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MISSION
To promote the Rule of Law and to improve the administration of justice in the state courts and courts around the world.
INTRODUCTION

The National Center for State Courts is the premier organization in the United States devoted to improving the administration of justice through leadership and service in the state courts. A dynamic strategic planning process is indispensable if the National Center is to continue to focus effectively its services and resources in this era of rapid change. Through its strategic planning process, the National Center seeks to align all of its human, financial, and capital resources in support of its mission, goals, and practice initiatives. By utilizing constituent surveys, trend analysis and Board of Director focus groups, the Center's strategic planning process ensures a:

- Shared sense of purpose
- Clear sense of direction
- Rational method for managing change
- Mechanism for consensus building
- Systematic approach to priority setting
- Method to evaluate programs
- Means of ensuring continuity

It has been said that, “Planning without action is futile; action without planning is fatal.” The NCSC Strategic Plan provides the framework that guides the organization's actions, behavior, and values as well as the individual performance of all staff. Through the Strategic Plan, all organizational activities, including development, marketing, facilities management, and communications, are designed to accomplish the National Center's mission, goals, and program initiatives.
GOALS

Leadership

The National Center will:

- Serve as a NATIONAL THINK TANK to conduct research, promote experimentation, establish performance standards and measures, identify best practices, and evaluate program performance,
- Provide a NATIONAL FORUM for discussion of issues affecting the administration of justice,
- Create a NATIONAL LEADERSHIP AGENDA for improving the administration of justice,
- Serve as a NATIONAL VOICE for the needs and interests of the state courts,
- Promote COLLABORATION AMONG NATIONAL COURT ASSOCIATIONS and related national organizations,
- Serve as an AGENT OF CHANGE to anticipate new developments and foster adaptation to new circumstances,
- Facilitate and support the PROVISION OF INDEPENDENT, ACCESSIBLE, RESPONSIVE FORUMS for the just resolution of disputes, and
- Strengthen the RULE OF LAW and administration of justice THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

Service

The National Center will:

- DEVELOP NEW KNOWLEDGE about judicial administration,
- Maintain and DISSEMINATE KNOWLEDGE and information about judicial administration,
- PROVIDE ASSISTANCE to help courts evaluate and solve problems, and address future needs,
- OFFER CONTINUING EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT programs for judges and court personnel, and
- FOSTER IMPROVED PERFORMANCE, accountability, public education, and communications to enhance public trust and confidence in courts.

Mary Campbell McQueen
President
National Center for State Courts
VALUES

A key objective of the National Center is to do the right thing and to do it right. To accomplish our mission through leadership and service requires that our actions be based upon a shared set of values.

**We Value Integrity**
We value and expect candor, honesty, and ethical behaviors by all those associated with the National Center. We are committed to upholding our position of trust by maintaining the highest standards of ethical behavior and the integrity of our services.

**We Value Commitment to the Courts**
We are dedicated to the goals of the judicial branch — helping courts to be accessible, expeditious, fair, independent, and accountable.

**We Value Knowledge and Expertise**
The principal way the National Center can assist the courts is by sharing knowledge and expertise in the field of judicial administration.

**We Value Professionalism**
We value the highest standards of competence and quality in work performed and the development of relationships and interactions based upon trust, civility and moral character.

**We Value Teamwork**
We believe that the whole can be greater that the sum of its parts and the collective intelligence and judgment of the organization can best be achieved through coordinated actions.

**We Value Performance and Effectiveness**
The National Center can add value to the work of the courts and can accomplish its mission only if all employees perform their jobs in a first-rate manner.

**We Value Innovation and Initiative**
Generating new ideas and research and serving as an agent of change are fundamental to the National Center’s existence, thus necessitating an environment that encourages action, experimentation, and progressive thinking.

**We Value Open, Honest, and Effective Communication**
The National Center strives for open and effective lines of communication. Honest interaction with both the courts and fellow employees creates an atmosphere of trust, promoting a higher quality of service.

**We Value Accountability**
We value sound management and the effective use of resources to the satisfaction of our constituents and funders. We will work to ensure that our conduct earns the support and trust of all segments of the court community that we serve and that we are personally accountable for all actions.

**We Value the Dignity and Worth of All People**
We value and encourage diversity in the workplace, and we treat all people with courtesy, respect, fairness, equality, and dignity.
Consistent with its goals, the National Center for State Courts has created eight Practice Areas to ensure that its services are focused on effective accomplishment of its goals and mission and thus the needs of its constituents. These Practice Areas reflect the top priority areas in the scope of state court administration. Within each Practice Area specific initiatives are set forth aimed at achieving one or more of the Center’s goals. While the work in several of the National Center’s Practice Areas contributes to satisfaction of more than one goal, in general the Practice Areas form the following relationships to the goals they are related to and are listed in the order of priority.

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Public Trust and Confidence

Compliance with the law is dependent to some degree upon public respect for the courts. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that public perceptions reflect actual court performance. Nevertheless, where performance is good and public communications are effective, trust and confidence are likely to be present. Where public perception is distorted and understanding unclear, good performance may need to be buttressed with educational programs and more effective public information.

It is important for courts to rely on objective data as well as public perceptions in assessing court performance.

This Practice Area represents the National Center’s efforts to enhance public trust and confidence in the courts. It includes court community collaboration, jury reform, public access to court records, public opinion surveys, public education, and the courts’ relationship with the media.

In 1998, the National Center published a second study that confirmed the existence of public discontent with the courts. This study found that 80 percent of the respondents agreed that cases are not resolved in a timely manner; only 32 percent of the respondents felt it is affordable to bring a case to court, and 40 percent felt court rulings are not understood; a majority of respondents felt corporations are favored over individuals, the wealthy are treated better than others, non-English-speaking people receive worse treatment than others, and juries are not representative of the community. Sixty-eight percent of African-Americans felt they were treated worse than others, and 45 percent of the other respondents agreed with them. A significant majority of respondents felt judicial decisions are influenced by politics, elected judges are influenced by having to raise campaign funds, and courts do not enforce their orders. Finally, 44 percent of the respondents felt courts were out of touch with their communities. More recent surveys done by individual states report similar findings.

The courts and the National Center must be concerned with these opinions and must devote significant attention to improving the public’s view of the courts.

NCSC will...
provide a national forum for discussion of issues affecting the administration of justice.
— LEADERSHIP GOAL
Program Initiatives

1. **Develop national communications strategy.** In support of the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ), the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA), the National Association for Court Management (NACM), and the Conference of Court Public Information Officers (CCPIO), the National Center will formulate a comprehensive strategy to enhance public trust and confidence in state courts.

2. **Implement public affairs education plan.** NCSC will provide long-term and comprehensive civic education to the public about courts through key components such as an enhanced Speakers Bureau, the poster series, and utilization of the state court public information officers network and will identify, collect, and disseminate public outreach materials.

3. **Produce and distribute additional Justice Case Files graphic novels.** Building upon the success of the first graphic novel, additional publications will continue this innovative medium to increase the public’s awareness and knowledge of their courts and will include lesson plans for teachers.

4. **Develop court website guidelines.** The Center will produce guidelines for both structure and content for model court Web sites. Excellent websites will be identified and recognized through an NCSC award.

5. **Establish a resource center on cameras in the courtroom.** NCSC will provide guidance on standards for the use of cameras in courts as well as encourage proper practices through development of a model court rule.

6. **Develop Jury Managers’ Toolbox.** The Center will create an online diagnostic tool for court administrators to evaluate their jury operations, to identify areas for potential improvement, and to estimate the fiscal impact of improvements in terms of increased efficiency as well as implementation costs.

7. **Create court staff ethics Web site.** Collection of information, guidelines, and advisory opinions will serve as a national resource for court personnel on matters involving ethical conduct.

8. **Address vanishing trials.** Work will continue with the American College of Trial Lawyers, the American Board of Trial Advocates, and similar organizations to identify potential remedies to preserve trial by jury as a viable option to dispose of cases.

9. **Advance the Civil Justice Initiative.** Empirical research in medical malpractice, class action, mass tort, electronic discovery, and other key areas of civil litigation will be the centerpiece of efforts to keep pace with the changing nature of civil litigation.
Court Technology

This Practice Area represents the National Center’s use of technology in order to improve access and increase efficiency and effectiveness of court operations. Emphasis is placed on the National Center’s role in development and promulgation of technology standards for the courts including, the Global Justice XML Data Model, which improves the sharing of information between courts and government agencies nationwide.

Hardly any aspect of court operation is unaffected by technology as it is the driving force of the future, thus the National Center continues work on the next generation of case management systems, and associated standards, electronic filing, electronic discovery, electronic document management, and the paper-on-demand courts, as well as integrated justice information systems and the difficult issues of public access to court records.

Technology can promote the highest quality of justice by reducing costs, delays, and inconvenience while improving accessibility. Improved administration and better-informed decision making are other ways technology can enhance the quality of justice. The National Center is uniquely positioned to provide leadership and expertise in the effort to ensure courts take advantage of technology in the most effective manner.

Program Initiatives

1. **Continue development of XML, data, e-filing, and communication standards.** Working with the Joint Technology Committee, standards development will continue in support of effective information sharing.

2. **Continue development of functional standards for case management systems.** In conjunction with the Joint Technology Committee of COSCA and NACM, the National Center will continue efforts to provide a common framework for information sharing for courts.

3. **Develop standards for electronic business processes and workflow.** Electronic filing, electronic records, and external data exchanges all move courts toward a paper-on-demand environment. The Center will develop standards for these and other business processes to facilitate workflow and efficiency.

4. **Provide courts more consumer report information on technology applications.** Through expansion of the technology portion of the Web site, the National Center will collect and disseminate up-to-date consumer and best practices information on new technologies.

NCSC will... serve as an agent of change to anticipate new developments and foster adaptation to new circumstances. — LEADERSHIP GOAL
5. **Improve data flows from courts to criminal history repositories.** The Center will assist the courts in complying with the requirements of the NICS Improvement Act and in providing guidance on facilitating interfaces with federal criminal history and information sharing programs.

6. **Investigate the feasibility of creating a project management certification.** Managing large scale automation projects requires a skilled project manager. The Center will investigate the feasibility of partnering with organizations that certify project managers in order to create a project manager certification program for court officials.

7. **Continue research on the best practices for integrated state justice information systems.** Working with federal agencies and other organizations, the National Center will provide technical assistance in the implementation of information systems and information-sharing strategies for courts.

8. **Develop Comprehensive Technology Utilization Protocol.** Both at the trial court level as well as at the state court system level, there exists the need for guidelines or checklists on what technology applications should be in use in courts. A set of user-friendly administrative products will be developed to help in oversight of technology RFPs, contracts, e-filing systems, and data sharing with other agencies.

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**Range of Current Activities**

**COURT TECHNOLOGY.** Improvement in the application of technology to court processes is vital to the ability of courts to effectively serve the public. The following activities illustrate the Center’s work in this area.

- Participate in defining and implementing national technology and data exchange standards
- Organize and staff court technology policy forums and provide technical support
- Identify court automation best practices and assist in implementation of those practices
- Provide consulting services on technology projects
- Conduct the country’s largest Court Technology Conference (CTC)
- Publish Court Technology Bulletin and maintain technology Web blog
- Maintain court technology vendor list
- Conduct CMP certification course on managing technology projects and resources
- Provide distance learning web-based program on jury technology

**NCSC will...**

provide assistance to help courts evaluate and solve problems, and address future needs.

— SERVICE GOAL
Judicial Independence and Accountability

To adjudicate without external interference and pressure is at the core of the rule of law and the jurisprudence of the United States. The importance of judicial independence is preserved not only by case decisions, but also by control over the administration of courts. For the last half-century, court leaders have sought to eliminate or at least limit political considerations in the selection, tenure, and salary of judges. They have striven for more control over the management and finances of the judicial branch and for more effective exercise of those responsibilities. They also have struggled against budgetary retaliation against judges whose decisions have offended the other branches. Implicit in all these objectives is the desire to preserve the judiciary as a coequal branch of government.

Early judicial leaders and pioneers of court management enjoyed some success in institutionalizing leadership structures within the state courts and in creating national organizations of judges and court managers to speak with more authority for state courts and to provide mutual support. Yet, much remains to be done, not only on the court reform agenda that centers on improving organizational coherence and modernizing the state judiciary, but also on the new and emerging agenda that focuses on the work of courts as public servants and stresses the importance of building public confidence.

Program Initiatives

1. **Continue building a constituency for the state courts.** Partnering with the leaders of the state courts, state bars, the corporate community and other good government groups, the National Center and its two leadership committees, the General Counsel Committee and the Lawyers Committee, will work to form Roundtable groups in support of state and local courts on challenges facing the judicial system.

2. **Develop a judicial accountability template.** This resource would describe the ways that judges are accountable, such as ethical standards, disciplinary actions and appellate review and outline the various best practices in state implementation of these mechanisms.

3. **Expand the Gavel to Gavel service as a means of monitoring attacks on judicial independence.** This service helps identify trends in legislative activity and gives a national overview of actions impacting the courts. The Center will seek to identify programmatic and fiscal impact projections in the affected states as well as contact information.

4. **Conduct Presiding Judges Forum.** This forum provides a vehicle for education, communication, and networking among chief administrative judges of the nation’s trial courts as well as the development of best practices and guidelines for use by presiding judges.
Establish periodic meetings and develop relationships with national associations having an interest in state courts.

Development of relationships with the leadership of the National Governor’s Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council of State Governments, the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities and other associations interested in the work of courts will improve communication and understanding on issues affecting all involved.

Serve as resource on judicial independence and judicial selection issues.

The Center will provide state judiciaries with an array of strategies and associated resources through which they can effectively respond to attacks on judicial independence and efforts to politicize judicial selection.

Conduct Fourth National Symposium on Judicial Administration.

Each decade since 1980, a national symposium has been conducted to review the state of and future of court administration in the state courts.

Monitor state initiatives for evaluating judges.

The Center will provide resource information on judicial evaluation programs and will seek to define the essential components of such evaluations.

Conduct an executive session in conjunction with Harvard University on the Role of State Courts as Instruments of Democratic Governance.

Over a three-year period, this project will bring experts from all groups involved with the courts to work with academic scholars at Harvard to identify how the courts can best respond to the societal trends of the future.
Access and Fairness

The core values of American jurisprudence are procedural due process, equal protection under the law, and the openness and availability of the justice system to all.

Many courts have engaged in self-assessment and have addressed public concerns about access, including openness of proceedings, effectiveness of citizen participation, respect and courtesy shown to citizens, financial barriers to access, and access for physically, mentally, and linguistically challenged persons.

State courts have worked very hard to understand the issues of access and fairness and their impact on the public. Yet, even with this examination of current practices and identification of problem areas, issues still remain for courts in terms of implementing solutions, such as finding the necessary funding to address known concerns and financing the development of additional training materials in the areas of access and fairness.

The National Center will continue to play an important role in working to identify solutions that can be used to address the access and fairness concerns identified in each state and by striving to provide a national resource for information on access and procedural fairness in the state courts.

Program Initiatives

1. **Create a Children and Families Institute.** Resources will be pooled and coordinated to create a more identifiable entity within the Center for delivering education, policy, and technical assistance services to courts, families, and children as well as compromised individuals such as those with mental health issues or drug and alcohol addiction.

2. **Conduct phase II of the national campaign to ensure racial and ethnic fairness in state courts.** This effort will focus on providing technical assistance and developing national resources to ensure fair and unbiased behavior by judges and court staff.

3. **Create Clearinghouse for interpreter technology best practices.** The Center will develop website content on technical and legal best practices for the use of audio and video-conferencing to provide remote interpreter services.

4. **Serve as host for the National Self-Represented Litigants Network.** Through this network basic research is conducted on effective best practices for assisting self-represented litigants, and support is provided for the SelfHelp.org Web site devoted to information sharing on this issue.
5. **Conduct National Sentencing Reform Project.** This project supports state efforts to adopt sentencing and corrections policies and programs based on evidence-based practices shown to be effective in reducing recidivism.

6. **Provide toolkit for dealing with conservators and guardians.** The Center will enhance resources to monitor conservators and guardians by providing training guides, manuals, and evaluation criteria.

7. **Provide technical assistance on implementation of applications and data exchange for dependency performance measures.** This project will develop and pilot national technical standards for data collection and case management system functions that support national performance standards for child welfare cases.

8. **Address the impact of immigration on the state courts.** Immigration issues are continuously evolving and courts are facing new issues without information or training. The Center will provide on-site technical assistance, serve as a clearinghouse for information, and develop judicial and staff education programs on these new issues.

9. **Develop evaluation tool to detect discrimination.** Working with COSCA, the Center will develop an evaluation instrument which can be used by courts as a checklist to detect areas of bias or discrimination.

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**Range of Current Activities continued**

- Maintain a directory of court-based self-help programs
- Publish newsletter to follow up on the work of the National Leadership Summit on Protection of Children
- Lead efforts to secure a federal funding stream for state courts for court interpretation
- Participate in National Guardianship Network to coordinate efforts to increase awareness of guardianship issues

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**NCSC will...**

*offer continuing education and professional development programs for judges and court personnel.*

— SERVICE GOAL
High-Performance Courts

This Practice Area promotes effective management of the courts in a systemic way. The basic premise is that the whole of court best practices is greater than the sum of the parts, especially when they are implemented in the most effective way. High performance courts take into account several perspectives of their performance: the customer view, the internal court view, an innovation or local work culture view, and finally a financial and social value view. The court prioritizes these views in the order listed, because it understands that customers, including the public, are the ultimate arbiters of institutional value.

A high performance court has a number of characteristics. First, it has a judicial and administrative culture that aligns with the court’s business objectives. Second, it implements specific business process best practices that align with the court’s culture and business objectives. Third, it has the necessary judicial and administrative staff, as measured by rigorous workload and staffing studies based on best practice business processes. Fourth, its budgets and available resources are built systematically on the workload and staffing studies and justified by any objective shortfalls in performance. Fifth, a small but significant set of performance measures help the court determine if it is meeting its business objectives in all significant areas. Finally, its technology supports the business best practices, providing the necessary workload, staffing, budget and performance data using open data standards.

Program Initiatives

1. **Develop framework for integrating court performance measures.** Without a conceptual framework for assessing performance measures, it is difficult to decide which set of measures should be preferred. Creation of a framework will allow program specific measures to be integrated into overall measures and the necessary resource allocations to be made.

2. **Evaluate CourTools.** Using the Performance Framework, evaluate all of the CourTools measures, determine if revisions are required, and produce a new specification of performance measures as required.

3. **Develop methods, templates, and guidelines for use of performance measurement data.** Since the introduction of CourTools in 2005, more and more states are generating results from the performance measures. Court leaders have expressed a need to have guidance on how to use this data to better manage the courts.

4. **Complete data standards for two more CourTools measures.** The four existing data standards for CourTools measures will be supplemented by data standards for two additional measures as prioritized by the COSCA Statistics Committee.
5. **Develop model standards for performance management reports.**
With the institution of performance measures comes the availability of significant information which can be used to manage the courts. The Center will develop standards for the types and layouts of the management reports which will best portray this information.

6. **Review and revise time standards.** The Center will work with the National Conference of State Trial Judges and Judicial Division of the ABA to review and revise the ABA Time Standards and the COSCA Delay Reduction Time Standards.

7. **Review and revise court organization standards.** After much attention in the 1970s and thereafter, little review of court organization standards has been done in recent years. The accumulation of practical experiences and significant research suggests the need for an evaluation and revision of these standards.

8. **Complete data standards for two drug court performance measures.** This project will apply known best practices to develop data standards for two national drug court performance measures as prioritized by the national drug court performance measure working group.

9. **Development of performance standards for problem-solving courts.** NCSC will develop and publish a checklist for use when considering creation of a problem-solving court, as well as specialized performance measures for problem-solving courts, including drug courts, domestic violence courts, family courts, and mental health courts. These will be aligned with the High Performance Courts Framework.

10. **Develop data standards for problem solving courts performance measures.** This project will apply known best practices to develop data standards for two national problem solving court performance measures as identified by the BJA project.

11. **Complete a set of appellate CourTools measures.** As a follow up to the trial court performance measures, CourTools, a similar performance measurement system will be created to address the unique nature of appellate courts.

12. **Create international framework for court excellence.** In conjunction with nations from across the globe, the National Center will develop a conceptual framework that courts internationally can use to assess voluntarily the quality of service they deliver.

13. **Publish State Court Organization Report.** The content of the State Court Organization Report will be redesigned for publication on the Web site as separate and more easily accessible products.
14. **Create a Court Solutions Institute.** This Institute will focus on identifying how courts solve problems, will host Court Solutions Roundtables, and will conduct the Court Solutions Conference.

15. **Integrate the work on statistics and technology.** This initiative integrates the activities of the COSCA Statistics Committee systematically with that of the Joint Technology and the CCJ/COSCA Court Management Committees.

16. **Develop guidelines for managing complex facility projects.** Judges and court administrators are often involved in courthouse construction or renovation projects. The Center will produce a management guide for use in overseeing such projects.

**NCSC will...**

serve as a national think tank to conduct research, promote experimentation, establish performance standards and measures, identify best practices, and evaluate program performance.

— LEADERSHIP GOAL
Court Security, Emergency Preparedness, and Continuity of Operations

As a basic institution of American democracy, trial and appellate courts are vulnerable to disruption, disaster, and turmoil when a court’s physical plant, records, judicial processes, employees, or customers are threatened, compromised, or otherwise diminished in performing basic justice functions. Terrorists, computer hackers, earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, and other natural disasters strike the lifeblood of courts: case information. All these possibilities lead to a need for more concerned and conscientious plans, strategies, and contingencies for records and judicial process protections and safeguards. Court-wide security and continuity of operations programs address those needs and provide avenues to protect, enhance, and restore essential court services. The National Center seeks to assist courts with the planning and management of court facilities, as well as security, emergency preparedness, and continuity of operations plans.

Program Initiatives

1. **Support the creation of a National Center for Judicial Security.** NCSC will work with the U.S. Marshals Service in the activities of a center dedicated to housing and sharing threat and security information and to conducting physical security assessments.

2. **Develop a national court security incident reporting database.** Expanded implementation of the online model security incident reporting form will serve as the basis for collection of court data.

3. **Develop additional educational courses on court security and emergency preparedness.** Building upon the existing ICM course “Emergency Management: A Roadmap for the Courts,” additional training programs will be developed in this area.

4. **Identify best practices for integrating security disciplines.** The Center will assist courts in efficiently and effectively producing necessary plans and practices in the area of emergency management, business continuity, physical security and IT security.

5. **Produce court security DVD.** This project will develop distance learning tools or DVDs on personal security for judges and court staff.

6. **Create the capacity to help courts interact effectively with FEMA when faced with emergencies.** One of the lessons learned from the courts that have dealt with catastrophic emergencies, such as Hurricane Katrina, is the need to have someone who can work with FEMA to leverage necessary resources.

7. **Create a Security Resource Center.** The Center will develop the capacity to assist courts to leverage federal security funds and will serve as the focal point for collection and dissemination of information on court security.

Range of Current Activities

- **COURT SECURITY, EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, AND CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS.** Emergency preparedness has numerous dimensions and has taken on increased importance with recent disasters and security threats. Below are examples of the Center’s work in this area.
  - Provide staff support to CCJ/COSCA Committee on Court Security
  - Assist courts in development and implementation of emergency management programs
  - Maintain the Continuity of Operations Planning Guide and Web site
  - Maintain an online court security forum
  - Conduct CMP program on emergency management
Court Funding

This Practice Area reflects the National Center's efforts to improve the availability and use of court financial resources. Adequacy of resources is fundamental to judicial independence and court performance. State courts have traditionally been the financially weakest of the three branches of government at both the state and local levels and have struggled to obtain operating and capital funds from the governments with responsibility for financing of courts.

Courts may require help with alternative funding sources or budget strategies. The National Center has been the principal information resource for courts with funding problems and a leader in the transition to state financing. The need for expert assistance on funding continues.

Program Initiatives

1. **Coordinate efforts to secure passage of Congressional appropriations to support state courts.** Programs involving state security initiatives, court interpretation services, and the NCSC State Courts Improvement Initiative are examples of initiatives requiring Congressional funding support.

2. **Update the NCSC monograph on Court Fees and Fines.** The assessment, collection, and utilization of court fines and fees varies throughout the country. Creation of a Web-based template that will provide best practices on collections and comparative data will facilitate policy discussions and improve court services and resources.

3. **Develop services to assist courts with budget deficits.** NCSC will monitor the condition of court budgets and will develop analytical tools such as cost/benefit analysis, and online budget toolkits and will assist courts in reengineering services as well as developing educational products and services on financial management.

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Range of Current Activities

**COURT FUNDING.** Adequacy of funding is fundamental to the courts' ability to serve the public and accomplish their mission. Examples of work in this area include:

- Provide consulting technical assistance to local courts on finance and budget issues
- Coordinate, edit and publish Judicial Salaries Survey Report and maintain Judicial Salary Resource Center
- Promote legislation to create a federal tax offset program to facilitate collection of fines, fees and restitution
- Publish Federal Funding Resource Guide as a catalog of federal grants available to state courts
- Conduct educational program on managing financial resources and revenue enhancement
- Work to secure federal funding for development of a threat assessment database
- Work to pass legislation to create a funding stream for state courts for emergency preparedness
- Advocate an explicit role for state courts in appropriate federal funding streams
- Improve access to federal funding stream

**NCSC will...**

* foster improved performance, accountability, public education and communication to enhance public trust and confidence in courts.  

— SERVICE GOAL
In order to achieve its mission in courts around the world, the National Center has developed a practice area to:

- Establish the National Center for State Courts as a major focal point for international exchanges of knowledge and experience in court management and administration,
- Support the transfer of innovative programs and technologies from the judicial systems of other countries to state courts,
- Provide state courts with the means to address management and administration issues arising from the growing ethnic diversity of the population in the United States,
- Develop the knowledge and tools necessary for state courts to respond to the requirements of the growing globalization of the economy, and
- Ensure state judicial leaders have an active role in developing and implementing international programs related to judicial administration.

These goals are accomplished mainly through technical assistance and consulting services, training programs, dissemination of information on programs, technologies, and best practices that enhance fairness, access to justice, the independence of the judiciary, and effective, efficient justice system operations. The National Center also seeks to develop links between American court organizations and their counterparts in other nations. Through this exchange of expertise and information, the National Center seeks to improve both the state courts and courts around the world.
Program Initiatives

1. **Expand the International Donor Program.** The International Program Division will seek to expand its standing program of assistance through international donors.

2. **Enhance capability of developing countries to resolve disputes dealing with free trade agreements.** On the economic front, globalization is marked by the growing number of free trade agreements that promise a reduction in import tariffs to increase competition, thereby improving the quality and reducing the prices of goods and services for consumers. These agreements include strict commitments by the signatory countries to comply with agreed upon commercial, labor, and environmental policies related to free trade. Non-compliance with the commitments could result in sanctions that result in an increased burden on the courts of the participatory countries. This initiative seeks to secure donor financing to enhance the capability of developing country courts to resolve disputes resulting from the alleged failure to comply with free trade treaty commitments. Activities would include training in alternative dispute resolution, institution building for ministries of justice, attorney's general, and independent judiciaries, and ethical behavior of court officials.

3. **Create an International Court Leadership Academy.** The focal point of this initiative will be to establish an international academy to train court officials in the administration of justice. Major activities will include the design of the curriculum, recruitment of participants, classroom teaching, and over time it is anticipated that the academy will develop a full range of courses currently offered by ICM, including the Court Executive Development Program.

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**NCSC will...**

serve as a national voice for the needs and interests of the state courts.

— Leadership Goal
NCSC will...
promote collaboration among national court associations and related national organizations.
— LEADERSHIP GOAL

STRENGTHENING NCSC INTERNAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Mission-driven organizations should always be focused on and committed to accomplishing the mission. In that pursuit, some actions are direct and some are indirect. It is natural to emphasize those activities that bear a direct correlation to achieving the desired outcome. Notwithstanding that tendency, long-term failure to address indirect infrastructure and support services will significantly hamper or destroy the ability to deliver direct services. The National Center seeks to recognize this fundamental truth by including in this plan initiatives which provide a systematic, formalized means of maintaining and improving these support services. These initiatives include development of financial resources, improvement of financial, accounting and technology support services, and enhancement of education, information, publications and association services.

Program Initiatives

1. **Pursue Congressional directed appropriation.** Lack of unrestricted funds severely limits the ability of the NCSC to achieve its overall mission. With demand for its services continually increasing, NCSC is embarking on a State Court Improvement Initiative to obtain an appropriation from Congress to enhance its Knowledge and Information Services, expand its education and technical assistance support, and further its best practices research.

2. **Draft new comprehensive development plan.** Solicitation of funds from corporations, law firms, foundations and private contributors is a key component of the National Center's revenue streams. These fund-raising efforts are most effective when focused and directed in accordance with a comprehensive plan.

3. **Maintain sound methodology for allocating indirect costs.** Sound financial management dictates that indirect costs be allocated in a consistent and fair manner. The National Center will evaluate its methodology to ensure its allocation method is most consistent and fair considering the nature of its business.

4. **Complete the Web site redesign project.** The NCSC Web site serves as the primary mechanism for dissemination of the National Center's knowledge and information. It also is a means to conduct interactive business, and it serves as a marketing opportunity. The Web site is being redesigned to accommodate more efficiently the unique and special needs of constituents.

5. **Complete project management project.** Effective project management is of utmost importance to an organization that renders its services by conducting projects. Automated integration of task, time and resource management will facilitate increased efficiency and improved quality of the services.
6. **Develop Financial Interface with Project Management System.** Project Management requires knowledge of costs incurred. The National Center will seek to interface data from the accounting system to the selected project management system.

7. **Complete expansion and occupancy of the Center House.** The Center House serves as the NCSC presence on Capitol Hill. It facilitates the transaction of government relations business and provides the ability to host meetings, receptions, and other similar events.

8. **Initiate a complete review of the CEDP curriculum.** The flagship educational program for the National Center is the Court Executive Development Program. In existence since the early 1970s, the curriculum for this program requires constant review and revision to stay abreast of current developments in court administration and business management.

9. **Develop new Web-based distance education courses.** Distance education via the Internet is becoming a central means of educating court personnel. ICM will create new courses and update existing courses that can be used by court managers and staff over the Internet.

10. **Develop new curricula for NACM’s Core Competencies.** In conjunction with seven pioneer states, the National Center will prepare, as a part of the Court Management Certification Program, complete curricula and supporting lesson plans for 12 courses to cover the NACM Core Competencies.

11. **Enhance the environmental scan process for development of Court Trends.** Court Trends has served as an effective means of informing the state courts of the coming societal trends that will be impacting the courts. More sophisticated futures research is required for this publication to maintain the quality and foresight for which it is known.

12. **Complete development of a corporate approach to delivering technology services.** This approach includes the development of a model IT strategic plan, a template for automated case management system reviews, and a methodology for business modeling for courthouse design.

13. **Provide increased training for mid-level managers.** On going professional development and succession planning is vital for any organization’s stability. The Center will enhance its efforts to provide training in human resource management, project and budget management, and technology, as well as substantive court-related topics.

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NCSC will... facilitate and support the provision of independent, accessible, responsive forums for the just resolution of disputes.

— LEADERSHIP GOAL
APPENDIX

National Center Programs

The programs of the National Center work in concert to ensure that state courts, and courts around the world, are provided with the most current and relevant information and assistance possible. These programs include:

- The Institute for Court Management serves as the education arm of the National Center and is dedicated to improving the management of the nation’s courts through education and training services.
- Court Consulting seeks to improve the management and operation of trial and appellate courts by providing consulting services and technical assistance.
- The Knowledge and Information Service serves the Center’s constituents and its staff through the capture, organization, and dissemination of data, information, and knowledge.
- Research and Technology helps courts through empirical research to respond to policy issues, anticipate societal problems that will affect courts, and develop new solutions that will provide fair and equitable administration of justice. Research Services creates knowledge that is of national scope, comparative in nature, and with an extended time horizon. Technology Services promotes the effective use of technology in courts. Emphasis is placed on development of technology standards.
- Association Services provides support services to national court associations.
- Government Relations Office supports the efforts of state judicial leaders in establishing and promoting policy positions on national issues affecting the state courts.
- External Affairs produces a variety of monographs, periodicals, public education, and information materials to assist courts and court professionals and serves as the communications arm of the Center.
- International Programs shares with our justice partners around the world information, technical assistance, and strategies to improve justice for all people.

NCSC will... create a national leadership agenda for improving the administration of justice. — LEADERSHIP GOAL