

Organizational and Administrative Review of the Fulton County, Georgia, Juvenile Court

Institute for Court Management
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Chief Judge Hickson, new chief judge for the Fulton County Juvenile Court, Fulton County, Georgia, requested an assessment of the organizational and administrative structure of the court. The goal of this assessment is to provide the court with observations and recommendations to increase efficiency and effectiveness in the court's administrative practices and its organizational structure. The study focused on the relationship of various court divisions and units within the organizational structure, aspects of the court culture that affect the organization, communication processes, decision-making, and policy development and implementation.

The project methodology included a review of literature related to the history of juvenile courts, standards developed for juvenile courts, and juvenile and general court organization. Background literature specific to the Fulton County Juvenile Court was requested. It included the annual report from 2000, organizational charts, narratives and brochures related to specific divisions, and three project reports for projects that had been conducted in the past three years. A site visit was conducted at the Fulton County Juvenile Court, September 16-20, 2001. During the site visit, nineteen internal and external stakeholders were interviewed. The consultant also had the opportunity to observe court proceedings. Information gathered from these tasks was synthesized and recommendations were developed.

Fulton County Juvenile Court has been located in eight different buildings and seventeen different locations within these buildings for the past two years. The Court will move to a permanent, new facility in November or December 2002. Chief Judge Hickson planned to review this report and coordinate some of the acceptable recommendations with that move. The recommendations, if all are accepted, would take at least one or more years to implement. The first step would be to develop a plan of action to make changes.

The primary recommendations of this report have to do with changes in the organizational structure. Other recommendations focus on supportive means to implement the changes into the court and its culture. The thrust of the organizational change would allow the chief judge to manage the court as the visionary, policy setting, and decision-making leader for the court. To accomplish this, the court should change the organizational structure so that there is one court administrator to whom all court divisions report. The report includes recommendations to change the reporting structure for various divisions including reorganization of the probation division and redefining the role of probation officers is also recommended.

The Fulton County Juvenile Court has an opportunity for change with a new chief judge and the move into the new Fulton County Juvenile Court Facility. With the organizational and administrative changes that Chief Judge Hickson will recommend to the court and the support from Judge Jones, the associate judges, the court staff and the county, this court has great potential in moving forward in a new direction to provide more effective and efficient juvenile court services to the Fulton County community.

This [research paper](#) is available in its entirety in portable document format. To access, you must first obtain and install the Adobe Acrobat Reader.



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