

## Intent of the Objective

Tradition and formality can obscure the reality that both the substantive and procedural laws are subject to change. Changes in statutes, case law, and court rules affect what is done in the courts, how it is done, and those who conduct business in the courts. Courts should make certain that mandated changes are implemented promptly and correctly.

## Responses to the Objective

### General Responses

Several city and parish courts reported that they had taken actions in FY 2002-2003 to ensure compliance with the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) and the provisions of the Louisiana Children's Code relating to Child-in-Need-of-Care cases.

**ASFA Compliance.** Twenty-six courts said that they had taken action to comply with ASFA and the Louisiana Children's Code. (Abbeville, Bogalusa, Bossier, Bunkie, Denham Springs, Eunice, Franklin, Hammond, Houma, Jeanerette, Kaplan, Lafayette, Marksville, Monroe, Morgan City, Natchitoches, Oakdale, Opelousas, Plaquemine, Port Allen, Rayne, Ruston, Slidell, Thibodaux, Vidalia, and West Monroe).

## Responses of Individual Courts

- **Abbeville City Court.** The Abbeville City Court reports that its judge and clerks attended seminars on ASFA compliance. OCS personnel were asked pertinent questions, and, as a result, the Court has determined that it is already in compliance with ASFA deadlines.
- **Bogalusa City Court.** The Bogalusa City Court reports that it has worked closely with the Office of Community Service (OCS) to comply with ASFA requirements.
- **Bossier City Court.** The Bossier City Court reports that its employees regularly attend conferences and receive monthly newsletters advising of any changes in laws that would affect city courts. It is the Court's practice to implement these changes promptly. The Court's scheduling is set with enough time to allow for continuances and still be able to meet the ASFA guidelines. The judge and court clerks attended workshops and training sessions on ASFA.
- **Bunkie City Court.** The Bunkie City Court reports that all CINC cases are filed in the district court. The Court has discussed ASFA requirements, as they pertain to delinquency proceedings, with prosecutors and probation officers.
- **Denham Springs City Court.** The Denham Springs Court reports that it attended conferences and developed a scheduling order that shows time delays and that references the appropriate statute.
- **Eunice City Court.** The Eunice City Court reports that it provided AFSA Guidelines to all attorneys handling juvenile matters and instructed the clerk on proper minute entries.
- **First Parish Court of Jefferson.** The First Parish Court of Jefferson reports that it has adopted a policy for tracking all changes in law and legal procedure. The Court continually



assesses and works to anticipate, as the need arises, all necessary adjustments in court operations necessitated by new legislation or the possible need for new legislation. The Court works with the State Legislature and executive departments to develop new procedures which will work for all involved including the public. (Example, Louisiana Department of Public Safety).

- **Franklin City Court.** The Franklin City Court reports that it made court personnel aware of ASFA guidelines and attended a judges' conference where ASFA guidelines were discussed.
- **Hammond City Court.** The Hammond City Court reports that it purchased and implemented a software package to assure compliance with ASFA requirements. It also hosted a training seminar for attorneys and court personnel on these requirements.
- **Houma City Court.** The Houma City Court reports that it has meticulously followed the timeline sheets provided by the Louisiana Supreme Court to ensure compliance with ASFA. In addition, the Court continually monitors the effectiveness and efficiency of its FINS program, and it currently has two employees on the LA FINS Association Executive Board.
- **Jeanerette City Court.** The Jeanerette City Court reports that it reviewed the ASFA materials provided by the Supreme Court with its staff, and discussed the materials with prosecutors and their staff.
- **Kaplan City Court.** The Kaplan City Court reports that it adopted policies and procedures to assure ASFA compliance in applicable cases.
- **Lafayette City Court.** The Lafayette City Court reports that its judges and juvenile clerk staff attended ASFA training.
- **Lake Charles City Court.** The Lake Charles City Court reports that it provides timely articles

to local media and to the bar association newsletter of all changes affecting the Court.

- **Marksville City Court.** The Marksville City Court reports that a FINS officer was assigned to be present in all juvenile proceedings to provide resource support.
- **Monroe City Court.** The Monroe City Court reports that it attended ASFA seminars to maintain compliance.
- **Morgan City Court.** The Morgan City Court reports that it instituted a FINS program in the Court. In addition, all personnel involved in juvenile cases attended an ASFA conference for training. The Court also uses and follows the bench cards provided by the Judicial Administrator in CINC cases.
- **Natchitoches City Court.** The Natchitoches City Court reports that its judge and juvenile clerk attended the ASFA CLE programs. The Court also keeps separate CINC records, and uses the bench cards provided by the Judicial Administrator of the Supreme Court in all CINC proceedings.
- **Oakdale City Court.** The Oakdale City Court reports that it has established greater coordination with the Office of Community Services (OCS) and the district attorney's office with respect to ASFA compliance.
- **Opelousas City Court.** The Opelousas City Court reports that it is following all ASFA deadlines and guidelines.
- **Plaquemine City Court.** The Plaquemine City Court reports that it attended all juvenile conferences and training sessions for ASFA compliance and implemented all ASFA time schedules in juvenile court proceedings.
- **Port Allen City Court.** The Port Allen City Court reports that it attended the ASFA training seminar sponsored by the Judicial Administrator of the Supreme Court.



- **Rayne City Court.** The Rayne City Court reports that the district attorney as well as attorneys involved in cases dealing with ASFA meet at least monthly to discuss and implement changes in procedures. The Court's clerks are also involved so that all deadlines are met and all procedures are followed. The Court holds meetings with the district attorney, the attorneys representing parties (who are generally court appointed), and court clerks to ensure that the Court complies with ASFA and the Children's Code regarding Child-in-Need-of-Care cases. Through this process the applicable timetables have been explained to all court personnel and attorneys involved.
- **Ruston City Court.** The Ruston City Court reports that it maintains membership in the Louisiana City Judges Association and serves on the legislative affairs committee. Further, the Court tracks and monitors changes in the law through Westlaw subscriptions.
- **Second Parish Court of Jefferson.** The Second Parish Court of Jefferson reports that the judges of its Court review changes in the law and legal procedure with the assistance of court attorneys. All changes that require modification of court procedure are implemented.
- **Slidell City Court.** The Slidell City Court reports that the court attorney routinely reviews all changes in law and procedure for the Court. The Court continues to closely monitor time guidelines for the filing and docketing of CINC cases. It also meets all ASFA requirements regarding essential judicial functions. The Court works in close collaboration with the district attorney and Office of Community Services (OCS) personnel to ensure these objectives are achieved. The Court also continues to develop a pool of attorneys appointed to represent the parents in CINC matters from the continued custody hearing to disposition. The Court has met with the staff attorney for the Office of Community Services (OCS) to discuss the time limits and guidelines pertaining to such cases. As a result, it no longer allows continuances unless

there is a great reason. In addition, its judge was interviewed as part of a federal and state government joint review with focus on identifying the strengths and weaknesses of child and family services.

- **Thibodaux City Court.** The Thibodaux City Court reports that it hired a former district manager from the Office of Youth Development to draft a worksheet for time limitations in juvenile cases. In addition, the Court has met with area managers for the Office of Youth Development and the Office of Community Services to discuss and resolve other issues affecting juvenile cases.
- **Vidalia City Court.** The Vidalia City Court reports that it attended seminars on ASFA compliance and discussed compliance requirements with its clerk.
- **West Monroe City Court.** The West Monroe City Court reports that the prosecutor's office informs and updates the Court regarding changes in the criminal laws. The Court has determined that it is in compliance with ASFA requirements.

## Future Plans

- **Hammond City Court.** The Hammond City Court reports that it will continue to work with court personnel, agencies and attorneys to assure that all ASFA requirements are met and that continuances are eliminated or kept to an absolute minimum. The Court also plans to provide additional training for attorneys regarding ASFA compliance.

## Objective 3.1

**To faithfully adhere to laws, procedural rules, and established policies.**

## Intent of the Objective

This objective is based largely on the concept of due process, including the provision of proper notice and



the provision of a fair opportunity to be informed and heard at all stages of the judicial process. Fairness should characterize the court's compulsory process and discovery. Courts should respect the right to legal counsel and the rights of confrontation, cross-examination, impartial hearings, and jury trials. The objective requires fair judicial processes through adherence to constitutional and statutory law, case precedents, court rules, and other authoritative guidelines, including policies and administrative regulations. Adherence to law and established procedures contributes to the court's ability to achieve predictability, reliability, and integrity. It also greatly helps to ensure that justice "is perceived to have been done" by those who directly experience the quality of the court's adjudicatory process and procedures.

### Responses to the Objective

- **Bossier City Court.** The Bossier City Court reports that it has provided Internet access to employees needing to do legal research. The Court strives to treat all litigants fairly and respectfully in all matters.
- **Crowley City Court.** The Crowley City Court reports that this objective has been addressed and continues to be monitored.
- **First Parish Court of Jefferson.** The First Parish Court of Jefferson reports that it always takes suggestions from all attorneys regarding all areas of court procedure.
- **Lafayette City Court.** The Lafayette City Court reports that it created special Boykinization forms.
- **Second Parish Court of Jefferson.** The Second Parish Court of Jefferson reports that its judges and court staff regularly review, and faithfully adhere to, laws, procedural rules, and established policies as regular, ongoing activities of the Court.
- **West Monroe City Court.** The West

Monroe City Court reports that its judge ensures impartiality to all parties and enforces proper barriers to prevent unfairness.

### Future Plans

- **Franklin City Court.** The Franklin City Court reports that it will seek input from other courts and judicial sources as well as local attorneys to address this objective.

### Objective 3.2

**To give individual attention to cases, deciding them without undue disparity among like cases and upon legally relevant factors.**

### Intent of the Objective

This objective upholds the standard that litigants should receive individual attention without variation due to the judge assigned or the legally irrelevant characteristics of the parties. To the extent possible, persons similarly situated should receive similar treatment. The objective further requires that court decisions and actions be in proper proportion to the nature and magnitude of the case and to the characteristics of the parties. Variations should not be predictable due to legally irrelevant factors, nor should the outcome of a case depend on which judge within a court presides over a hearing or trial. The objective relates to all decisions, including sentences in criminal cases, the conditions of bail, the amount of child support, the appointment of legal counsel, and the use of court-supervised alternatives to formal litigation.

### Responses to the Objective

- **First Parish Court of Jefferson.** The First Parish Court of Jefferson reports that each case is given its own time for pre-trial, status conference, and trial. The Court has a basic philosophy that can be articulated for each type of case, but each case is handled individually and decided on its own merits.
- **Morgan City Court.** The Morgan City Court





reports that it employed a system of uniform bond scheduling for certain offenses.

- **Second Parish Court of Jefferson.** The Second Parish Court of Jefferson reports that each case is given its own time for pre-trial, status conference and trial. The Court has a basic philosophy that can be articulated for each type of case, but each case is handled individually and decided on its own merits.

### Future Plans

- **Marksville City Court.** The Marksville City Court reports that it will establish an attorneys' focus group/panel.

### Objective 3.3

To ensure that the decisions of the court address clearly the issues presented to it and, where appropriate, to specify how compliance can be achieved.

### Intent of the Objective

An order or decision that sets forth consequences or articulates rights but fails to tie the actual consequences resulting from the decision to the antecedent issues breaks the connection required for reliable review and enforcement. A decision that is not clearly communicated poses problems both for the parties and for judges who may be called upon to interpret or apply the decision. This objective implies that dispositions for each charge or count in a criminal complaint, for example, is easy to discern, and that the terms of punishment and sentence should be clearly associated with each count upon which a conviction is returned. Noncompliance with court pronouncements and subsequent difficulties of enforcement sometimes occur because orders are not stated in terms that are readily understood and capable of being monitored. An order that requires a minimum payment per month on a restitution obligation, for example, is clearer and more enforceable than an order that establishes an obligation but sets no time frame for completion. Decisions in civil cases, especially those unraveling tangled webs of multiple claims and parties, should

also connect clearly each issue and its consequences.

### Responses to the Objective

- **First Parish Court of Jefferson.** The First Parish Court of Jefferson reports that, in all criminal cases handled by its court, defendants are provided with the details of his/her sentence in writing. On a case where probation is required, compliance with conditions of probation is monitored by the Court's probation department.
- **Morgan City Court.** The Morgan City Court reports that, upon sentencing, the Court fully explains to all parties the judgment or ruling.
- **Second Parish Court of Jefferson.** The Second Parish Court of Jefferson reports that in all criminal cases, defendants are provided with the details of their sentences in writing. On a case where probation is required, compliance with conditions of probation is monitored by the Court's probation department.

### Future Plans

- **Rayne City Court.** The Rayne City Court reports that it will request attorney feedback on the handling of criminal and civil cases and will weigh their responses in an effort to improve the Court.

### Objective 3.4

To ensure that appropriate responsibility is taken for the enforcement of court orders.

### Intent of the Objective

Courts should not direct that certain actions be taken or prohibited, and then allow those bound by their orders to honor them more in the breach than in the observance. This objective encourages courts to ensure that their orders are enforced. The integrity of the dispute resolution process is reflected in the degree to which the parties adhere to awards and



settlements arising out of them. Noncompliance may indicate misunderstanding, misrepresentation, or a lack of respect for, or confidence in, the courts. Obviously, courts cannot assume total responsibility for the enforcement of all of their decisions and orders. The responsibility of the courts for enforcement varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, program to program, case to case, and event to event; however, all courts have a responsibility to take appropriate action for the enforcement of their orders.

## Responses to the Objective

### General Responses

Several city and parish courts reported that they took action in FY 2002-2003 to ensure the timely enforcement of arrest warrants, subpoenas, and summons.

- **Improved Service of Process.** Eleven courts said they improved service of process. (Bastrop, Bossier City, Crowley, Denham Springs, Franklin, Jefferson-1st Parish, Marksville, Monroe, N.O. 2nd City, N.O.-Traffic and Slidell).
- **Created a Manual-Tracking Program.** One court said it created a manual-tracking program. (Pineville).
- **Improved Address Lists.** Ten courts said they improved address lists. (Bossier City, Eunice, Kaplan, Lake Charles, N.O.-Traffic, Oakdale, Opelousas, Port Allen, Ruston and Zachary).
- **Improved Enforcement.** Sixteen courts said that they improved enforcement. (Bogalusa, Eunice, Jeanerette, N.O.-2nd Parish, Kaplan, Leesville, Marksville, New Iberia, N.O.-Traffic, Oakdale, Rayne, Ruston, Slidell, Springhill, Ville Platte and Winnsboro).
- **Created an Automated-Tracking Program.** Five courts said that they created an automatic-tracking system. (Bossier City, Lake

Charles, Oakdale, Pineville and Thibodaux).

- **Coordinated With Other Jurisdictions.**

Twelve courts said that they coordinated with other jurisdictions. (Jeanerette, Jefferson-1st Parish, Jennings, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Leesville, Marksville, Monroe, Natchitoches, N.O.-Traffic, Pineville and Vidalia).

### Responses of Individual Courts

- **First Parish Court of Jefferson.** The First Parish Court of Jefferson reports that the Court's probation department monitors individual cases to ensure compliance with sentencing and probation conditions. The Court communicates with the sheriff's office and the clerk of court's office to provide information on missed court dates and outstanding attachments. No criminal defendant leaves the Court without a specific return date until the case is concluded.
- **Baker City Court.** The Baker City Court reports that it provides the police department with warrant information weekly.
- **Bastrop City Court.** The Bastrop City Court reports that it improved service of process to ensure timely enforcement of arrest warrants, summons and subpoenas. The Court held one session of night court in an attempt to clear up bench warrants.
- **Baton Rouge City Court.** The Baton Rouge City Court reports that its civil division was reorganized so that a permanently designated staff for that division processes pleadings from their original filing date through dismissal. This arrangement provides for clearer communication and accountability between the Court and the ancillary agencies that serve the Court in issuing the processes. Training was provided in the criminal, traffic, and civil divisions to emphasize the importance of accuracy and clarity when dealing with the agencies and the legal community, including pro se litigants requesting enforcement of these processes.



- **Bogalusa City Court.** The Bogalusa City Court reports that it has improved enforcement for timely arrest warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **Bossier City Court.** The Bossier City Court reports that it improved service of process, improved address lists, and created an automated tracking program to ensure the timely enforcement of warrants, summons, and subpoenas. In addition, the Court reports that it closely monitors defendants through their probation officers to ensure that all orders are enforced.
- **Crowley City Court.** The Crowley City Court reports that it improved service of process to ensure timely enforcement of arrest warrants, summons, and subpoenas (warrants are difficult because there is no jail space).
- **Denham Springs City Court.** The Denham Springs City Court reports that it improved service of process to ensure timely enforcement of arrest warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **Eunice City Court.** The Eunice City Court reports that it improved address lists and improved the enforcement of arrest warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **First Parish Court of Jefferson.** The First Parish Court of Jefferson reports that it improved service of process and coordinated with other jurisdictions to ensure timely enforcement of arrest warrants, summons and subpoenas.
- **Hammond City Court.** The Hammond City Court reports that it consulted with the Marshal to improve service and assisted in the establishment of a warrant division in the Marshal's office.
- **Jeanerette City Court.** The Jeanerette City Court reports that it improved enforcement and coordinated with other jurisdictions to ensure timely enforcement of arrest warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **Jennings City Court.** The Jennings City Court reports that it coordinated with other jurisdictions to ensure timely enforcement of arrest warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **Kaplan City Court.** The Kaplan City Court reports that it improved address lists, improved enforcement and, within legal parameters, adopted policies and procedures fostering inter agency cooperation concerning the timely enforcement of arrest warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **Lafayette City Court.** The Lafayette City Court reports that it has an automated system for tracking warrants, summons, and subpoenas, and that it continuously coordinates with the Marshal's office and other jurisdictions to enforce warrants.
- **Lake Charles City Court.** The Lake Charles City Court reports that it improved address lists, created an automated tracking program and coordinated with other jurisdictions to ensure the timely enforcement of warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **Leesville City Court.** The Leesville City Court reports that it improved enforcement and coordinated with other jurisdictions to ensure the timely enforcement of warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **Marksville City Court.** The Marksville City Court reports that it improved service of process, and coordinated with other jurisdictions to ensure the timely enforcement of arrest warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **Monroe City Court.** The Monroe City Court reports that it improved service of process and coordinated with other jurisdictions to ensure timely enforcement of arrest warrants, summons, and subpoenas.



- **Morgan City Court.** The Morgan City Court reports that the judge maintains contact with adult and juvenile probation officers and the Court's FINS officer to ensure compliance. The Court holds regular meetings and coordinates with other jurisdictions to ensure compliance in all probation matters. The Court also plans to improve communication with the police department and the city prosecutor regarding enforcement issues.
- **Municipal City Court of New Orleans.** The Municipal City Court of New Orleans reports that it worked with law enforcement officers to implement a computerized service of process system.
- **Natchitoches City Court.** The Natchitoches City Court reports that it coordinated with other jurisdictions to ensure the timely enforcement of warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **New Iberia City Court.** The New Iberia City Court reports that it improved its enforcement of warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **Oakdale City Court.** The Oakdale City Court reports that it improved address lists and created an automated tracking program to ensure the timely enforcement of warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **Opelousas City Court.** The Opelousas City Court reports that the enforcement and serving of warrants and subpoenas is handled by the Marshal's office. It publishes all court bench warrants in its local daily newspaper and has repeatedly asked the Marshal's office to improve its enforcement of bench warrants. The Court has also improved address lists.
- **Pineville City Court.** The Pineville City Court reports that it created manual and automatic tracking programs and coordinated with other jurisdictions to ensure the timely enforcement of warrants, summons, and

subpoenas. In addition, the court administrator communicates daily with the police department, specifically with the officer assigned to warrants. The clerk's office ensures that appropriate responsibility is taken for the enforcement of court orders by working with the prosecutor's office, police department and the probation office on a daily basis.

- **Plaquemine City Court.** The Plaquemine City Court reports that it evaluated a computer link between its court and police department for implementation in 2004 as a means of improving enforcement of court orders.
- **Port Allen City Court.** The Port Allen City Court reports that it improved address lists to ensure the timely enforcement of warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **Rayne City Court.** The Rayne City Court reports that it had meetings with the Marshal's office and city police to improve the enforcement of court orders. In addition, the Marshal has added personnel to enforce arrest warrants, summons and delivery of subpoenas.
- **Ruston City Court.** The Ruston City Court reports that it improved address lists and improved enforcement. In addition, on a designated court day each month, it conducts a probation review day which requires the attendance of all probationers at the end of their scheduled probation term to insure court orders relating to fines, court costs, restitution, etc. have been complied with.
- **Second City Court of New Orleans.** The Second City Court of New Orleans reports that it improved service of process to ensure the timely enforcement of arrest warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **Second Parish Court of Jefferson.** The Second Parish Court of Jefferson reports that its probation department monitors individual cases to ensure compliance with sentencing and



probation conditions. The Court also communicates with the parish sheriff's office and the clerk of court's office to provide information on missed court dates and outstanding attachments. The Court has also improved enforcement. No criminal defendant leaves the Court without a specific return date until the case is concluded. It is the duty of the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's office to serve arrest warrants, summons and subpoenas. To assist that agency, the Court has started using a computer program that advises the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's office of the issuance and recall of attachments.

- **Shreveport City Court.** The Shreveport City Court reports that it created an automated tracking program and has a probation office to monitor compliance with court orders. The Marshal's office carries out the orders and mandates of the Court and transfers warrant information to the Shreveport Police Department so that officers can check for outstanding warrants.
- **Slidell City Court.** The Slidell City Court reports that it improved service of process to ensure the timely enforcement of warrants, summons, and subpoenas.
- **Springhill City Court.** The Springhill City Court reports that it improved its enforcement of warrants, subpoenas, and summons.
- **Sulphur City Court.** The Sulphur City Court reports that it worked with the marshal to suspend some contempt fines if the person voluntarily appeared at the marshal's request.
- **Thibodaux City Court.** The Thibodaux City Court reports that a meeting is held with the police captain in charge of services anytime there is a question about the timeliness of service.
- **Traffic Court of New Orleans.** The Traffic Court of New Orleans reports that it improved service of process, address lists. The

Court also coordinated with other jurisdictions to ensure the timely enforcement of warrants, summons, and subpoenas.

- **Vidalia City Court.** The Vidalia City Court reports that it coordinated with other jurisdictions to ensure timely enforcement of arrest warrants, summons and subpoenas.
- **Ville Platte City Court.** The Ville Platte City Court reports that it improved enforcement of its arrest warrants, summons and subpoenas.
- **Winnsboro City Court.** The Winnsboro City Court reports that it improved enforcement of its arrest warrants, summons and subpoenas.
- **Zachary City Court.** The Zachary City Court reports that it improved address lists to ensure the timely enforcement of warrants, summons, and subpoenas.

### Future Plans

- **Baker City Court.** The Baker City Court reports that it will conduct night court quarterly with a focus on outstanding warrants.
- **Bastrop City Court.** The Bastrop City Court reports that, in the coming year, it will revise its warrant enforcement process.
- **Breaux Bridge City Court.** The Breaux Bridge City Court reports that it will ask the newly elected sheriff of St. Martin Parish to pick up and incarcerate persons with active bench warrants.
- **Marksville City Court.** The Marksville City Court reports that it will attempt to execute warrants more effectively.



### Objective 3.5

To ensure that all court records of relevant court decisions and actions are accurate and preserved properly.

#### Intent of the Objective

Equality, fairness, and integrity in courts depend in substantial measure upon the accuracy, availability, and accessibility of records. This objective recognizes that other officials may maintain court records. Nevertheless, the objective does place an obligation on courts, perhaps in association with other officials, to ensure that records are accurate and preserved properly.

#### Responses to the Objective

- **Bossier City Court.** The Bossier City Court has installed two counter computer stations to enable the public to access civil, criminal and traffic records. The Court is in the process of improving its offsite storage facilities for easier retrieval and better preservation.
- **First Parish Court of Jefferson.** The First Parish Court of Jefferson reports that all agencies work together for the common goal of preserving court records properly and accurately. A new digital court reporting system will enhance this objective. Plans to purchase this system in 2004 are in place. The parish courts have standardized all court information and have had in place, for some time now, effective ways of storing, retrieving, and preserving court records. Plans are in place for the clerk of court to enhance imaging capability in 2004.
- **Houma City Court.** The Houma City Court reports that it has begun a process of electronically scanning and storing court records, as well as microfilming old cases.
- **Lake Charles City Court.** The Lake Charles City Court reports that it works in cooperation with the Secretary of State to ensure preservation of records.

- **Second Parish Court of Jefferson.** The Second Parish Court of Jefferson reports that improvements have been made to the program that creates computerized minute entries so that more detailed and more secure minute entries can be produced.
- **Sulphur City Court.** The Sulphur City Court reports that it investigated scanning documents and off-site storage.
- **West Monroe City Court.** The West Monroe City Court reports that its records are maintained and stored in a central system through new computer networking.

#### Future Plans

- **Morgan City Court.** The Morgan City Court reports that it will work toward a standardized storage plan to ensure the preservation of records. The Court will also work to organize its legal library.

### Objective 4.1

To maintain the constitutional independence of the judiciary while observing the principle of cooperation with other branches of government.

#### Intent of the Objective

The judiciary must assert and maintain its independence as a separate branch of government. Within the organizational structure of the judicial branch of government, city and parish courts should establish their legal and organizational boundaries, monitor and control their operations, and account publicly for their performance. Independence and accountability support the principles of a government based on law, access to justice, and the timely resolution of disputes with equality, fairness, and integrity; and they engender public trust and confidence. Courts must both control their proper functions and demonstrate respect for their co-equal partners in government.



## Responses to the Objective

- **Bunkie City Court.** The Bunkie City Court reports that there have been times when the various branches of government did not get along very well. While maintaining the independence of the judiciary, it is getting along very well with the current mayor and council. In fact, thanks to the mayor and council, it now has a full-time collector. Through such collaboration, the collection of past due fines has increased, and everyone is very happy with the outcome.
- **First Parish Court of Jefferson.** The First Parish Court of Jefferson reports that its judges continually strive to maintain a working relationship with the various courts and with the other branches of parish government including the clerk of court's office, the sheriff's office, the district attorney's office and other parish officials. Additionally, the judges of the Court maintain contact with state legislators in order to further the goals and meet the requirements of the Court. At all times the Court approaches these relationships as an independent body.
- **Lake Charles City Court.** The Lake Charles City Court reports that it has sponsored monthly meetings with city administrators and the chief of police to improve the administration of justice.
- **Morgan City Court.** The Morgan City Court reports that its judge met with the mayor, city council members, the parish president and the city marshal to discuss the funding and operations of the Court. The judge also attended city council meetings and addressed the mayor and council regarding these issues. The judge also met with Senator Gautreaux and testified before a senate committee on a bill for funding juvenile services. In addition, the judge met with the St. Mary Parish Safe Schools Coalition and the Juvenile Crime Enforcement Coalition to discuss ways of improving juvenile justice.
- **Ruston City Court.** The Ruston City Court

reports that it sponsored a criminal justice seminar for local law enforcement officials with emphasis on DWI and lawful search and seizure issues.

- **Second Parish Court of Jefferson.** The Second Parish Court of Jefferson reports that it strives to maintain a working relationship with the various courts and with other branches of parish government including the clerk of court's office, the sheriff's office, the district attorney's office and other parish officials. In addition, the judges of the Court maintain contact with state legislators in order to further the Court's goals and to address its requirements. The Court approaches these relationships as an independent body at all times.
- **Sulphur City Court.** The Sulphur City Court set up a meeting with the local state representative to discuss legislation affecting the Court.

## Future Plans

- **Bunkie City Court.** The Bunkie City Court reports that it plans to address the problem of timely case management and punctual commencement of court proceedings. The number of delays seems to increase in proportion to the number of lawyers that work in the Court. Plea bargains and other conferences between prosecutors and defendants are going to be restricted to a certain amount of time so they will not interfere with the punctual commencement of court proceedings.
- **Bossier City Court.** Bossier City Court reports that it intends to maintain a high level of cooperation with all branches of government.

## Objective 4.2

To seek, use, and account for public resources in a responsible manner.

## Intent of the Objective

Effective court management requires sufficient



resources to do justice and to keep costs affordable. This objective requires that a court responsibly seek the resources needed to meet its judicial responsibilities, that it uses those resources prudently (even if the resources are inadequate), and that it properly account for the use of the resources.

### Responses to the Objective

- **Alexandria City Court.** The Alexandria City Court reports that it subscribed to Lexis on-line for legal research.
- **Baton Rouge City Court.** The Baton Rouge City Court reports that the Administrative Office, through the efforts of the Network Services Division of the Court, has devised an internal funds manager program that provides instantaneous accounting of all funds, including balances and account expenses. Prior to that time, the Court relied on the local government's accounting, which was only available after a (30) thirty-day delay.
- **Bossier City Court.** The Bossier City Court reports that it has employed a certified public accountant to ensure that proper accounting and spending procedures are followed. The Court has also adopted new travel regulations for controlling costs.
- **First Parish Court of Jefferson.** The First Parish Court of Jefferson reports that it is currently using Westlaw online for research. It also makes use of the websites of the Louisiana Legislature, the Supreme Court, the Fifth Circuit and other court-related organizations. The Court has developed and promulgated general guidelines for managing its Judicial Expense Fund. An independent audit is performed each calendar year. Each year a proposed and final budget is prepared for the 1st Parish Court Judicial Expense Funds. If expenditures are anticipated to be over \$250,000, the Court complies with all public participation requirements and notices. The Court reports that it is, and always has been, pro-active in its efforts to control court costs that are not related to court functions.
- **Lake Charles City Court.** The Lake Charles City Court reports that it went directly to the city council to obtain funding for new staff. The Court continues to follow Supreme Court funding guidelines and has also hired an in-house comptroller to manage its accounting.
- **Morgan City Court.** The Morgan City Court reports that its funds are audited annually by an independent auditing firm.
- **Oakdale City Court.** The Oakdale City Court reports that it continually meets with its CPA auditor to ensure proper handling of court funds.
- **Pineville City Court.** The Pineville City Court reports that an additional deputy clerk was hired to help ensure proper staffing. Renovations were made to add a new workstation for the collection of bonds and fines. These changes have improved security, accessibility to the public, and case management accuracy.
- **Rayne City Court.** The Rayne City Court reports that it has hired college students to assist staff in doing tasks under qualified supervision. The students allow time for regular staff to focus on doing various high level administrative functions. The students perform such tasks as answering the phone, making copies, filing information, etc.
- **Ruston City Court.** The Ruston City Court reports that every year a certified public accountant audits all accounts under the direction of the court system. The Court also employs a separate CPA to help prepare monthly financial reports properly.
- **Second Parish Court of Jefferson.** The Second Parish Court of Jefferson reports that the parish's budget director helps the Court to maintain proper accounting procedures when preparing its annual operating budget. An annual audit is conducted on the operating budget by a CPA/auditor. An annual audit is also





conducted on the Court's Judicial Expense Fund account by an outside auditor. In compliance with statutory law, the annual budget for the Judicial Expense Fund is published in a local publication, and public hearings are held to review it. Efforts are being made by the Court to investigate and control the costs of civil filing fees and criminal court costs that are not related to court functions.

- **Sulphur City Court.** The Sulphur City Court reports that it added a full-time clerk, and had the city hire a secretary for the prosecutor, a job previously handled by the clerk of court. The Court also started using computers to do legal research through Westlaw and to access the DMV, the Secretary of State, and others, through the Internet. The Court's accounts are audited, and the city's accountant assists the Court in developing fiscal procedures and monthly reports. To reduce its cost to the public, the Court has recently reviewed all of its costs and charges.
- **West Monroe City Court.** The West Monroe City Court reports that new positions have been created for juvenile proceedings and probation.

### Future Plans

- **Rayne City Court.** The Rayne City Court reports that it will continue to train court personnel and staff, but will also look for other resources to facilitate judicial and administrative functions. The Court will continue to cooperate and provide assistance to performance audits.
- **Shreveport City Court.** The Shreveport City Court reports that city courts need guidance and supervision regarding their judicial expense funds - especially with respect to expenditures relating to travel. The courts also need guidance and supervision regarding the many special and local bills that are filed during legislative sessions that negatively affect the jurisdiction and processes of other city courts.

### Objective 4.3

To use fair employment practices.

### Intent of the Objective

The judiciary stands as an important and visible symbol of government. Equal treatment of all persons before the law is essential to the concept of justice. Accordingly, the courts should operate free of bias in their personnel practices and decisions. Fairness in the recruitment, compensation, supervision, and development of court personnel helps to ensure judicial independence, accountability, and organizational competence. Fairness in employment also helps establish the highest standards of personal integrity and competence among employees.

### Responses to the Objective

#### General Responses

Several city and parish courts reported that they sponsored or spent resources for employee training and development in FY 2002-2003.

- **Provided Courtesy Training.** Ten courts said they provided courtesy training. (Baton Rouge, Bossier City, Crowley, Hammond, Jefferson-1st Parish, Lafayette, Monroe, N.O.-1st City, N.O.-2nd City and Sulphur).
- **Used Training Videos/CDs, etc.** Five courts said they used training videos/CDs, etc. (Baton Rouge, Hammond, Jefferson-1st Parish, Oakdale and Shreveport).
- **Provided Management Training.** Sixteen courts said they provided management training. (Baton Rouge, Hammond, Houma, Jefferson-1st Parish, Jennings, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Monroe, Natchitoches, N.O.-1st City, N.O.-2nd City, N.O.-Traffic, Oakdale, Pineville, Shreveport and Zachary).
- **Provided Technology Training.** Twenty-four courts said they provided technology



training. (Baton Rouge, Bossier City, Breaux Bridge, Eunice, Franklin, Hammond, Houma, Jefferson-1st Parish, Jefferson-2nd Parish, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Monroe, Morgan City, N.O.-1st City, N.O.-2nd City, N.O.-Municipal, N.O.-Traffic, Opelousas, Pineville, Plaquemine, Ruston, Slidell and Zachary).

- **Provided ADA Training.** Two courts said they provided ADA training. (Baton Rouge and Plaquemine).
- **Paid for Continuing Education and Training.** Thirty-seven courts said they paid for continuing education and training. (Alexandria, Ascension, Baker, Bastrop, Baton Rouge, Bogalusa, Bossier City, Breaux Bridge, Houma, Jeanerette, Jefferson-1st Parish, Jefferson 2nd Parish, Kaplan, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Marksville, Monroe, Morgan City, Natchitoches, New Iberia, N.O.-1st City, N.O.-Municipal, Oakdale, Opelousas, Pineville, Thibodaux, Plaquemine, Port Allen, Rayne, Ruston, Shreveport, Slidell, Springhill, Sulphur, Vidalia, West Monroe and Zachary).
- **Sent Employees to Conferences.** Forty-four courts said they sent employees to conferences. (Abbeville, Alexandria, Ascension, Baker, Bastrop, Baton Rouge, Bogalusa, Bossier City, Breaux Bridge, Crowley, Denham Springs, Eunice, Franklin, Hammond, Houma, Jeanerette, Jefferson-1st Parish, Jefferson 2nd Parish, Jennings, Kaplan, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Marksville, Monroe, Natchitoches, New Iberia, N.O.-1st City, N.O. Municipal, N.O. Traffic, Oakdale, Opelousas, Pineville, Plaquemine, Port Allen, Rayne, Ruston, Slidell, Springhill, Sulphur, Vidalia, Ville Platte, West Monroe, Winnsboro and Zachary).

## Responses of Individual Courts

- **Abbeville City Court.** The Abbeville City Court reports that it paid for continuing education and training of its employees and sent employees to conferences.

- **Alexandria City Court.** The Alexandria City Court reports that it paid for continuing education and training of its employees and sent employees to conferences.
- **Ascension Parish Court.** The Ascension Parish Court reports that paid for continuing education and training of its employees and sent employees to conferences.
- **Baker City Court.** The Baker City Court reports that it paid for continuing education and training of employees and sent employees to conferences.
- **Bastrop City Court.** The Bastrop City Court reports that it sent its employees to conferences.
- **Baton Rouge City Court.** The Baton Rouge City Court reports that it provided courtesy training, training videos/CDs, management training, technology training, and ADA training. The Court also paid for continuing education and training for employees, and sent employees to conferences.
- **Bogalusa City Court.** The Bogalusa City Court reports that it provided courtesy and technology training, paid for continuing education and training of employees and sent employees to conferences.
- **Bossier City Court.** The Bossier City Court reports that it provided courtesy and technology training, paid for continuing education and training, and sent employees to conferences. The Court also has written policies and procedures to ensure the equal treatment of all employees.
- **Breaux Bridge City Court.** The Breaux Bridge City Court reports that it provided technology training, paid for continuing education and training and sent employees to conferences.
- **Crowley City Court.** The Crowley City



Court reports that it provided courtesy training and sent employees to conferences.

- **Denham Springs City Court.** The Denham Springs City Court reports that it sent employees to conferences.
- **Eunice City Court.** The Eunice City Court reports that it provided technology training and sent employees to conferences. It has also participated in the character city program encouraging court personnel to exhibit character appropriate to the judicial system in an effort to better serve the public and engender respect for the judiciary.
- **First City Court of New Orleans.** The First City Court of New Orleans reports that it provided courtesy, management and technology training. It also paid for continuing education and training, sent employees to conferences, and addressed fair employment practices.
- **First Parish Court of Jefferson.** The First Parish Court of Jefferson reports that in late 2003, the revision of its existing policy manual was completed. This manual will be printed and distributed to all employees in 2004. All subjects addressed by the strategic plan were covered and many more. The Court reports that it provided courtesy, management and technology training. It also used training videos/CDs, paid for continuing education and training, and sent employees to conferences.
- **Franklin City Court.** The Franklin City Court reports that it provided technology training and sent employees to conferences.
- **Hammond City Court.** The Hammond City Court reports that it provided courtesy, management and technology training. It also used training videos/CDs and sent employees to conferences.
- **Houma City Court.** The Houma City Court reports that it recently reviewed the employee

handbook and intends to make continual revisions to it. The Court also provided management and technology training, paid for continuing education and training, and sent employees to conferences.

- **Jeanerette City Court.** The Jeanerette City Court reports that it paid for continuing education and training and sent employees to conferences.
- **Jennings City Court.** The Jennings City Court reports that it provided management training and sent employees to conferences.
- **Kaplan City Court.** The Kaplan City Court reports that it paid for continuing education and training, sent employees to conferences, and adopted policies and procedures conducive to employees having access to assistance and information as needed from the Court.
- **Lafayette City Court.** The Lafayette City Court reports that it provided courtesy training, management and technology training, paid for continuing education and training, and sent employees to conferences. The Court also hired a consultant who administered the Meyers Briggs test to all employees and held a session to facilitate group interactions and improve communication with the public.
- **Lake Charles City Court.** The Lake Charles City Court reports that it provided management and technology training, paid for continuing education and training, and sent employees to conferences.
- **Marksville City Court.** The Marksville City Court reports that it paid for continuing education and training, sent employees to conferences, and held monthly office meetings to review the Court's docket and developments.
- **Minden City Court.** The Minden City Court reports that it paid for continuing education and training.
- **Monroe City Court.** The Monroe City Court



reports that it provided courtesy training, management and technology training, paid for continuing education and training, and sent its employees to conferences.

- **Morgan City Court.** The Morgan City Court reports that it includes in its Policy and Procedures Manual a section that addresses harassment, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family Leave Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act and all civil rights laws. The Court also reports that it provided technology training and paid for continuing education and training for its employees.
- **Municipal City Court of New Orleans.** The Municipal City Court of New Orleans reports that it provided technology training, paid for continuing education and training, and sent its employees to conferences.
- **Natchitoches City Court.** The Natchitoches City Court reports that it provided management training, paid for continuing education and training, and sent its employees to conferences.
- **New Iberia City Court.** The New Iberia City Court reports that it paid for continuing education and training and sent its employees to conferences. The judge continues to attend seminars, educational programs, and conferences in an attempt to become further educated and remain updated as to current cases and laws. In addition, the Court has provided resources for the court staff to attend similar types of programs and activities.
- **Oakdale City Court.** The Oakdale City Court reports that it used training videos/CDs, provided management and technology training, paid for continuing education and training, and sent its employees to conferences. It convened two meetings of court personnel including judges, administrators, clerks and software program providers to explore better and more efficient ways of automating court operations. This effort is ongoing. Its main obstacle has been the high cost

of the programs available. The Court reports that it needs assistance from the Supreme Court to develop standardized programs that would serve the small city courts as well as the larger ones.

- **Opelousas City Court.** The Opelousas City Court reports that it provided technology training, paid for continuing education and training, and sent its employees to conferences.
- **Pineville City Court.** The Pineville City Court reports that it provided management and technology training, paid for continuing education and training, and sent its employees to conferences.
- **Plaquemine City Court.** The Plaquemine City Court reports that it provided technology and ADA training, paid for continuing education and training, and sent its employees to conferences.
- **Port Allen City Court.** The Port Allen City Court reports that it paid for continuing education and training, and sent its employees to conferences.
- **Rayne City Court.** The Rayne City Court reports that it paid for continuing education and training, and sent its employees to conferences.
- **Ruston City Court.** The Ruston City Court reports that it provided technology training, paid for continuing education and training, and sent its employees to conferences.
- **Second City Court of New Orleans.** The Second City Court of New Orleans reports that it provided courtesy training, and management and technology training to its employees.
- **Second Parish Court of Jefferson.** The Second Parish Court of Jefferson reports that new employees are provided with verbal instructions on office policy and procedures. Notices of applicable laws relating to ADA and FMLA are posted as required by law. The Court also reports that it provided technology training, paid for



continuing education and training, and sent employees to conferences.

- **Shreveport City Court.** The Shreveport City Court reports that it developed an employee handbook outlining policies affecting court personnel, conducted employee training sessions on sexual harassment and equal employment opportunities, used training videos/CDs, provided management training, and paid for continuing education and training for its employees.
- **Slidell City Court.** The Slidell City Court reports that it adopted a harassment policy, provided technology training, paid for continuing education and training, and sent employees to conferences.
- **Springhill City Court.** The Springhill City Court reports that it paid for continuing education and training, and sent employees to conferences.
- **Sulphur City Court.** The Sulphur City Court reports that it went to seminars and reviewed that information with all personnel. It also provided courtesy training, paid for continuing education and training, and sent employees to conferences.
- **Traffic Court of New Orleans.** The Traffic Court of New Orleans reports that it provided management and technology training, and sent its employees to conferences.
- **Vidalia City Court.** The Vidalia City Court reports that it paid for continuing education and training, and sent its employees to conferences.
- **Ville Platte City Court.** The Ville Platte City Court reports that it sent its employees to conferences.
- **West Monroe City Court.** The West Monroe City Court reports that it paid for continuing education and training, and sent its employees to conferences.

- **Winnsboro City Court.** The Winnsboro City Court reports that it sent its employees to conferences.
- **Zachary City Court.** The Zachary City Court reports that it provided management and technology training, paid for continuing education and training, and sent its employees to conferences. The Court reports that it strives to provide professional and courteous service to the public and it participates in continuing education programs and civic activities.

### Future Plans

- **Morgan City Court.** The Morgan City Court reports that it will be implementing a new employee policy and procedure manual in 2004.
- **New Iberia City Court.** The New Iberia City Court reports that it will continue to educate its employees on current laws and cases.
- **Oakdale City Court.** The Oakdale City Court reports that it plans to continue pursuing the master plan for court technology undertaken in 2003. It will also review its policies for accuracy and preservation of records and will review its human resource policies.
- **Pineville City Court.** The Pineville City Court reports that it will continue legal education and judicial training by having employees attend conferences and seminars.

### Objective 4.4

**To inform the community of the court's structure, functions, and programs.**

### Intent of the Objective

Most citizens do not have direct contact with the courts. Information about courts is filtered through sources such as the media, lawyers, litigants, jurors, political leaders, and the employees of other components of the justice system. Public opinion polls indicate that the public knows very little about



the courts, and what is known is often at odds with reality. This objective implies that courts have a direct responsibility to inform the community of their structure, functions and programs. The disclosure of such information, through a variety of outreach programs, increases the influence of the courts on the development of the law, which, in turn, affects public policy and the activities of other governmental institutions. At the same time, such disclosure increases public awareness of and confidence in the operations of the courts.

## Response to the Objective

### General Responses

- **Provided A Newsletter.** Three courts said they provided a newsletter. (Baker, Denham Springs and Winnfield).
- **Visited Classrooms.** Twenty-five courts said they visited classrooms. (Ascension, Baton Rouge, Bunkie, Eunice, Franklin, Hammond, Houma, Jefferson-1st Parish, Jefferson-2nd Parish, Jennings, Kaplan, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Leesville, Marksville, Morgan City, New Iberia, N.O.-1st City, N.O.-2nd City, N.O.-Traffic, Plaquemine, Port Allen, Rayne, Slidell and West Monroe).
- **Gave Talks At Various Forums.** Thirty-three courts said they gave talks at various forums. (Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Bogalusa, Bossier City, Bunkie, Eunice, Franklin, Hammond, Houma, Jeanerette, Jefferson-2nd Parish, Kaplan, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Leesville, Marksville, Monroe, Morgan City, New Iberia, N.O.-1st City, N.O.-2nd City, N.O.-Traffic, Oakdale, Opelousas, Pineville, Plaquemine, Rayne, Shreveport, Springhill, Sulphur, Thibodaux, Ville Platte and West Monroe).
- **Participated In Judicial Ride-Along Programs.** One court said it participated in judicial ride-along programs. (Slidell)
- **Appeared on Radio and TV Shows.** Eleven courts said they appeared on radio and

TV shows. (Alexandria, Hammond, Jefferson-1st Parish, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Leesville, Marksville, N.O.-1st City, N.O.-Municipal, N.O.-Traffic and Plaquemine).

- **Sponsored A Teen Court Program.**

Eleven courts said they sponsored a teen court program. (Bossier City, Bunkie, Jefferson-1st Parish, Jefferson-2nd Parish, Marksville, Minden, Monroe, Natchitoches, Springhill, Winnsboro and Zachary).

- **Sponsored Tours of Courts.** Fifteen courts said they sponsored tours of courts. (Bogalusa, Bossier City, Bunkie, Crowley, Eunice, Hammond, Jeanerette, Lafayette, Minden, Monroe, New Iberia, Ruston, Vidalia, Winnsboro and Zachary).

- **Participated In Shadow Programs.**

Thirteen courts said they participated in shadow programs. (Ascension, Baton Rouge, Franklin, Hammond, Kaplan, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Morgan City, Natchitoches, Plaquemine, Rayne, Sulphur and Thibodaux).

### Responses of Individual Courts

- **Alexandria City Court.** The Alexandria City Court reports that it gave talks at various forums and appeared on radio and TV shows.
- **Ascension Parish Court.** The Ascension Parish Court reports that its judge visited classrooms to educate the public about its Court, the law, and the administration of justice. In addition, classes from local high schools have visited the Court.
- **Bastrop City Court.** The Bastrop City Court reports that it sponsored tours of the Court.
- **Baton Rouge City Court.** The Baton Rouge City Court reports that its judges visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, sponsored tours of the Court to educate the public about its Court, the law, and the administration of justice. The Court also reports



that its website is constantly being updated to provide current information about the judges, the programs offered to the public, the current court calendar and the daily dockets. The website also identifies resource agencies and provides responses to commonly asked questions.

- **Bogalusa City Court.** The Bogalusa City Court reports that its judge gave talks at various forums and participated in shadow programs.
- **Bossier City Court.** The Bossier City Court reports that it gave talks at various forums sponsored a teen court program and tours of the Court, participated in shadow programs, spoke to civic groups, and provided handouts to assist with the filing of small claims. The Court also reports that it is in the process of developing a website with helpful public information.
- **Breaux Bridge City Court.** The Breaux Bridge City Court reports that it provided a newsletter and sponsored tours of the Court.
- **Bunkie City Court.** The Bunkie City Court reports that its judge visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, sponsored a teen court program, and participated in shadow programs.
- **Crowley City Court.** The Crowley City Court reports that its judge sponsored tours of the Court and participated in shadow programs.
- **Eunice City Court.** The Eunice City Court reports that its judge visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, and participated in shadow programs.
- **First City Court of New Orleans.** The First City Court of New Orleans reports that it provided a newsletter, and that its judges visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, and appeared on radio and TV shows.
- **First Parish Court of Jefferson.** The First Parish Court of Jefferson reports that its judges visited classrooms, appeared on radio and TV

shows and sponsored a teen court program and tours of the Court. The Court continues to be involved in high school mock trials, public forums, radio addresses and visits from students from the surrounding schools.

- **Franklin City Court.** The Franklin City Court reports that it visited classrooms and gave talks at various forums.
- **Hammond City Court.** The Hammond City Court reports that its judge visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, appeared on radio and TV shows, sponsored tours of the Court, and participated in shadow programs.
- **Houma City Court.** The Houma City Court reports that its judge visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, sponsored tours of the Court, participated in shadow programs and developed a website which includes the structure, function and programs provided by the city court.
- **Jeanerette City Court.** The Jeanerette City Court reports that it gave talks at the Chamber of Commerce forum and made public school appearances. The Court also participated in Mock Trial Competitions.
- **Jennings City Court.** The Jennings City Court reports that it visited classrooms and sponsored tours of the Court.
- **Kaplan City Court.** The Kaplan City Court reports that it visited classrooms and gave talks at various forums.
- **Lafayette City Court.** The Lafayette City Court reports that its judges visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, appeared on radio and TV shows and participated in shadow programs. The Court also sought and received funds from the parish government to hire a part-time computer technician.
- **Lake Charles City Court.** The Lake Charles



City Court reports that its judges visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, appeared on radio and TV shows, and sponsored tours of the Court.

- **Leesville City Court.** The Leesville City Court reports that its judge visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, and appeared on radio and TV shows.
- **Marksville City Court.** The Marksville City Court reports that its judge visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, appeared on radio and TV shows, and sponsored a teen court program.
- **Minden City Court.** The Minden City Court reports that it sponsored a teen court program and participated in shadow programs.
- **Monroe City Court.** The Monroe City Court reports that its judges gave talks at various forums, sponsored a teen court program and tours of the Court, and participated in shadow programs.
- **Morgan City Court.** The Morgan City Court reports that its judge visited classrooms and gave talks at various forums.
- **Municipal Court of New Orleans.** The Municipal Court of New Orleans reports that its judges appeared on radio and TV shows.
- **Natchitoches City Court.** The Natchitoches City Court reports that it sponsored a teen court program.
- **New Iberia City Court.** The New Iberia City Court reports that its judge visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, sponsored tours of the Court, and participated in shadow programs. The judge also made public appearances to inform the general public of the functions of the Court and to build confidence in the integrity of the court system.

- **Oakdale City Court.** The Oakdale City Court reports that its judge gave talks at various forums and sponsored tours of the Court. In addition, its judge spoke to civic and private groups to inform the community of the court's structure, function and programs.
- **Opelousas City Court.** The Opelousas City Court reports that its judge gave talks at various forums and sponsored tours of the Court. Its judge also attended local meetings to inform the community of the court's structure, programs, etc.
- **Pineville City Court.** The Pineville City Court reports that its judge gave talks at various forums.
- **Plaquemine City Court.** The Plaquemine City Court reports that its judge visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, and appeared on radio shows.
- **Port Allen City Court.** The Port Allen City Court reports that its judge visited classrooms.
- **Rayne City Court.** The Rayne City Court reports that its judge spoke frequently to school classes and various non-profit organizations to advise them of the services and programs provided by the Court as well as its structure.
- **Ruston City Court.** The Ruston City Court reports that its judge sponsored tours of the Court, participated in shadow programs, and encouraged school classes or other groups, such as boy scouts, to witness court proceedings or participate in a lecture/question and answer period with the Court and its personnel. The Court also reports that it published a handbook, in conjunction with the Ruston City Marshal's office, providing instructions for using the Court in various areas of litigation. The Court supports the Criminal Justice Department of Grambling State University by allowing interns to work in various personnel positions that meet their graduation requirements.





- **Second City Court of New Orleans.** The Second City Court of New Orleans reports that its judges visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, and sponsored tours of the Court.
- **Second Parish Court of Jefferson.** The Second Parish Court of Jefferson reports that its judges visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, sponsored a teen court program, and posted numerous notices on bulletin boards outside of each courtroom. The judges also made presentations and speeches throughout the year to various groups and schools.
- **Shreveport City Court.** The Shreveport City Court reports that its judges gave talks at various forums and sponsored tours of the Court.
- **Slidell City Court.** The Slidell City Court reports that its judge visited classrooms, participated in Judicial Ride-Along programs, and sponsored tours of the Court.
- **Springhill City Court.** The Springhill City Court reports that its judge gave talks at various forums and sponsored a teen court program.
- **Sulphur City Court.** The Sulphur City Court reports that its judge gave talks at various forums, sponsored tours of the Court, built a website, was interviewed by the newspaper, and spoke at meetings.
- **Thibodaux City Court.** The Thibodaux City Court reports that its judge gave talks at various forums and sponsored tours of the Court. The Court also participated in the annual Mayor For A Day Program, comprised of students elected for public positions from Thibodaux High School and E.D. White Catholic High School.
- **Traffic Court of New Orleans.** The Traffic Court of New Orleans reports that it published a newsletter, and that its judges visited classrooms, gave talks at various forums, appeared on radio and TV shows, and sponsored tours of the Court.
- **Vidalia City Court.** The Vidalia City Court reports that its judge sponsored tours of the Court and participated in shadow programs.
- **Ville Platte City Court.** The Ville Platte City Court reports that its judge gave talks at various forums.
- **West Monroe City Court.** The West Monroe City Court reports that its judge visited classrooms, gave talks at various forum, and sponsored tours of the Court.
- **Winnsboro City Court.** The Winnsboro City Court reports that its judge sponsored a teen court program and participated in shadow programs.
- **Zachary City Court.** The Zachary City Court reports that its judge gave talks at various forums, sponsored a teen court program, and participated in shadow programs. The Court also sponsored DWI mock trials in 2002 in conjunction with the Zachary Police Department and the civics classes at Zachary High School. The purpose of the mock trials was to educate students on the dangers and consequences of driving under the influence. The Court plans to continue these trials now that Zachary has formed its independent school district.

### Future Plans

- **Baker City Court.** The Baker City Court reports that it will conduct a teen DWI mock trial program in conjunction with the Baker Rotary Club.
- **Marksville City Court.** The Marksville City Court reports that it will promote public awareness of available city court remedies through radio talk shows, etc. The Court also plans to have the judge and staff provide lectures, or talks, to local civic organizations and the Chamber of Commerce.



- **Morgan City Court.** The Morgan City Court reports that it will develop and distribute an information guide that educates the public on the Court's structure, function and programs.
- **New Iberia City Court.** The judge of the New Iberia City Court will make additional public appearances in an attempt to give the public a better perception of how the court system works.
- **Opelousas City Court.** The Opelousas City Court reports that its judge will attend more club meetings to explain detailed operations of the court system.
- **Rayne City Court.** The Rayne City Court reports that its judge and staff will continue to find effective, inexpensive ways to inform the community of the Court's structure, function and programs by meeting with groups and discussing the Court with them. Additionally, the Court intends to prepare and distribute brochures to inform the public of the functions of the Court.
- **Winnsboro City Court.** The Winnsboro City Court reports that it will continue to be actively involved in community programs such as the, "Stay on Court – Not in Court," a Tennis Clinic for youth in the summer months, and will continue to administer the Teen Court Program.

#### Objective 4.5

To recognize new conditions or emerging events and to adjust court operations as necessary.

#### Intent of the Objective

Effective courts are responsive to emergent public issues such as drug abuse, child and spousal abuse, AIDS, drunken driving, child support enforcement, crime and public safety, consumer rights, racial, ethnic, and gender bias, and more efficiency in government. This objective requires courts to recognize and respond appropriately to such emergent public issues. A court that moves deliberately in response to emergent issues is a

stabilizing force in society and acts consistently with its role in maintaining the rule of law and building public trust and confidence.

#### Responses to the Objective

##### General Responses

Several city and parish courts reported that they had developed their technology resources in FY 2002-2003.

- **Bought Additional Personal Computers.** Thirty-one courts said they bought additional personal computers. (Ascension, Baton Rouge, Bastrop, Bogalusa, Bossier City, Crowley, Denham Springs, Eunice, Hammond, Houma, Jefferson-2nd Parish, Jennings, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Minden, Natchitoches, New Iberia, N.O.-1st City, N.O.-2nd City, N.O.-Municipal, N.O.-Traffic, Pineville, Plaquemine, Port Allen, Rayne, Ruston, Slidell, Sulphur, Vidalia, Ville Platte and Winnsboro).
- **Installed Video-Conferencing/Arraignment System.** Three courts said they installed video-conferencing/arraignment systems. (Ascension, Bossier City and New Zachary).
- **Installed Electronic Monitoring.** Six courts said they installed electronic monitoring. (Ascension, Breaux Bridge, Eunice, Jefferson-1st Parish, Leesville and New Iberia).
- **Installed and Used PowerPoint Software.** Six courts said they installed and used PowerPoint software. (Baton Rouge, Bossier City, Hammond, Kaplan, Lake Charles and Oakdale).
- **Installed New Audio-Visual Equipment.** Two courts said they installed new audio-visual equipment. (Baton Rouge and Marksville).
- **Installed Legal Research Software.** Twenty-two courts said they installed legal research software. (Abbeville, Ascension, Baker, Breaux Bridge, Crowley, Denham Springs,



Eunice, Jefferson-1st Parish, Jennings, Kaplan, Lake Charles, Monroe, New Iberia, N.O.-1st City, Pineville, Ruston, Slidell, Springhill, Sulphur, Vidalia, West Monroe and Winnsboro).

- **Installed a LAN System.** Five courts said they installed a LAN system. (Jefferson-1st Parish, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Ruston and West Monroe).
- **Installed Real-time Reporting.** Two courts said they installed real-time reporting. (Crowley and N.O.-1st City).
- **Installed E-mail/Internet.** Twenty-three courts said they installed e-mail and Internet. (Ascension, Bossier City, Breaux Bridge, Crowley, Denham Springs, Hammond, Houma, Jeanerette, Jennings, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Monroe, Natchitoches, N.O.-1st City, N.O.-Traffic, Oakdale, Ruston, Slidell, Springhill, Thibodaux, Ville Platte, West Monroe and Zachary).
- **Upgraded Word Processing Software.** Nineteen courts said they upgraded word processing software. (Ascension, Baton Rouge, Bossier City, Breaux Bridge, Hammond, Jefferson-1st Parish, Jennings, Kaplan, Lake Charles, Marksville, N.O.-1st City, N.O.-2nd City, N.O.-Traffic, Oakdale, Shreveport, Sulphur, Thibodaux, West Monroe and Zachary).
- **Installed Digital Audio/Video.** Two courts said they installed digital audio/video. (Baton Rouge and Springhill).
- **Installed Automated Security System.** Eight courts said they installed an automated security system. (Bossier City, Denham Springs, Jefferson-1st Parish, New Iberia, Plaquemine, Ruston, Thibodaux and Zachary).

## Responses of Individual Courts

- **Abbeville City Court.** The Abbeville City Court reports that it installed legal research software.

- **Ascension Parish Court.** The Ascension Parish Court reports that it bought additional personal computers, upgraded its word processing software and acquired e-mail and Internet capabilities. It also installed electronic monitoring, a video-conferencing/arraignment system and legal research software.
- **Baker City Court.** The Baker City Court reports that it installed legal research software.
- **Bastrop City Court.** The Bastrop City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers.
- **Baton Rouge City Court.** The Baton Rouge City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers, installed and used PowerPoint software, upgraded its word processing software, and installed new audio-visual equipment including digital audio-visual equipment. With the assistance of local government, the Court developed the capability for on-line payments of traffic and parking tickets. This procedure will enable the public to make payments on fines and fees without appearing in court. Through partnership with the local Police Department, automated, hand-held ticket writers were purchased for issuing parking tickets. This technology will reduce entry errors and data entry time and will free court personnel for other productive functions. Finally, through partnership with the Police Department, the data from the offense/arrest report generated by police officers will be imported electronically from its source to the database at City Court. This will eliminate the need for duplicate data entry and reduce errors. It will also enable the local prosecuting authority to obtain the necessary information to review cases more promptly, so that initiation of prosecution will not be delayed. The Court has also developed a housing docket to provide for prosecution of blight conditions in the community. The local government has focused attention on this concern as community leaders and neighborhood groups have become more attentive to the negative consequences of these conditions. The Court has also obtained



appropriate video equipment, including PowerPoint capabilities, are for use in the courtroom by all parties involved in housing matters. The focus of this effort will be on rehabilitation and providing resource information to the landlord or owner to improve conditions.

- **Bogalusa City Court.** The Bogalusa City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers.
- **Bossier City Court.** The Bossier City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers, upgraded word processing software, and installed and used PowerPoint software. It also installed a video-conferencing/arraignment system, e-mail and Internet capabilities, and an automated security system. The Court regularly upgrades its computers and software and has employed a full-time technical support assistant.
- **Breaux Bridge City Court.** The Breaux Bridge City Court reports that it installed electronic monitoring, legal research software, e-mail and Internet capabilities, and upgraded its word processing software.
- **Bunkie City Court.** The Bunkie City Court reports that it received a grant and installed new recording and transcribing equipment.
- **Crowley City Court.** The Crowley City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers and installed legal research software, real-time reporting, and e-mail and Internet capabilities. The Court's judge has served as a mentor to several city courts and continually pursues CLE courses.
- **Denham Springs City Court.** The Denham Springs City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers and installed legal research software, e-mail and Internet capabilities, and an automated security system.
- **Eunice City Court.** The Eunice City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers and installed electronic monitoring and legal research software.

- **First City Court of New Orleans.** The First City Court of New Orleans reports that it bought additional personal computers and installed legal research software, real-time reporting and e-mail and Internet capabilities. The Court also and upgraded its word processing software and developed other court technologies.
- **First Parish Court of Jefferson.** The First Parish Court of Jefferson reports that it installed electronic monitoring, legal research software, an automated security system, and a LAN system. It also upgraded its word processing software and is currently working on a master plan for the development of technology. The Court reports that the First and Second Parish Courts have always been ahead of the technology curve in regards to management information systems. The Court continually evaluates and assesses its present and future needs.
- **Hammond City Court.** The Hammond City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers, installed and used PowerPoint software, installed e-mail and Internet capabilities, and upgraded its word processing software. It also provided free training for members of the Bar and court personnel regarding the Children's Code and representation in juvenile matters.
- **Houma City Court.** The Houma City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers and installed e-mail and Internet capabilities. The Court is serving on the Planning Team with the Louisiana Supreme Court for the development of an Integrated Juvenile Justice Information System (IJJIS).
- **Jeanerette City Court.** The Jeanerette City Court reports that it installed e-mail and Internet capabilities.
- **Jennings City Court.** The Jennings City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers, installed legal research software and e-mail and Internet capabilities, and upgraded its word processing software.



- **Kaplan City Court.** The Kaplan City Court reports that it upgraded its legal research and word processing software. The Court lacks the necessary resources to install a LAN system, but it updated its current computer hardware and software, and automated its security.
- **Lafayette City Court.** The Lafayette City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers, installed and used PowerPoint software, installed a LAN System, installed e-mail and Internet capabilities, and maintained its current legal research software.
- **Lake Charles City Court.** The Lake Charles City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers, upgraded its word processing software and installed and used PowerPoint software. It also installed legal research software, a LAN system, and e-mail and Internet capabilities.
- **Leesville City Court.** The Leesville City Court reports that it installed electronic monitoring.
- **Marksville City Court.** The Marksville City Court reports that it installed new audio-visual equipment, upgraded its word processing software, and installed new transcription and recording devices in the courtroom.
- **Minden City Court.** The Minden City Court reports that it bought one additional personal computer.
- **Monroe City Court.** The Monroe City Court reports that it installed legal research software and e-mail and Internet capabilities.
- **Morgan City Court.** The Morgan City Court reports that bids are being considered for a new record storage system and new audio equipment.
- **Municipal City Court of New Orleans.** The Municipal City Court of New Orleans reports that it bought additional personal computers.
- **Natchitoches City Court.** The Natchitoches City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers and installed e-mail and Internet capabilities for its clerks.
- **New Iberia City Court.** The New Iberia City Court reports that it improved docketing and scheduling and the manual system of case processing. It also installed an automated case management information system and took steps to reduce cases under advisement. The Court continued to upgrade its computer systems in an attempt to manage and process cases in a timely fashion.
- **Oakdale City Court.** The Oakdale City Court reports that it installed and used PowerPoint software, installed e-mail and Internet capabilities, and upgraded its word processing software.
- **Opelousas City Court.** The Opelousas City Court reports that it upgraded computers, installed a high-speed Internet connection, and upgraded its software.
- **Pineville City Court.** The Pineville City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers and installed legal research software.
- **Plaquemine City Court.** The Plaquemine City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers and installed a video-conferencing/arraignment system and an automated security system.
- **Port Allen City Court.** The Port Allen City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers and installed updated traffic and criminal docketing software.
- **Rayne City Court.** The Rayne City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers, improved its research resources, and increased its training. Its judge and personnel also attended seminars to better use those resources.



- **Ruston City Court.** The Ruston City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers and installed legal research software, a LAN system, e-mail and Internet capabilities and an automated security system. Within the last two years, the Court has upgraded its computer equipment in all departments and written a new criminal justice program, which has facilitated the introduction of computers to the courtroom for accessing and updating information.
- **Second City Court of New Orleans.** The Second City Court of New Orleans reports that it bought additional personal computers and upgraded its word processing software.
- **Second Parish Court of Jefferson.** The Second Parish Court of Jefferson reports that it bought additional personal computers. Its computer program has been enhanced to allow the Court's DWI Department immediate access to minute entries made by the Court's minute clerks. In addition, regular meetings are scheduled between court administrative personnel, other courts and other branches of the system including the clerk of court's office, the district attorney's office, and parish officials.
- **Shreveport City Court.** The Shreveport City Court reports that it upgraded its word processing software.
- **Slidell City Court.** The Slidell City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers and installed legal research software and e-mail and Internet capabilities.
- **Springhill City Court.** The Springhill City Court reports that it installed legal research software and digital audio/video.
- **Sulphur City Court.** The Sulphur City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers, upgraded its word processing software and installed legal research software, e-mail and Internet capabilities and a website. The Court also conferences with other courts on software and recording systems.
- **Thibodaux City Court.** The Thibodaux City Court reports that it installed e-mail and Internet capabilities, upgraded its word processing software and installed an automated security system. The Court also reports that it updates its software annually.
- **Traffic Court of New Orleans.** The Traffic Court of New Orleans reports that it bought additional personal computers, upgraded its word processing software, and installed e-mail and Internet capabilities and an automated security system.
- **Vidalia City Court.** The Vidalia City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers and installed legal research software.
- **Ville Platte City Court.** The Ville Platte City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers and installed e-mail and Internet capabilities.
- **West Monroe City Court.** The West Monroe City Court reports that it upgraded its word processing software and installed legal research software, a LAN system and e-mail and Internet capabilities.
- **Winnsboro City Court.** The Winnsboro City Court reports that it bought additional personal computers and installed legal research software.
- **Zachary City Court.** The Zachary City Court reports that it installed a video-conferencing/arraignment system to obtain testimony without transporting prisoners. The Court also installed e-mail and Internet capabilities and an automated security system. It also purchased new computers, new judicial software and upgraded its word processing software.

## Future Plans

- **Baker City Court.** The Baker City Court



reports that it will update court software and computer equipment for better docket control and tracking.

- **Crowley City Court.** The Crowley City Court reports that it will continue to monitor other courts and attend the required seminars.
- **Lafayette City Court.** The Lafayette City Court reports that it is negotiating to install a video conferencing system to do remote arraignments with prisoners. It will update software and hardware in the courtroom to have touch screen monitors and will develop a plan to systematically and regularly review hardware and software needs, and implement a priority system to deal with those needs.
- **Marksville City Court.** The Marksville City Court reports that it will attempt to upgrade the computer and technical capabilities of the clerks of court.
- **Monroe City Court.** The Monroe City Court reports that it projects implementation of new computers and software to further maintain its goals. It has also projected the possibility of image scanning to cut down on court record storage problems.
- **Pineville City Court.** The Pineville City Court reports that it will obtain a more advanced telephone system to ensure a higher quality of service.
- **Sulphur City Court.** The Sulphur City Court reports that the new software to be implemented should make it easier to put more case information on its website. Also, the Court will propose networking with the city police, D.A. and the Court to create a paperless ticket system and to reduce duplication in computer inputs. In addition, the Court intends to purchase a new system that will allow the Court to stop using its outdated tape recorders and to record digitally on a computer instead.

## Objective 5.1

To ensure that the court and the justice it renders are accessible and are perceived by the public to be accessible.

### Responses of Individual Courts

- **First Parish Court of Jefferson.** The First Parish Court of Jefferson reports that it strives to have its employees available to assist the public in a professional manner, and the judges strive to respond to all requests.
- **Morgan City Court.** The Morgan City Court reports that an opinion survey instrument is made available to all court patrons.
- **Ruston City Court.** The Ruston City Court reports that it is ADA accessible. The Court also provides an amplification system.
- **Second Parish Court of Jefferson.** The Second Parish Court of Jefferson reports that it strives to have its employees available to assist the public in a professional manner, and the judges strive to respond to all requests.

### Future Plans

- None reported.

## Objective 5.2

To ensure that the court functions fairly, impartially, and expeditiously, and is perceived by the public to be so.

### Responses of Individual Courts

- **First Parish Court of Jefferson.** The First Parish Court of Jefferson reports that its judges have established basic policies and procedures that are available to the public.
- **Morgan City Court.** The Morgan City Court reports that to ensure punctual commencement of all court proceedings, the Court has adopted a policy of not scheduling any



appointments for the Court's judge a half-hour prior to any court proceeding.

- **Second Parish Court of Jefferson.** The Second Parish Court of Jefferson reports that the judges have established basic policies and procedures that are available to the public.

#### **Future Plans**

- **None reported.**

#### **Objective 5.3**

To ensure that the court is independent, cooperative with other components of government, and accountable, and is perceived by the public to be so.

#### **Responses of Individual Courts**

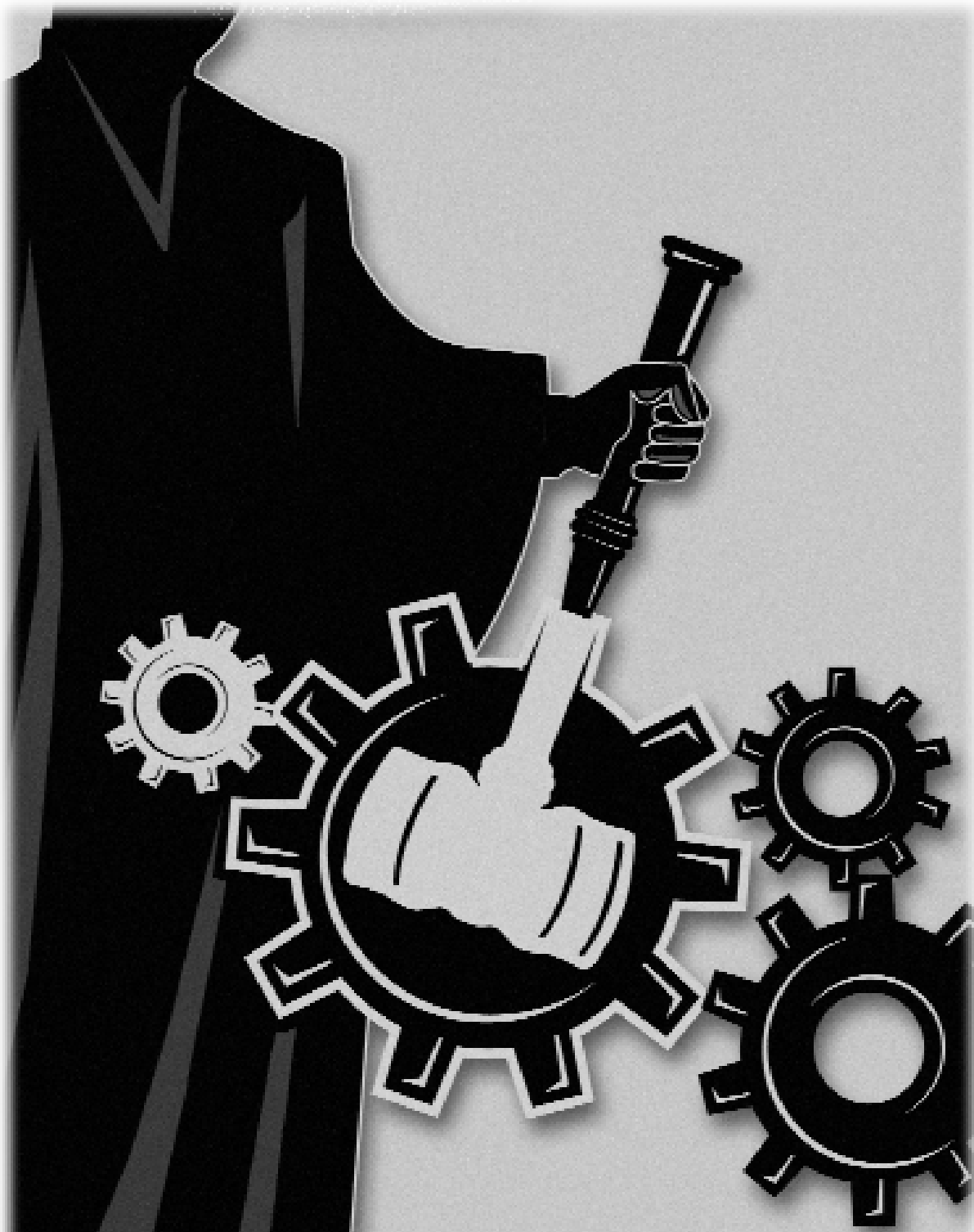
- **None Reported.**

#### **Future Plans**

- **None Reported.**







PERFORMANCE REPORTS:

**SUPREME COURT DATA  
GATHERING SYSTEMS**

# SUPREME COURT DATA GATHERING SYSTEMS

The Supreme Court has either developed or is in the process of developing the following twelve automated and manual systems for gathering data on itself, the courts of appeal, and the district courts:

- The Clerk of Court's Case Management Information System
- CMIS Criminal Disposition Data System
- The Louisiana Protective Order Registry (LPOR)
- The Drug Court Information System
- The Traffic Violation System
- The Court of Appeal Reporting System (CARS)
- The Trial Court Reporting System
- The Juvenile and Family Court Reporting System
- The Parish and City Court Reporting System
- The FINS Data Base System
- The Integrated Juvenile Justice Information System (IJJIS)

Each of these systems is briefly described below.

## LOUISIANA SUPREME COURT CASE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Louisiana Supreme Court Case Information Management System (CIMS) was developed in 1999 on a PC-Server platform using the Access data base as a front-end tool and Oracle as a back-end processing tool for storing, tracking, retrieving, and reporting Supreme Court information on Supreme Court filing, transactions, and actions, and Louisiana bar rolls. The system replaces an earlier system developed on a WANG mini-computer - a system developed in 1982 and one of the earliest Supreme Court case management systems in the nation.

The new system was designed:

- to handle the migration of data from the old WANG system to the new system;
- to have an open architecture for accommodating growth, enhancements, and new components;



- to exchange information with other courts, particularly the courts of appeal; and
- to be completely Y2K compliant.

The system can generate several standard reports including financial reports, specific case filing reports, and statistical information. The data for the performance indicators in the FY 2001-2002 judicial appropriations bill were generated by the system.

### **CMIS CRIMINAL DISPOSITION DATA SYSTEM**

The Court Management Information System (CMIS) criminal disposition data system, when completed, will be a complete database of all dispositions and sentences from the district courts. Currently, the CMIS staff is receiving criminal filing information, dispositions, and sentencing information from 61 parishes. The three district courts not transmitting criminal justice information to CMIS, for varying reasons, are located in Bossier, East Carroll, and Lafourche parishes.

The CMIS staff continues working with the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to develop an automated procedure for matching dispositions in the CMIS database to CCH criminal history records. Only those arrest charges where the disposition charge exactly matches the arrest charge (i.e. the prosecutor has not modified the charge at billing) will be initially attached to the State Police CCH rap sheet. The Integrated Criminal Justice Information Systems (ICJIS) Policy Board and associated Technical Committee continues studies on how to attach all remaining criminal history information to the CCH rap sheet.

### **THE LOUISIANA PROTECTIVE ORDER REGISTRY (LPOR)**

The Louisiana Protective Order Registry (LPOR) is a statewide repository for court orders issued to prevent harassing, threatening, or violent acts against a spouse, intimate partner, dating partner, or family member. The Registry was established by state legislation passed in 1997. La. R.S. 46:21 36.2 charged the Judicial Administrator's Office of the Louisiana Supreme Court with responsibility for the LPOR's development and maintenance, as well as for the creation and dissemination of standardized order forms to be used by all courts.

The LPOR was officially launched in April, 1999, when the first version of the standardized forms was released and training was provided at regional seminars held across the state to introduce the registry, explain how it works, and disseminate the forms. Since that date, training teams have reached more than 3,000 people with LPOR information and materials.

As of March 31, 2002, the LPOR contained 47,296 orders. Of these, 31,452 (66.5%) are civil orders, including temporary restraining orders, protection orders, preliminary injunctions, permanent injunctions, and court approved consent agreements. The remaining records, 15,844 (33.5%), are criminal stay away orders, including peace bonds, bail restrictions, sentencing orders, and probation conditions.

Law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and the courts are authorized to access information in the LPOR. Law enforcement officials can search the LPOR for active orders as part of a routine background or warrant check.



If an order is in the Registry, the search will yield a summary of its terms and conditions. The official conducting the search can also request a fax-back copy of the actual order. Instant access to protective order information can improve the response to domestic violence incidents and enhance safety for victims and their children, as well as for the responding officers.

In addition to law enforcement officials, judges, prosecutors, and probation personnel can obtain information from the LPOR for consideration in domestic violence and stalking cases. Also, state and federal law enforcement agencies can search the LPOR when conducting background checks on those who apply to purchase a firearm through a licensed dealer. Anyone who is the subject of a qualifying protective order is prohibited under federal law from possessing, purchasing, transporting or selling a firearm or ammunition during the period of the order.

The LPOR will be able to provide performance indicators on domestic violence in terms of the victims and perpetrators, as well as on court workload and processing.

## **THE DRUG COURT INFORMATION SYSTEM**

In July 2001, the responsibility for the development of the Drug Court Information Management System (DCIMS) was transferred to the Louisiana Supreme Court from the Office of Addictive Disorders. The first phase of the development of the database, which is a web-based application that utilizes Active Server Pages on the front end and an Access database on the back end, was completed in February 2002. Drug courts are currently piloting the application statewide and feedback from this pilot period will be used to further enhance the database.

Presently, the DCIMS is designed to assist drug courts with tracking their clients through the drug court process by maintaining demographic, program status, treatment-related and discharge data. In the next phase of development, further capabilities will be added to the application to achieve the goal of a comprehensive case management system. Reporting capabilities will also be enhanced so that drug courts can easily meet federal reporting requirements, as well as Louisiana Supreme Court requirements. These enhancements in data collection and reporting will assist the Louisiana Supreme Court in its goal of an annual report on the performance of drug courts in the state.

## **THE TRAFFIC VIOLATION SYSTEM**

The purpose of the Traffic Violation System is to update driver history records through electronic transmission of traffic filings and related disposition data. To achieve this goal, district courts, as well as city and mayors' courts, will transmit this data to CMIS. CMIS then runs tests on the data to check it for accuracy and completeness and then places this data on a server for retrieval by Office of Motor Vehicles (OMV). When completed, the system will quicken the process by which OMV, as well as judges and prosecutors around the state, receive traffic case data.

The project is steadily moving forward. Currently 30 courts, listed below, are transmitting traffic case data to CMIS. They are: Allen, Avoyelles, Bienville, Caldwell, DeSoto, Franklin, Grant, Jackson, Lafayette, Lincoln, Livingston, Madison, Morehouse, Natchitoches, Ouachita, Richland, St. James, St. John, Sabine, Union, Vermilion, Webster, West Carroll, Winn 1st and 2nd Parish Courts of Jefferson, Baker City Court, Baton Rouge City Court, Ponchatoula Mayor's Court and Slidell City Court. OMV is currently accepting data from



22 of the aforementioned courts. Further, more courts intend to participate in the project and are currently in various stages of updating their systems in order to capture and transmit traffic data. An additional benefit of the project is decreased paperwork on behalf of the clerks of court. In the past, courts have sent traffic information to OMV via physical mail by filling out the reverse side of traffic ticket with the disposition and sentence, or by electronic tape. As courts are approved by OMV for regular traffic transmission, they are able to stop mailing copies of tickets or forwarding electronic tapes.

Once completed, the system will be able to generate performance indicators on workloads, types of traffic violations, and recidivism.

### **THE COURT OF APPEALS REPORTING SYSTEM (CARS)**

CMIS continues to work with the appellate courts in the design of their new systems and the collection of common data elements for both the appellate courts and CMIS. An agreement has been reached with the appellate courts on the reporting of case types, dispositions, manners of disposition, common data elements and event triggers for the automation of CARS, all in alignment with reporting criteria for the National Center for State Courts (NCSC). The appellate courts may now implement these standards in their respective databases. Additionally, CMIS will be collecting the same information for reporting to NCSC. The CARS system is currently providing the performance indicators included in the FY 2000-2001 judicial appropriations bill.

### **THE TRIAL COURT REPORTING SYSTEM**

The Trial Court Reporting System is essentially a manual system through which the Supreme Court receives at the end of each calendar year from the clerks of court data on juvenile, civil, and criminal case filings, and the number of civil and criminal jury trials. In all but thirteen of the parishes, traffic filings are separated from criminal filings. In somewhat less than half of the parishes, criminal filings are able to be broken down into felonies and misdemeanors. Jury trial data is reported monthly by each judge to the Supreme Court on manual formats that request information on the number of civil and criminal jury trials. The data derived from the manual forms submitted by the clerks of court and the judges are later computerized by the Supreme Court using Excel Spreadsheet software. The performance indicators potentially available from the system in its current form would consist of the number of juvenile, civil and criminal filings and the number of civil and criminal jury trials for each judicial district, and all district courts, and the percentage of filings and jury trials of each district compared to the sum of all districts.

### **THE JUVENILE AND FAMILY COURT REPORTING SYSTEM**

The Juvenile and Family Court Reporting System is a manual system through which the Supreme Court receives from the four juvenile courts within the state data on juvenile delinquency cases, juvenile traffic cases, adoption cases, child support cases, and other cases, and from the one family court in the state data on family court filings by type of case. The juvenile court data includes information on formal and informal case processes and dispositions and other data. The data derived from the manual forms submitted by each court is computerized on Excel spreadsheets by the court staff and maintained by year. The performance indicators available from the juvenile component of the system would consist generally of the number and percentage of cases or children involved in the system and affected by various parts of the courts' case processing.



The performance indicators potentially available from the family court component of the system would consist of the number and percentage of filings by type of case.

### **THE PARISH AND CITY COURT REPORTING SYSTEM**

The Parish and City Court Reporting System is a manual system through which the Supreme Court receives from each parish and city court data on the number of civil, criminal, traffic, and juvenile cases filed and terminated in the previous calendar year. The data derived from the manual forms submitted by each court is computerized on Excel spreadsheets by the Court staff and maintained by year. The performance indicators potentially available from the system in its current form would consist of the number and percentage of filings by case type.

### **THE FINS DATA BASE SYSTEM (GUIDANCE)**

The FINS data base system, called Guidance, is a software system for recording, calculating, tracking, and reporting informal case information pertaining to the Families in Need of Services (FINS) process. Guidance has been incorporated into the Integrated Juvenile Justice Information System using SQL And ACCESS database formats and a combination of Microsoft Visual Basic and other PC-oriented programming languages. The software is designed to run on either a stand-alone computer or within a Novell or Windows NT network using one of many operating platforms including Windows95, Windows98, or Windows NT. The software has numerous levels of functionality including: data capture and tracking; event scheduling; correspondence, notice, and report generation; service monitoring; case linking and coordination; and many other features. The system has been updated and enhanced, and will be fully operational soon. Once it is fully operational, each FINS office shall be required to submit to the Supreme Court periodic reports that will be automatically generated by the data base system. Contained in these reports will be data for the development of very comprehensive performance indicators that should be available in FY 2002-2003.

### **THE INTEGRATED JUVENILE JUSTICE INFORMATION SYSTEM (IJJIS)**

The Integrated Juvenile Justice Information System (IJJIS) is being developed to accomplish three levels of integration:

- (1) the integration of all functions within the juvenile court, i.e. intake and assessment, docketing, calendaring, case management, notice and document generation, appeals tracking, warrant tracking, automated minute entry, and financial record keeping;
- (2) the integration of all case types (child abuse and neglect, delinquency, families in need of services, adoption, child support, etc.) by the use of common family identifiers; and
- (3) the integration of information from all agencies involved in juvenile court proceedings (the protective services agency, law enforcement agencies, the district attorney, the indigent defender, the probation and parole agencies, treatment facilities, corrections agencies, the public school system, and other agencies).



The system will be built on a PC-server platform using a windows GUI and a PC-oriented database design. Once completed, the system will be in the public domain and can be adapted, enhanced, and changed as needed.

Currently, the IJJIS consists of the following components: a docketing, calendaring, scheduling subsystem, and subsystems for tracking Child-in-Need-of-Care (CINC) cases, Termination of Parental Rights (TPR or Certification for Adoption) cases, FINS Guidance cases (see above), and Truancy cases. Once completed, the system will also track cases involving delinquency, traffic, formal FINS, mental health, and other case types and could potentially provide, depending on district and city court usage, comprehensive performance indicators on workload, the effectiveness of various type of interventions, the availability of services, and many other factors.





PERFORMANCE REPORTS:

# DATA STANDARDS



# DATA STANDARDS

The data standards upon which the completed systems have been built and the standards guiding the development of future systems are indicated in the chart below:

<b>System</b>	<b>Basis of Standards</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clerk of Court Case Management Information System</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• State</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CMIS Criminal Disposition Data System</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National Center of Crime Information (NCIC); State</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Louisiana Protective Order Registry</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NCIC; State</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Drug Court Information System</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drug Court Program Office</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Traffic Violation System</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• State</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Court of Appeal Reporting System (CARS)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National Center for State Courts (NCSC)</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Trial Court Reporting System</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NCSC</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Juvenile and Family Court Reporting System</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NCSC; State</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Parish and City Court Reporting System</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NCSC</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The FINS Data Base System (Guidance)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• State</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Integrated Juvenile Justice Information System (IJJIS)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Louisiana Children's Code</li></ul>



## BARRIERS TO DATA GATHERING AND DEVELOPMENT

Many of the problems impairing the development of information systems capable of producing meaningful indicators on judicial performance are deeply rooted in the chaotic way in which the judicial system is structured, governed, and financed.

The present set of fragmented arrangements involves more than 747 elected judges and justices of the peace spread over five layers of courts -- Supreme Court, courts of appeal, district courts, parish and city courts, and justices of the peace. It also involves 41 elected district attorneys, 69 elected clerks of court, 65 elected sheriffs, 64 coroners, approximately 390 elected constables serving justices of the peace, 50 elected city court marshals or constables, and 250 mayors or their designees managing mayors' courts -- all of whom exercise individual, independent authority and are funded through different financing mechanisms.

The current set of financial arrangements is equally bewildering and problematic. As part of these arrangements, local governments are required to carry the heavy burden of funding a large part of the operations of the courts, the district attorneys, and the coroners -- all of which are state constitutional functions. Citizens are also required to pay rather high fees, fines, court costs and assessments to also help pay for the costs of judicial branch functions. These arrangements create a condition of "rich" offices and "poor" offices, and force agencies that should work together to compete with one another for limited resources. Furthermore, the present funding arrangements prevent uniformity and consistency in judicial services, and threaten judicial impartiality by making judicial functions too dependent on local governments and user-generated income. In addition, the current financing arrangements make it impossible for citizens and the legislature to understand the total amount of financing being provided to each agency, thus making public accountability nearly impossible.

The fragmentation of the structure of the judicial branch and the fragmentation of its funding seriously affect the Supreme Court's ability to gather data, to achieve effective coordination and collaboration within the system, and to improve judicial performance and the administration of justice.

As a result of the fragmented structure and financing of the judicial branch, the judicial system lacks many types of data that would help the Supreme Court and the lower courts to manage and expedite cases and improve the administration of justice. This is particularly true in the district courts. In most judicial districts, the reason for the lack of data is the general lack of appropriate automated case management systems for capturing and reporting the information. To report data manually for hundreds and thousands of cases per month is time consuming and costly. Another factor is the time and cost of reprogramming. Even where information systems do exist, they may not be programmed to provide the type of information being requested. Because of the constitutional and other factors affecting the structure and financing of the judicial branch, many judicial districts do not have, under the present system, the resources or the ability to generate the types of data needed to allocate resources properly, reduce delays, and, in general, manage cases more effectively. Some examples of the types of data that are currently not available within judicial district courts are provided in Exhibit 1 of this part of the Supreme Court's Strategic Plan.



The ability of family, juvenile, city and parish courts to generate needed data is also limited. Only a few of these types of courts have sophisticated management information systems capable of generating needed data. The great majority of these courts are very limited in the types of data they can produce. Most are able to generate filing data on certain types of cases in terms of number filed and number terminated but the case typing is very limited, and case management information and specific disposition data are generally unavailable in an automated form.

The capacity to generate automated case management and disposition information is virtually non-existent within the jurisdictions of justices of the peace and the mayors courts, primarily because of the lack of financial, staffing, and technological resources in these jurisdictions.

