



## The Effective Criminal Case Management Project

### An Overview

The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) invites your court to join a national initiative to identify and document effective criminal caseflow management practices. In joining with other courts across the nation, your court will be able to:

- Look at your court's performance alongside that of other comparable courts;
- Help shape the future of criminal caseflow management; and
- Share ideas and experiences for reducing delay and controlling costs.

Criminal case processing is a major part of the work of the courts. Effective caseflow management practices have evolved in many jurisdictions, with creative collaboration among justice system partners. The purpose of this project is to document court performance (e.g., time to disposition, clearance rate, trial rate) and uncover the effective practices that drive high performance in criminal case management.

Participating courts will gain access to the tools and strategies for improving caseflow processing most pertinent to their criminal justice system environment. Specifically, participants will be able to:

- **Examine your court's criminal case processing practices in a comparative perspective.** For the first time ever, as many as 50 participating courts will be able to evaluate their case processing using consistent information and analysis. Learn how your court compares with others around the country.
- **Identify and examine the significant case events in the caseflow process of both felony and misdemeanor cases.** Effective management of criminal cases starts by identifying the key events in the process, the optimal timing of each event, what should happen at each event, and why (e.g., recommended time from arrest to the pre-trial release determination and what should be accomplished at this point).
- **Clarify the essential data elements underlying a caseflow management system.** Effective criminal caseflow management requires court managers to assemble an in-depth empirical understanding of how cases move through the court system. Contemplating the design and content of a case management plan requires attention to the data

foundation. Thus, a key step is identifying the necessary data elements to evaluate criminal caseflow practices as well as evaluating the quality of the information being compiled.

- **Identify the most effective criminal caseflow management performance measures to be used by your court.** The study will evaluate the role of key measures related to case processing, including time to disposition, time between major case processing events, trial date certainty, and the number of continuances. In addition, for each measure, participants will help to develop a benchmark or desired target level of performance against which current performance can be assessed.
- **Provide effective methods to present information on diagnosing and forecasting caseflow challenges.** Caseflow management performance indicators can produce a great deal of data, much of it new and possibly unfamiliar to judges and court managers. To avoid information overload, NCSC staff will work with each court to create tables and graphs that will assist a court executive team in deciding what data is most important and how the data can best be used to examine specific performance issues and questions.
- **Show a commitment to self-examination and self-improvement.** Effective court leaders realize the importance of court improvement and assessment efforts in today's funding climate. Additionally, showing a willingness to evaluate and improve the administration of justice positively impacts trust and confidence in the courts.

Participating courts must be capable of submitting case-level data on 12 months of felony and/or misdemeanor dispositions. The [ECCM web page](#) outlines the data being requested, which will be closely managed by the NCSC to ensure confidentiality and security.