

E-SJI NEWS

New Mexico Reengineering Commission Releases Report to Address Judicial Challenges

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Through SJI's Strategic Initiatives Grants (SIG) program, the New Mexico Judiciary began the process of state court reengineering in FY 2011. The judiciary recognized this as an opportunity to achieve operational efficiencies, meet service delivery goals, and address systemic change. The process closely followed the New Mexico Supreme Court's multi-year development of a strategic plan in 2009 that called for a New Mexico Reengineering Commission to represent the diverse statewide interests of the judiciary and Administrative Office of the Courts.

During January and February 2011, the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) assisted the Commission in conducting a statewide survey on how to operate courts more effectively and efficiently. There were more than 1,800 responses to the survey, covering a broad range of topics and ideas. A condensed summary of the survey results is included in Exhibit C of the report. The complete survey results are available on the New Mexico Judiciary's [website](#) under the, "What's New" link on the New Mexico Reengineering Commission front page.

The Commission and NCSC consultants observed that the priorities reflected through the survey results addressed challenges present in everyday operations, and in long range projects. Beyond the traditional concern on lack of financial resources was how to maximize existing resources, especially information technology. Contained within the report are planned IT projects, some of which are already underway, that have the capacity to reengineer court processes and practices. These included:

- Statewide implementation of the Odyssey Case Management System in all courts;



- E-filing for general jurisdiction courts, e-payment options for court fines and fees, and electronic citations for limited jurisdiction courts;
- Appellate Court electronic case management;
- Expansion of judicial video records within the district courts, as well as a series of electronic data management and civil access to justice initiatives.

The report further breaks down a series of nine initiatives that the Commission is exploring or actively pursuing through reengineering as a result of the survey. Some of these initiatives are being pilot tested before statewide launch, and some are being implemented in jurisdictions where the need is highest.

SJI support has enabled NCSC to collect information on state court reengineering projects, and maintain an updated map of reengineering efforts from across the country on the NCSC Budget Resource Center [web-site](#). The website provides information about the process and links to the final reengineering reports for a number of states.

The full report from the New Mexico Reengineering Commission, including four appendices can be downloaded from the [NCSC Library and Digital Archive](#).

Judicial Curriculum on Intimate Partner Domestic Violence Statewide Expands to Law Enforcement

Legal Momentum's National Judicial Education Program (NJEP) received a grant (SJI-11-E-154) from SJI to update, maintain, and disseminate the 2004 distance-learning curriculum titled, *Intimate Partner Sexual Abuse: Adjudicating this Hidden Dimension of Domestic Violence Cases*. The curriculum was originally developed with the assistance of SJI (SJI-N-04-170) and Department of Justice/Office on Violence Against Women.

The course features 13 modules and case studies to assist distance learners in gaining a full comprehension of intimate partner violence and the implications it can have during court proceedings, particularly risk assessment. Originally structured for the judicial learner, the course has translated well with other criminal justice stakeholders, and is now routinely used by prosecutors, defense attorneys, probation and police officers. Most recently, NJEP



learned of Kentucky's decision to offer the course to 5,000 police officers throughout the state.

The curriculum includes the most up-to-date interdisciplinary research on the impact of intimate partner sexual abuse. The curriculum addresses issues of victim safety, creating a court environment that encourages victims to disclose the extent to which they were abused, responding to cultural issues which affect disclosure, improving risk assessment proce-

dures, and how to evaluate batterer and sex offender treatment programs. Among other perspectives, the course encourages justice systems to work proactively together with community stakeholders, advocates, and other resources in decision-making for civil, criminal, family, juvenile and probate cases; and in custody and visitation determinations.

The web course was developed and written by the NJEP, a project of Legal Momentum in cooperation with the National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ). Instructional design and technical assistance were provided by the Judicial Education Center of the New Mexico Institute of Public Law at the University of New Mexico Law School.

The course can be accessed online, free of charge at www.njep-ipsacourse.org.

NACM Continues to Advance Education Through Increased Accessibility

As the largest association of court professionals, the National Association for Court Management (NACM) works to serve a dedicated audience of court managers, staff, and judges through its training, development of core competencies, conference events, and member-related programming.

The [NACM Core Competencies](#) were developed in the 1990s by its members. Years of refining by the NACM Professional Development Advisory Committee culminated in 2003 with the publication of the 10 Core Competencies. NACM began the process of developing online distance learning for the [Core Competencies Modules](#) and promote their use in court administration to make educational



opportunities more readily accessible to the courts (SJI-10-E-159).

In addition to distance learning, NACM's up-

coming mid-year conference (February 5-7, 2012) will provide educational sessions on transformative governance and leadership. More information about the upcoming conference is available on the NACM [conference page](#).

NACM continues to extend the availability of the educational content, and learning modules, free of charge, on the NACM [website](#).

Michigan's Workload Study and Assessment of Operations and Technology Results in Second Phase

In response to difficult fiscal challenges, declining case filings, and an observable decrease in the statewide population, the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) obtained SJI assistance to evaluate trial and appellate court workload and statewide court operations.

With oversight and technical assistance provided by the Michigan Judicial Needs Assessment Committee and the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), the state began the process of reviewing trial and appellate courts using separate workload and case filing surveys. This study resulted in an updated statistical methodology that included weighted caseload evaluations. The results of these evaluations led to the formulation of recommendations to the Committee, Judiciary, and Legislature.

Suggestions to improve operations and balance judicial workload throughout the state were issued in the Judicial Resources Recommendation (JRR) report, and included the following:

- Elimination of 45 trial court judgeships, and four Court of Appeals judgeships by attrition;
- Redistribute certain judgeships to fill the judicial needs of neighboring communities;
- Begin concurrent jurisdictional planning to permit more equitable assignment of judges within a circuit; and
- Consolidation of some judicial districts.

It is estimated that this combination of recommendations will save the state over \$8 million in judicial staffing costs. Additional savings through balance of the workload and imple-

mentation of concurrent jurisdictions, and Appellate Court technology planning are also anticipated.

Michigan will continue to proceed with the judicial restructuring and matching technological improvements in both the Court of Appeals and in the trial courts with actual needs. This second phase of the project will provide the courts with the expertise they need to support many aspects of court reengineering.

The final report for the Michigan Court of Appeals can be downloaded from the [NCSC Library and Digital Archive](#). The JRR report that the State Court Administrative Office compiled for FY 2011 is available [online](#).

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