



2015-2016 STRATEGIC PROJECTS

Companion Document

20th Judicial Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts

Revised: January 2016



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2015 Strategic Projects

January 2015

Overview

The 20th Judicial Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts conducted an extensive review and revision of their Strategic Plan in 2014. This companion document (to the 2015-2017 Strategic Plan) presents the Courts' annual priority projects for the five strategic focus areas, which are:

1. Resources/Infrastructure
2. Access, Services, and Programs
3. Timely Resolution/Efficient Operations
4. Community Relations and Collaboration with Partners
5. Employee Development and Innovative Work Culture

Also included are the Courts' mission, vision, and core values and the long-range goals and objectives for each of the strategic focus areas.

The status of the priority projects listed below will be reviewed and updated regularly. Highlighted priority rankings by the 2014 Strategic Planning Task Force are included within each strategic focus area. In addition, each year the Courts will review and update the Strategic Plan as needed. Also, the Courts will annually review progress and accomplishments related to the priority projects listed below. Based on project status and Court needs, the Strategic Planning Oversight Team (SPOT) will reevaluate and establish new priorities.

Mission, Vision, and Core Values



Strategic Focus Areas and Annual Priority Projects

Strategic Focus Area #1: Resources and Infrastructure

Goals and Objectives

Strategic Focus Area #1: Resources and Infrastructure

Goal 1: The Courts will have sufficient, predictable, and stable funding and other requisite resources including human resources to provide justice and quality services.

- Objectives:
1. Advocate for funding, staffing, and other resource needs of the Courts.
 2. Educate and build support for the Courts' programs and resource needs among justice system partners and the public.
 3. Collaborate with state and local leaders to ensure funding and other resource needs of the Courts are met.
 4. Pursue additional resources/grants to supplement the Courts' funding.
 5. Increase collection of fines, fees, restitution, and other court costs.
 6. Align/re-align resources to meet changing needs and circumstances.
 7. Implement cost savings and cost reduction measures.

Goal 2: The Courts' infrastructure will support the business and priorities of the Courts.

- Objectives
1. Ensure the Courts have sufficient staff with the requisite skills to provide quality justice and achieve the priorities of the Courts.
 2. Ensure the Courts' governance structure best supports the needs and priorities of the Courts.
 3. Improve the Courts' technology to meet the current and future needs of court users, judges, and staff.
 4. Ensure reliable data is available to make operational and strategic decisions.
 5. Ensure the County court facilities meet the current and future needs of court users, judges, and staff.
 6. Improve safety and security at court locations and offices.

2015 Priority Projects – SFA #1

Strategic Focus Area #1: Resources and Infrastructure			
Priority Project	Lead Person(s)	Timeline (Start/End Dates)	Desired Outcome
1. Work with County Administration to conduct a facility assessment at the Fillmore Complex Court location. 23 points	Kevin Bowling	Feb 2015- Dec 2015	Written plan with recommendations for new Probate Court/Circuit Court-Family Division facility
2. Develop a court-wide collection team to increase collaboration and establish a common methodology across court divisions. 13 points	Becky Rowden	July 2015 - Dec 2015	Working with Dave Cook in IT, automated the garnishment/writ process. Matt assisted the district court with a collection process for the new position of collections in their department
3. Assess and expand the Courts' internship program. 5 points	Malorie Ruiter		Expanding to include short-term assignment requests.
4. Identify and research appropriate grant opportunities; identify eligibility criteria. 5 points		July 2015	Three team members attended training 10/2015. No requests

Strategic Focus Area #2: Access, Services, and Programs

Goals and Objectives

Strategic Focus Area #2: Access, Services, and Programs	
<u>Goal 1: The Courts will be accessible to all people.</u>	
<u>Objectives:</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Enhance language assistance for court users.2. Assist court users with their understanding of the Courts.3. Improve electronic access to the Courts and appropriate case information.4. Expand opportunities for court users to conduct court business from remote locations.5. Eliminate/reduce barriers to accessing the courts (e.g., transportation, language, cost, hours of operation, lack of legal representation, etc.)6. Improve physical access to County court buildings/facilities.
<u>Goal 2: Judicial officers and staff will provide the highest quality of customer service – timely, respectful, and free of bias – to all court users.</u>	
<u>Objectives</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Establish, communicate, and reinforce a culture of service excellence.2. Train and mentor the workforce in service excellence.3. Establish and strengthen cross-departmental communication, collaboration, and mechanisms for responding to customer needs and questions.
<u>Goal 3: The Courts’ programs and services will meet the current and emerging needs of court users and the community, and improve justice-related outcomes.</u>	
<u>Objectives:</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Improve existing court programs and services particularly those for jurors, families, juveniles, and litigants with mental illness and addictions.2. Research and expand the use of evidence-based, innovative, and other effective court programs.3. Measure the effectiveness of, and continuously improve, court programs, services, and outcomes.4. Expand partnerships and collaborate with justice system partners and other courts to improve services and outcomes.5. Assess court related community needs, using input from the community.

2015 Priority Projects – SFA #2

Strategic Focus Area #2: Access, Services, and Programs			
Priority Project	Lead Person(s)	Timeline (Start/End Dates)	Desired Outcome
1. Research and implement digital check-in technology (e.g., iPads, e-forms, etc.) 18 points	See Below*	In Progress	
2. Improve and maintain court related pages on the County website. 13 points		Pending	
3. Assess the feasibility of expanding court programs and services to multiple County/Court locations. 13 points	See Below*	In Progress	See Below*
4. Improve the juror experience through increased use of technology (e.g., online registration, check-in process, payment on day of service, etc.) 4 points		Pending	
5. Develop “Court 101” resources to help the public navigate the court system. 3 points		Pending	

*

Project	Lead Person(s)
Patron Call-In	Johanna Wallace/Sheri Lankheet
Remote Access	Angie Revilla
Appointment Reminders	Tiffany Mast/Kathy Winston
Digital Check-In	Tiffany Mast/Jennell Challa
Digital Signage/General Info	Shannon Kapala
Remote Court Payments	Jennell Challa

Strategic Focus Area #3: Timely Resolution and Efficient Operations

Goals and Objectives

Strategic Focus Area #3: Timely Resolution and Efficient Operations	
<u>Goal 1: The Courts will resolve legal matters in a timely manner, exceeding adopted time standards.</u>	
<u>Objectives:</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Reduce unnecessary delay from filing to adjudication.2. Implement innovative and effective delay-reduction and case management principles and practices.3. Use available technologies to increase efficiency and effectiveness.4. Involve and collaborate with the legal community and state and local justice system partners to improve timeliness.5. Start court events (e.g., trials, hearings, and appointments) when they are scheduled to begin.6. Enhance and expand programs and services that assist in effectively and expeditiously resolving legal matters.7. Measure the effectiveness of operational changes and continuously improve the Courts' performance on timeliness.
<u>Goal 2: The Courts' processes will be understandable, efficient, and effective. (procedural fairness)</u>	
<u>Objectives</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Evaluate, streamline, and simplify court processes and procedures, i.e., make them more understandable and efficient.2. Use available technologies to improve efficiency and effectiveness.3. Increase use of appropriate digital records.4. Implement principles and practices that promote procedural fairness.5. Inform and train judicial officers and staff on new processes, procedures, and practices.
<u>Goal 3: All court users and court personnel will be treated with dignity and respect. (procedural fairness)</u>	
<u>Objectives:</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Treat everyone respectfully at all times (e.g., jurors, victims/witnesses, court users, family members, court personnel); increase cultural competence of judicial officers and staff.2. Provide timely services to court users; reduce wait times.3. Ensure court users understand court orders and what they need to do to comply.4. Provide court users with reasonable opportunity to express their needs and/or tell their story.5. Implement restorative practices.

2015 Priority Projects – SFA #3

Strategic Focus Area #3: Timely Resolution and Efficient Operations			
Priority Project	Lead Person(s)	Timeline (Start/End Dates)	Desired Outcome
1. Identify and develop non-judicial/administrative methods of resolving cases and plans for implementing those methods. 37 points	Jennell Challa	Oct. 2015	FOC assuming the PA responsibility in paternity establishment.
2. Conduct a study to measure the timeliness of hearings and the amount of time it takes to schedule a hearing date. 27 points	Thom Lattig	Nov. 2015 – Jan. 2016	Identify conflict and delay issues at Fillmore Complex – delinquency hearings.
3. Enhance the implementation of video conference technology. 9 points	N/A		
4. Develop a plan to digitize records and move toward a paperless court environment. 4 points	N/A		
5. Identify and share best practices on delay reduction. 1 point	N/A		
6. Conduct the annual Public Satisfaction Survey. Standing project	Jennell Challa and Thom Lattig	Oct. 19, 2015	

Strategic Focus Area #4: Community Relations and Collaboration with Partners

Goals and Objectives

Strategic Focus Area #4: Resources and Infrastructure
<p><u>Goal 1: The Courts will be more understandable to the public.</u></p> <p><u>Objectives:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Educate the public about the Courts using multiple methods and media.2. Strengthen connections with the community.3. Reach out to and gather input from community partners, employers, schools, and other community leaders.4. Strengthen the Courts' internal capacity to improve and influence public education and community relations.5. Strengthen press and media relations.6. Enhance volunteer opportunities at the Courts.
<p><u>Goal 2: The Courts will have positive relations with, and will gain the support of, justice system and community system partners.</u></p> <p><u>Objectives</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Inform and educate justice system stakeholders about the Courts (e.g., needs, services, performance).2. Collaborate with the other branches of government and justice system and community partners on projects of mutual interest and benefit.3. Use feedback and/or personal experiences from constituents/others to build support for the work of the Courts.4. Increase transparency and accountability.

2015 Priority Projects – SFA #4

Strategic Focus Area #4: Community Relations and Collaboration with Partners			
Priority Project	Lead Person(s)	Timeline (Start/End Dates)	Desired Outcome
1. Establish a court volunteer program. 14 points	Team 4 and Co-leaders	Completed w/ additional projects identified	Develop a docent curriculum/program for the Courthouse, host a court wide Volunteer Recognition event for the month of April 2016
2. Conduct a needs assessment for a Court Public Information Officer position. 13 points	Team 4 and Co-leaders	Completed	No further action
3. Conduct a court/employer summit to identify common issues and determine how to improve court/employer relations. 3 points	Team 4 and Co-leaders	Ongoing	Explore additional options and viability of this project, given the efforts of connecting the courts and employers through Solutions/Michigan Works!
4. Develop and implement a targeted social media strategy for the Court. 3 points	N/A	N/A	Dismiss this priority project due to the potential pitfalls and issues involved – Will be re-evaluated by Leadership Team
5. Develop an inventory of staff members with community connections (e.g., volunteer activities, Board participation, other employment, etc.) 1 point	Team 4 and Co-leaders	Completed	Review and update based on established schedule of January and July, annually

Strategic Focus Area #5: Employee Development and Innovative Work Culture

Goals and Objectives

Strategic Focus Area #5: Employee Development and Innovative Work Culture	
<u>Goal 1: The work culture and environment will be positive, innovative, and engaging.</u>	
<u>Objectives:</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Increase career development and promotional opportunities.2. Promote an environment that is innovative and embraces change.3. Engage staff in making organizational changes and improvements.4. Enrich the jobs of staff – provide meaningful and interesting work.5. Implement best practices to strengthen the work culture and environment.6. Recognize and reward innovation, implementing changes, and achievements of teams and staff.7. Enhance teamwork and communication throughout the Courts.8. Support and strengthen the supervisory, management, and leadership skills of supervisors and managers.9. Coach and mentor staff.10. Communicate expectations and hold all staff accountable for high performance.11. Increase professionalism and consistency within and across the Courts.
<u>Goal 2: The Courts' workforce will have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform well today and in the future.</u>	
<u>Objectives</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Increase education and training opportunities with focus on the skills needed in the future.2. Expand on-the-job (real time) learning and development opportunities.3. Fill the skills gap based on the needs of the Courts and competencies of current staff.

2015 Priority Projects – SFA #5

Strategic Focus Area #5: Employee Relations and Innovative Work Culture			
Priority Project	Lead Person(s)	Timeline (Start/End Dates)	Desired Outcome
1. Evaluate the Courts' Building Bench Strength program for effectiveness and identify recommendations for program improvement. 30 points	Heather Blodgett/Rick Taylor	4/16/2015-11/19/2015	Develop method for evaluating effectiveness of BBS program. After research, make recommendations as to effectiveness/improvements. Present findings/recommendations to SPOT Team. Circulate findings/recommendations to Court staff. Assist with implementation of recommendations.
2. Develop an employee orientation manual. 12 points	Heather Blodgett/Rick Taylor	8/27/2015 – 12/31/2016	Develop a comprehensive, court-wide orientation program for new and existing employees. Provide exposure to all facets of the Court system.
3. Plan and launch a management/supervisor training program. 2 points	TBD	TBD	TBD
4. Generate team building options for staff to implement on a divisional basis. 2 points	TBD	TBD	TBD
5. Conduct the Employee Satisfaction Survey. Standing project	Heather Blodgett/Rick Taylor	2/5/2015-6/18/2015	Complete survey. Make recommendations based on results. Circulate results/recommendations to Court staff. Implement recommendations, as appropriate.

Divisional Strategic Projects

Each of the strategic focus areas identified in Strategic Plan have court wide priority projects associated with them, which will be evaluated and implemented (if feasible) by one of the five related action teams. In addition to these court wide efforts, the Strategic Plan recognizes a variety of special projects which are better suited to be developed and implemented on a divisional level. For this reason there are certain court events and projects included below, for which the Circuit/Probate Leadership Team has assigned responsibility on a divisional basis. Some of the projects are recurring events, while others are intended to be time limited. As divisional needs change, these strategic projects may be modified and expanded. General project oversight will be provided by divisional administrators and regular updates will be shared with the Strategic Planning Oversight Committee.

Divisional Strategic Projects Trial Division			
Priority Project	Lead Person(s)	Timeline (Start/End Dates)	Desired Outcome
1. Annual Bench/Bar Meeting		May – November 2015	
2.			
3.			
4.			

Divisional Strategic Projects Friend of the Court Division			
Priority Project	Lead Person(s)	Timeline (Start/End Dates)	Desired Outcome
1. Annual Law Day/Law Week Activities (Legal Self Help Center)		January – May 2015	
2. Co-sponsor Katty Shack 5K Run/Walk in support of crime victims		January – April 2015	
3. Explore and recommend options for transitioning paternity arraignments to administrative hearings			
4. Evaluate and recommend options for remote work alternatives			
5. Annual Domestic Law Summit		January – June 2015	

Divisional Strategic Projects Juvenile Services Division			
Priority Project	Lead Person(s)	Timeline (Start/End Dates)	Desired Outcome
1. Annual PACK (Professionals Advocating and Caring for Kids) Meeting			
2. Annual Adoption Day Celebration		June – November 2016	
3. YLS (Youth Level of Screening) Risk/Needs Assessment Implementation and Evaluation			
4. Identification and Implementation of juvenile specific EBP (evidence based practices)			
5. Development of specialized training for juvenile attorneys			

Divisional Strategic Projects Probate Court			
Priority Project	Lead Person(s)	Timeline (Start/End Dates)	Desired Outcome
1. Digital scanning of all court file documents in effort to prepare for a complete paperless court environment			
2. Explore options for the expanded use of electronic case filing			
3. In conjunction with efforts to create court wide new employee orientation materials, develop a Probate specific orientation/training manual			
4.			