



# Recommendations for Improving Public Trust & Confidence

Analysis of Trial Court Plans and  
AOC Strategic Projects

*Draft – June 22, 2005*

*(Final Report Due in September)*

*Not for public distribution*

*For Judicial Council discussion only*

***Produced for:***

The Judicial Council of California

***Produced by:***

Brenda J. Wagenknecht-Ivey, Ph.D.  
President, PRAXIS Consulting, Inc.  
Denver, Colorado

This report is produced for the Judicial Council of California, Administrative Office of the Courts, 455 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102-3688.

Copyright© 2005 by Judicial Council of California/Administrative Office of the Courts. All rights reserved.

Prepared for Judicial Council of California Annual Planning Meeting, June 22-23, 2005 by Brenda J. Wagenknecht-Ivey, Ph.D., PRAXIS Consulting, Inc., 1899 Wynkoop Street, Suite 300, Denver, Colorado 80202.

Except as permitted under the Copyright Act of 1976 and as otherwise expressly provided herein, no part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including the use of information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the copyright holder. Permission is hereby granted to nonprofit institutions to reproduce and distribute this publication for educational purposes if the copies credit the copyright holder.

For additional information, please contact:

Dianne Bolotte, Manager  
Planning and Effective Programs Unit,  
Executive Office Programs Division,  
Administrative Office of the Courts  
San Francisco, CA  
Dianne.bolotte@jud.ca.gov  
415-865-7633

This report is also available on the California Courts Web site: [www.courtinfo.ca.gov](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov)

*Printed on 100% recycled and recyclable paper.*

## CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	1
I. Analysis of Trial Court Operational Plans and Annual Progress Reports, and Recommendations for Improving Public Trust and Confidence .....	9
II. Analysis of AOC Strategic Projects and Recommendations for Improving Public Trust and Confidence .....	33
Conclusion .....	42

### Appendices

- A. Trial Courts that Submitted Operational Plans
- B. Trial Courts that Submitted Annual Progress Reports
- C. Summary of Trial Court Operational Plan Objectives Compared to the Branch’s Six Strategic Goals (includes the Sub-Categories within each Strategic Goal)
- D. Relevant Findings: Public Trust and Confidence Survey
- E. Priority Level and Implementation Status of APR Objectives Within Branch Strategic Goals

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Introduction and Overview**

The Judicial Council of California remains committed to branchwide strategic and operational planning. At its upcoming meeting in late June 2005, the judicial council, among other things, will conduct an interim review of the branch's direction pursuant to the *Operational Plan for California's Judicial Branch* adopted in December 2003. In 2006, the judicial council is scheduled to review and revise the branch strategic plan.

Each year, as part of its interim review of the operational plan, the council considers information gathered from its many partners and stakeholders to better understand their needs, priorities, and pressing issues. This report provides judicial council members with an analysis of information provided by California's 58 trial courts, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), and the citizens of California per the recently conducted "Public Trust and Confidence in the Courts of California" survey.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, this report includes:

- A detailed analysis of trial court operational plans and annual progress reports (APRs), including the priority level and implementation status of plan objectives, which were submitted in early 2005;
- An overview of the AOC's strategic projects including the implementation status of the projects as of early May 2005; and
- Recommendations for improving public trust and confidence at the local and state levels based on a comparative analysis of trial court and AOC activities and relevant findings from the Public Trust and Confidence survey.

### **Trial Court Analysis and Findings**

Fifty-three, or 91 percent, of California's trial courts submitted their operational plans to the Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts by March 31, 2005, and 46, or 79 percent, submitted their APRs by April 30, 2005. Thus, a very large proportion of California's trial courts are represented in this analysis.

The methodology used to analyze the operational plans and APRs submitted by the trial courts included grouping the 1,038 trial court operational plan objectives into the six strategic goals of the branch. Second, within each of the strategic goals, the objectives were grouped into categories by common themes (e.g., interpreters, facilities, internal operations). A statewide analysis was then conducted of the operational plan objectives that fell into each of the branch's six strategic goals as well as the thematic categories within each goal. Fourth, an analysis was conducted of the priority level and implementation status of the APR objectives. Finally, a comparative analysis was conducted of the trial courts' operational plans and the results of the Public Trust and Confidence survey.

---

<sup>1</sup> For a complete summary of the survey findings, see the Public Trust and Confidence Survey: Final Report (June 2005) prepared by the Public Research Institute, San Francisco State University and the National Center for State Courts.

## Findings

**Alignment with the Branch Plans.** The operational plans of California’s trial courts are aligned closely with the strategic and operational plans of the judicial branch. While aligned with the branch plans, the trial courts’ plans focus on local issues, local operations, and providing justice and other services to court users, which are not directly included in the branch plans.

Twenty-eight percent—the largest proportion—of trial court operational plan objectives falls into the Quality of Justice/Service to the Public strategic goal, and 24 percent—the second largest proportion—falls into the Modernization of Management and Administration strategic goal. Education is the strategic goal with the smallest proportion—8 percent—of trial court operational plan objectives (see Exhibit 1).

Of the 286 operational plan objectives in the Quality of Justice/Service to the Public strategic goal, seven common themes, or sub-categories, emerged from the analysis. The sub-category with the largest proportion of objectives within this strategic goal is External Education/Public Understanding (27 percent). Examples of objectives in this category include enhancing and expanding outreach and public education efforts generally, educating youth and others about the courts, involving the community in strategic planning efforts, and improving informational and educational materials. The sub-category with the smallest proportion of objectives is Customer Service/Timeliness (8 percent), as shown in Exhibit 5.

Nine common sub-categories emerged from the analysis of the 253 objectives in the Modernization of Management and Administration strategic goal. The sub-category with the largest proportion of objectives is Internal Operations/Best Practices (25 percent). Examples of objectives in this category include becoming more efficient, implementing best practices, streamlining processes, improving policies and procedures, and developing measures to monitor court performance. The sub-category with the smallest proportion of objectives in this strategic goal is Succession Planning (4 percent), as shown in Exhibit 4.

**Priority Level of Trial Court APR Objectives.** The two branch strategic goals with the largest proportion of high priority objectives are Independence and Accountability (80 percent) and Modernization of Management and Administration (70 percent), as seen in Appendix E. Examples of the objectives within the Independence and Accountability strategic goal are (1) allocating court resources in accordance with court user needs, (2) developing tools to provide for public accountability, (3) having adequate and stable court funding, (4) acquiring funding for specific needs and other innovations, (5) having a sufficient number of judges to handle the caseload, (6) improving staffing levels to meet service demands, (7) distributing work more evenly throughout the court, (8) migrating/transferring services from the county to the court, (9) enhancing the policy-making process, and (10) ensuring stable and efficient court governance and management.

Examples of objectives within the Modernization of Management and Administration strategic goal, in addition to those noted above, include (1) transitioning court facilities from the county to the state, (2) implementing succession planning for judicial officers and staff, (3) improving the job satisfaction and participation of staff, (4) expanding payment of fines/fees, (5) improving labor relations and updating personnel practices, (6) strengthening internal controls/auditing

procedures, (7) providing adequate court facilities, and (8) improving physical security in and around the courthouse.

The strategic goals with the largest proportion of low priority objectives are Access, Fairness, and Diversity and Quality of Justice/Service to the Public with 9 percent each.

**Implementation Status.** Despite challenging times, the trial courts report that they continue to work on most of the objectives included in their operational plans and APRs. Specifically, trial courts report that 22 percent of their APR objectives have been fully implemented (completed and ongoing), 45 percent have been partially implemented, 29 percent are in the planning stage, and only 4 percent have been set aside or dropped.

The two strategic goals with the largest proportion of objectives that have been fully implemented (completed and ongoing) are (1) Education and (2) Quality of Justice/Service to the Public (26 and 24 percent respectively), as shown in Appendix E. The strategic goals with the largest proportion of objectives that have been set aside or dropped are Quality of Justice/Service to the Public (6 percent) and Modernization of Management and Administration (5 percent).

**Quality of Justice Service to the Public Strategic Goal.** The largest proportion of the trial courts' objectives fall into the Quality of Justice/Service to the Public strategic goal, but it has the smallest proportion of high priority objectives of any of the strategic goals. Further, this goal has the second lowest proportion of objectives that are fully or partially implemented and the second largest proportion of objectives that are in the planning stage or have been set aside/dropped.

**Modernization of Management and Administration Strategic Goal.** This strategic goal has the second highest proportion of trial court objectives and the second highest proportion of high priority objectives. However, this strategic goal has the smallest proportion of objectives that have been implemented and the largest proportion of objectives that are in the planning stage or have been set aside/dropped.

## **AOC Analysis and Findings**

The AOC is working on 58 strategic projects, 54 of which are included in this analysis. Further, this analysis covers implementation activities on the AOC's strategic projects from July 2004 through May 6, 2005.

The methodology used to analyze the implementation activities on the AOC's strategic projects included grouping the projects into similar categories within each of the branch's six strategic goals. Once sorted and grouped, the distribution of the projects within each of the strategic goals and within the three parts of the branch's operational plan was reviewed. Second, the status of each of the projects was reviewed. Third, the number of project milestones achieved was reviewed. Finally, a comparative analysis was conducted between the AOC's strategic projects and the results of the Public Trust and Confidence survey.

## **Findings**

**Alignment with the Branch Plans.** The AOC's strategic projects are closely aligned with the branch's strategic and operational plans. Addressing statewide issues, the AOC's project is distributed across all of the branch's six strategic goals.

Thirty-five percent—the largest proportion—of the AOC's projects fall into the Quality of Justice/Service to the Public strategic goal, and 24 percent—the second largest proportion—falls into the Independence and Accountability strategic goal. Four percent—the smallest proportion—falls into the Access, Fairness, and Diversity strategic goal, as shown in Exhibit 8.

The 19 projects included in the Quality of Justice/Service to the Public Strategic goal are grouped into four broad project categories: (1) interpreters; (2) public education and outreach; (3) families/children/juveniles/domestic violence; and (4) innovative practices/program improvements, including collaborative justice programs and jury improvements (see Exhibit 11).

The 13 projects included in the Independence and Accountability strategic goal are also grouped into four broad project categories: (1) resources/accountability, (2) human resources/labor relations/benefits, (3) funding, and (4) governance/policy making, as shown in Exhibit 9.

**Implementation Status.** Of the 54 projects, four are in the planning stage, 44 are partially implemented, three are ongoing, and two have been fully implemented (see Exhibits 9-11).

Ninety-six percent of the project milestones were achieved between July 2004 and May 2005, demonstrating progress on most of the AOC's strategic projects. Milestone completion indicates that progress is being made on projects according to project plans, but it does not necessarily mean that projects are completed or nearly completed.

## **Recommendations for Improving Public Trust and Confidence: Comparative Analysis**

In late 2004/early 2005, the Public Research Institute, San Francisco State University conducted a survey of randomly selected members of the public and attorneys in California. The purpose of the survey was to measure current perceptions of the California court system, in order to inform the Judicial Council's strategic policy planning process. Overall, 2,414 Californians participated in the telephone survey, and 527 practicing attorneys completed an Internet-based or telephone survey.

The survey was designed to (1) determine California residents' knowledge, familiarity, attitudes, and specific experience of the courts in their communities and the California state judicial system overall, (2) measure the public's trust and confidence in the courts in their community and the California state judicial system as a whole, and (3) determine if and why levels of public trust and confidence may systematically vary by experiences with the court system, demographic variables, and other factors. Appendix D includes a summary of survey findings relevant to this analysis.

## Findings

A comparative analysis of (1) the trial court operational plans and APRs and (2) the AOC's strategic projects to the Public Trust and Confidence survey findings shows that much of the work being done throughout California is consistent with what was learned from the survey. That is, the trial courts and AOC are working on many priorities that address some of the findings from the recent public opinion and attorney survey. However, the analysis also reflects that some gaps exist in what is being done, suggesting that opportunities can be seized by both the trial courts and the AOC in the future. These gaps and opportunities are the basis for the recommendations included throughout this report.

**Trial Court and AOC Activities that Address Public/Attorney Perceptions and Needs.** The trial courts are engaged in many activities that support the findings of the Public Trust and Confidence survey. For example, per their operational plans, many trial courts are (1) developing or making improvements to their Web sites, (2) developing or enhancing informational and educational materials, (3) improving access to court information and services, (4) improving internal operations and implementing best practices, (5) reaching out to and connecting with their communities, and (6) using technology to improve access and services to court users.

The AOC is also working on a variety of strategic projects that are consistent with the survey findings. For example, the AOC is working on (1) several jury improvement projects; (2) projects that will assist self-represented litigants and non-English speaking court users; (3) several projects that enhance public education and outreach; (4) a variety of projects to enhance services to families, children, and juveniles; (5) several technology and systems projects; and (6) several funding and baseline budget projects.

All of these state and local projects and priorities are supported by the survey findings. They are seemingly worthwhile in helping to meet the needs and expectations of the public and in influencing positive perceptions of the California courts.

**Existing Gaps and Opportunities.** The comparative analysis also reveals some existing gaps in the priorities of the trial courts and AOC. As presented below, the biggest gaps in what the trial courts and/or the AOC are working on currently represent the greatest opportunities for improvement. A gap is identified for the trial courts if a relatively small proportion of courts have operational plan objectives related to the survey finding and for the AOC, if it currently does not have an existing strategic project addressing the survey finding. See the next section for specific trial court and AOC recommendations. Existing gaps and opportunities for improvement include:

- The biggest unmet expectations of members of the public are (1) reporting to the public on job performance, (2) local courts being open at convenient times, and (3) local courts concluding cases in a timely manner.
- Members of the public rated the 11 potential barriers to taking a case to court as follows (from highest to lowest frequency): (1) cost of hiring an attorney, (2) the time it takes away from work/home, (3) availability of another way to solve the problem, (4) the court fees that

are required, (5) the time it takes to get a court decision, (6) uneasiness about what might happen at court, (7) the hours or days the court is open, (8) the lack of child care facilities, (9) travel distance to court from home, (10) physical problems make using the court difficult, and (11) difficulty with the English language.

- New immigrants identified the following as the three most frequently identified barriers to taking a case to court: (1) the cost of hiring an attorney; (2) difficulty reading, speaking, or understanding English; and (3) uneasiness about what might happen at court.
- The strongest influence on public opinions of the courts is the perception of fairness in procedures used by the courts. Factors associated with procedural fairness include (1) being unbiased in case decisions, (2) treating people with dignity and respect, (3) listening carefully to what people have to say, and (4) taking the needs of people into account.
- Statewide factors that influence perceptions of procedural fairness include (1) protecting constitutional rights, (2) ensuring public safety, (3) assisting those who want to act as their own attorney, (4) reporting to the public on job performance, and (5) making sure judges follow the rules (note: there are some differences among demographic groups).
- Local factors that influence perceptions of procedural fairness include (1) conducting cases in a timely manner, (2) being open at convenient times, (3) judges being honest and fair, (4) judges who are independent (not influenced by political considerations), (5) the average citizen being able to understand what takes place in courts, (6) juries being representative of the community, (7) the courts being in touch with the community, and (8) overcoming feelings of reluctance/uneasiness about going to court (note: there are some differences among demographic groups).
- Attorneys practicing in the family law area rated the courts the lowest on procedural fairness.
- Members of the public gave the lowest ratings on procedural fairness in the Family/Juvenile and Parking/Traffic areas. Litigants in parking or traffic cases gave the lowest ratings on procedural fairness.
- Information requests satisfactorily answered by court staff are associated with higher levels of court approval and perceived procedural fairness.
- Serving as a member of a jury is associated with increased confidence in the courts. Members of the public who had served as a jury member also gave the courts the highest approval ratings and the highest ratings on procedural fairness.
- Experience in a court case other than a juror (e.g., litigant, witness, victim, respond to a jury summons) is associated with both lower approval ratings of the courts and lower ratings on perceptions of procedural fairness. Victims and litigants gave the lowest approval ratings of the courts.

- A third of the people indicate that they get information about the state courts from the courts themselves. Nearly a quarter reports that they get information from the Internet.
- Members of the public and attorneys who contact the courts for information via the Internet, telephone, or in-person are generally more satisfied than dissatisfied with their experience. However, both groups are most dissatisfied with their experience when they have telephone contact.
- A majority of members of the public gets information about the courts in their counties from the courthouse/courthouse personnel. Slightly more than a third gets information from court Web sites and the Internet.
- A large proportion of members of the public and attorneys rated the information provided by Web sites and courthouse personnel as useful/somewhat useful. Despite these high ratings, the biggest area for improvement in ratings is the usefulness of information provided by courthouse personnel.
- Attorneys who do business with the courts on a daily basis tend to be the least positive in their assessments of the courts.

**Recommendations for Improving Public Trust and Confidence.** Recommendations for filling the gaps and seizing improvement opportunities are presented throughout the report. Some of the most significant recommendations for improving public trust and confidence in California’s courts are presented below.

To address the survey findings, both the trial courts and the AOC should:

1. Measure, track, and report to the public on court and branch performance.
2. Work with local legal providers, volunteer lawyers, and the State Bar to provide affordable and quality representation to all parties.
3. Continue to make the courts more understandable, convenient, and user-friendly for all parties. For example, hours of operation, self-help services, ADR programs, and assistance to non-English speakers can be expanded.
4. Address statewide and local factors that influence perceptions of procedural fairness. In addition, sensitize judges and court staff of the significance of perceptions of procedural fairness and provide them with training/education to enhance skills and abilities.
5. Provide additional or reallocate resources to the family, juvenile, parking, and traffic areas to positively influence perceptions of procedural fairness.
6. Refocus on timeliness of case disposition and services. Resolve cases and provide services to all court users in a timely manner.

7. Continue to enhance the state and trial courts' Web sites and implement other technological innovations that will enhance court operations and services.
8. Improve the experiences of court users at "first point of contact" with the courts (via telephone and in-person). For example, improve telephone access, the service level provided to court users over the telephone, and the usefulness of the information provided by court staff.

## **I. ANALYSIS OF TRIAL COURT OPERATIONAL PLANS AND ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING PUBLIC TRUST AND CONFIDENCE**

### **Section Overview: Summary and Findings**

- Ninety-one percent of trial courts (n=53) submitted their operational plans and 79 percent of trial courts (n=46) submitted their annual progress reports.
- The operational plans of the trial courts are aligned closely with the six strategic goals of the California Judicial Branch, and many objectives support the findings of the Public Trust and Confidence survey. However, the trial courts' plans include many objectives pertaining to local issues, local operations, and the delivery of services to court users, which are not directly included in the branch plan.
- Twenty-eight percent—the largest proportion—of the trial court operational plan objectives falls into the Quality of Justice/Service to the Public strategic goal and 24 percent—the second largest proportion—falls into the Modernization of Management and Administration strategic goal. Eight percent—the smallest proportion—of objectives falls into the Education strategic goal.
- The strategic goals with the largest proportion of high priority objectives are: Independence and Accountability and Modernization of Management and Administration (80 and 70 percent respectively). The strategic goals with the largest proportion of low priority objectives are: Access, Fairness, and Diversity and Quality of Justice/Service to the Public (9 percent each).
- The strategic goals with the largest proportion of objectives that have been fully implemented (completed and ongoing) are Education and Quality of Justice/Service to the Public (26 and 24 percent respectively). The strategic goals with the largest proportion of objectives that have been set aside or dropped are: Quality of Justice/Service to the Public (6 percent) and Modernization of Management and Administration (5 percent).
- Recommendations for improving public trust and confidence:
  1. Make improvements that will affect perceptions of procedural fairness, especially in the family/juvenile and parking/traffic areas.
  2. Eliminate barriers/potential barriers to taking cases to court.
  3. Take affirmative steps to address the unmet expectations of the public.
  4. Take affirmative steps to positively affect the approval ratings and perceptions of procedural fairness of victims, witnesses, and litigants.
  5. Improve the level of customer service provided over the phone and the usefulness of information provided by court staff.
  6. Improve the information available on court Web sites and via the Internet.
  7. Expand court services, resolve cases, and provide services in a timely manner.
  8. Make the courts more convenient, understandable, and user-friendly.

## **Introduction and Overview**

This section presents a summary of an analysis of the (1) operational plans submitted by California's trial courts in early 2005 and (2) annual progress reports (APRs) submitted by the trial courts in April 2005. It also includes a comparative analysis of the trial court operational plans and the results of the Public Trust and Confidence survey conducted in late 2004/early 2005. This section includes:

1. The demographics of responding courts and a brief overview of the methodology used to analyze the operational plans and annual progress reports;
2. Specific findings from an analysis of operational plans and APRs submitted by the trial courts, which show (a) the degree of alignment between trial court operational plan objectives and the branch strategic and operational plans, (b) the trial courts' priorities pursuant to their operational plan objectives, and (c) the level of priority and implementation status of the trial courts' objectives and projects per the APRs; and
3. Recommendations for improving public trust and confidence in California's courts.

## **Demographics of Responding Courts and Methodology**

Fifty-three, or 91 percent, of California's trial courts submitted their operational plans to the Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts by March 31, 2005, and 46, or 79 percent, submitted their APRs by April 30, 2005.<sup>2</sup>

### **Operational Plan Methodology**

First, the trial court operational plan objectives were reviewed and grouped into one of the judicial branch's six strategic goals. Then, the trial court operational plan objectives within each of the branch's six strategic goals were grouped into categories by common themes (e.g., interpreters, facilities transfer, and internal operations).<sup>3</sup>

As much as possible, the trial court operational plan objectives were kept in the same branch strategic goal as those submitted by the trial courts. However, some of the trial court operational plan objectives were reassigned to a different branch strategic goal to (1) better align the trial court objectives with the branch strategic and operational plans and (2) maintain consistency among trial courts for purposes of this analysis.

Second, the trial court operational plan objectives were resorted into the branch's six strategic goals. A statewide analysis was conducted of the operational plan objectives that fell into each of the six branch strategic goals as well as the thematic categories within each goal.

Third, a comparative analysis was conducted of the trial courts' operational plans and the results of the Public Trust and Confidence survey. Relevant survey findings are summarized in

---

<sup>2</sup> See Appendices A and B for a list of the trial courts that submitted their operational plans and APRs by the deadlines, and thus, are included in this analysis.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix C for the categories of objectives within each strategic goal.

Appendix D. The following discussion includes recommendations for improving public trust and confidence in the courts.<sup>4</sup>

### **Annual Progress Report Methodology**

First, the APR objectives/priorities were sorted by branch strategic goal and then grouped into the same sub-categories that were used for the operational plan analysis. The sub-categories, or themes, within each branch strategic goal are provided in Appendix C.

Second, the objectives/priorities were analyzed by level of priority: high, medium, and low.

Third, the objectives/priorities were analyzed by implementation status: fully implemented and completed, fully implemented and ongoing, partially implemented, planning stage, and set aside or dropped.

### **Trial Court Operational Plans and APRs: Analysis, Findings, and Recommendations for Improving Public Trust and Confidence**

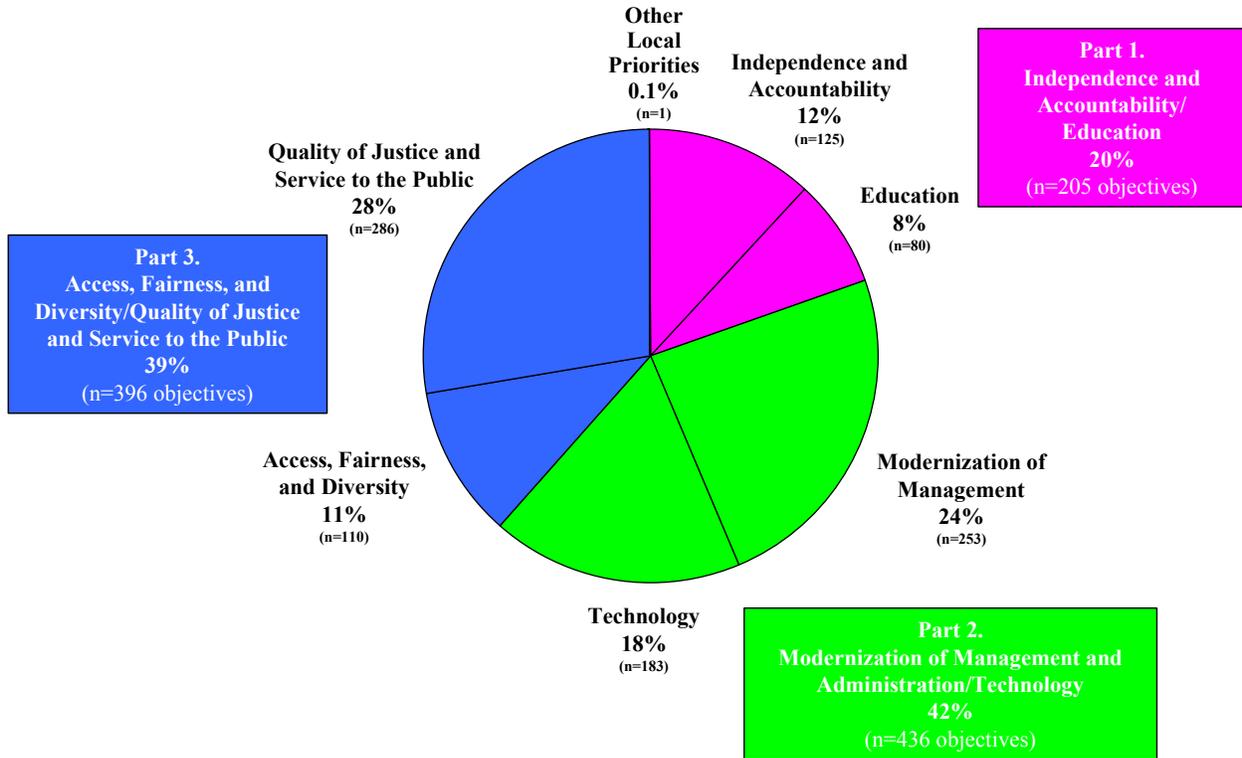
Below are (1) findings from a statewide analysis of the trial court operational plans and APRs and (2) recommendations for improving public trust and confidence in the courts.

Exhibit 1 presents an overall summary of the trial court operational plan objectives grouped by the three parts of the branch operational plan, which include the branch's six strategic goals. It shows (1) the alignment of the trial court operational plans with the branch strategic and operational plans and (2) where the highest proportion of trial court operational plan objectives falls vis-à-vis the branch's six strategic goals.

---

<sup>4</sup> For detailed findings of the survey, refer to the final Public Trust and Confidence Survey Report (June 2005) published by John Rogers, Ph.D., of the Public Research Institute, San Francisco State University and David Rottman, Ph.D. of the National Center for State Courts.

**Exhibit 1**  
**Summary of Trial Court Operational Plan Objectives**  
**Compared to the Six Strategic Goals of the Judicial Branch**  
**Percent of Objectives<sup>5</sup> (n=1,038)**



**Summary Observations and Findings**

1. The operational plans of the trial courts are aligned closely with the six strategic goals of the California Judicial Branch and many objectives support the findings of the Public Trust and Confidence survey.
2. While aligned with the branch plan, the trial courts’ plans focus on local issues, local operations, and providing justice and other services to court users, which are not directly included in the branch plan.
3. Twenty-eight percent—the largest proportion—of trial court operational plan objectives falls into the Quality of Justice/Service to the Public strategic goal, followed by 24 percent—that the second largest proportion—that falls into the Modernization of Management strategic goal. Eight percent—the smallest proportion—of objectives fall into the Education strategic goal.

<sup>5</sup> Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Exhibits 2-7 below provide statewide information about the operational plans of the trial courts. They show (1) the common sub-themes from the trial court operational plan objectives within each of the branch's six strategic goals and (2) the sub-themes that have the highest proportion of trial court operational plan objectives. In sum, the exhibits show the distribution of trial court objectives across and within the branch's six strategic goals and the specific areas that the trial courts are focusing on within the goals, pursuant to their operational plans.<sup>6</sup>

The following discussion also references the charts included in Appendix E, which show the priority level and implementation status of the objectives in the trial courts' APRs.

### **Strategic Goal 1: Access, Fairness, and Diversity**

Eleven percent of the trial court operational plan objectives are grouped into this strategic goal. Six common themes emerged from the analysis of the 110 trial court operational objectives in this strategic goal. They are:

1. Interpreters
2. Self-Represented Litigants
3. Access to Facilities
4. Diversity/Culturally Appropriate Services
5. Equal Justice/Fairness
6. General Access (to Information, Elimination of Barriers, Customer Service)

Specific examples of the trial court operational objectives (or what is included in each of the sub-categories) follow.

**Interpreters.** Examples include: (1) ensure that court users have access to certified or registered interpreters, (2) expand language access, (3) provide access to all non-English speaking customers, and (4) improve availability of certified interpreter services in rural areas.

**Self-Represented Litigants.** Examples of objectives in this category are: (1) increase access for self-represented litigants; (2) provide assistance to and educate self-represented litigants; (3) expand hours of Self-Help Action Center (SHAC); (4) have accessible, user-friendly resources for unrepresented litigants; and (5) open a Spanish self-help center.

**Access to Facilities.** Examples include: (1) ensure that court facilities are ADA compliant, (2) improve access for the elderly and disabled individuals, (3) remove physical barriers to court access to meet ADA standards, (4) provide wheelchair access to court facilities, and (5) install new internal signs.

**Diversity/Culturally Appropriate Services.** Examples of objectives in this category are: (1) be aware of the service needs of the diverse ethnic population of the county, (2) provide culturally appropriate services, (3) encourage diversity for all appointments made by the court, (4) ensure that court personnel reflect the diversity of the population, (5) address ethnic bias, and (6) understand cultural differences.

---

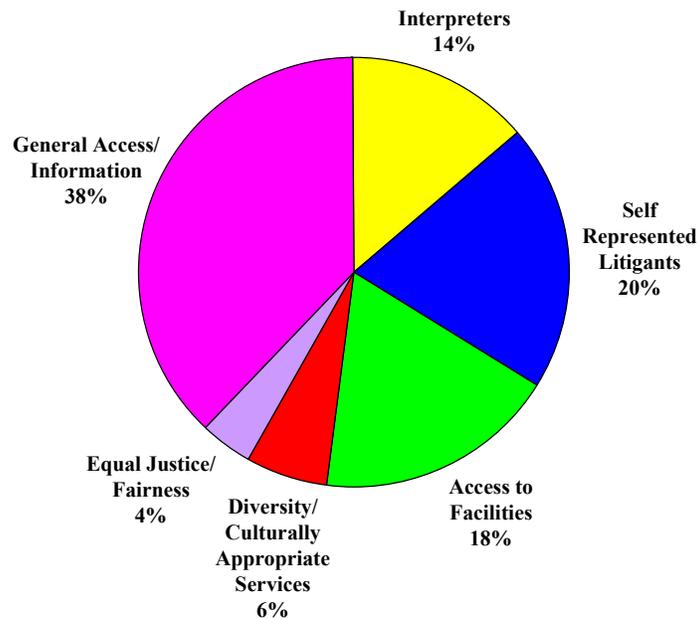
<sup>6</sup> See Appendix C for a tabular display of the data included in Exhibits 2-7.

**Equal Justice/Fairness.** Examples include: (1) provide equal access for all people, (2) implement consistent policies and procedures to promote fairness and standardization, and (3) treat all court users fairly.

**General Access (to Information, Elimination of Barriers, Customer Service).** Examples of objectives in this category include: (1) improve public access to court information and services; (2) install, modernize, or expand public access terminals; (3) eliminate barriers to access (e.g., communication, procedural, and hours of operation); (4) expand hours of access to the clerk’s office; and (5) offer court services to remote areas of the county.

Exhibit 2 presents the proportional distribution of trial court objectives by sub-categories for the Access, Fairness, and Diversity strategic goal. See Appendix D for the relevant findings of the Public Trust and Confidence survey and the two charts in Appendix E that show the proportion of APR objectives by level of priority and implementation status.

**Exhibit 2**  
**Access, Fairness, and Diversity**  
**Sub-Categories from Operational Plans**  
Percent of Objectives (n=110)



**Observations and Findings: Access, Fairness, and Diversity**

1. Eleven percent of the trial courts’ operational plan objectives are in this strategic goal, ranking fifth out of the six branch goals.

2. The sub-category with the largest proportion of trial court operational plan objectives in this strategic goal is General Access/Information (38 percent). The objectives in this category include making the courts more accessible by improving access to information and services, eliminating barriers, expanding hours of operation, and offering services remotely.
3. Fifty-nine percent of the APR objectives in this strategic goal are identified as a high priority.
4. Twenty percent of the APR objectives have been fully implemented (completed or ongoing). Fifty-one percent have been partially implemented. Combined, the APR objectives in this strategic goal represent the third-largest proportion of objectives that have been fully or partially implemented by the trial courts (71 percent).

### **Recommendations for Improving Public Trust and Confidence:**

1. *Educate on the Significance of Procedural Fairness:* (1) Educate judicial officers and staff on the importance of perceived procedural fairness; (2) train judicial officers on positive courtroom decorum and staff on customer relations (e.g., being unbiased in case decisions, treating people with dignity and respect, listening carefully to what people have to say, taking the needs of people into account); and (3) hold judicial officers and staff accountable and responsible for good customer service/relations with all court users.
2. *Improve Procedural Fairness:* Make changes that influence perceptions of procedural fairness such as (1) reduce case delay and wait times for services; (2) extend court hours to nights and weekends; (3) demonstrate that judges are independent (not influenced by political consideration), fair, and honest; (4) make the courts more convenient, understandable, and user-friendly; (5) ensure that courts are in touch with their communities; and (6) measure and report on court performance.
3. *Eliminate Barriers:* Focus on eliminating barriers/potential barriers to taking cases to court such as (1) work with local legal services providers and volunteer lawyers to provide affordable and quality legal representation; (2) make courts more convenient, understandable, and user-friendly (e.g., reduce the amount of time required away from work/home, increase the hours courts are open, help people understand and feel more comfortable with the courts, provide child care services); (3) resolve cases and provide court services in a timely manner; (4) enhance remote access to courts and expand the business that court users can conduct remotely; (5) expand ADR programs; and (6) provide expanded services to non-English speaking court users (e.g., information and forms in multiple languages, access to interpreters, multi-lingual staff and judges, multi-lingual self-help services).
4. *Meet Expectations:* Make changes that address “unmet expectations” such as (1) measure and report to the public on court performance; (2) keep the court open at convenient times (nights/weekends), and (3) expeditiously resolve cases by conducting early case assessment, controlling cases, minimizing continuances, conducting settlement conferences, expanding ADR, and implementing other effective case management practices.

5. *Enhance Customer Service*: (1) Focus on improving the experiences of court users at “first point of contact” with the courts (via phone, in-person, and the Web site); (2) improve telephone access to the courts and enhance the services provided to people who call the court (by court staff that answer the telephones); (3) improve the usefulness of the information provided by courthouse staff (e.g., implement changes that will allow court staff to be more helpful and provide more useful information without giving legal advice); and (4) hold all judicial officers and staff accountable for meeting higher customer service standards (increase job performance expectations related to customer service).
6. *Improve Online Information/Doing Court Business Remotely*: Continue to improve the information available on court Web sites/via the Internet. Proactively divert people from going to courthouses to get information by providing needed information online and/or from remote locations. In addition, continue to expand the business court users can conduct remotely (e.g., pay fines/fees, check on jury status, find times and locations of court hearings, check the status of their cases).
7. *Enhance Diversity/Culturally Appropriate Services*: Focus on enhancing the diversity of judicial officers and court staff and expanding culturally appropriate services.

## **Strategic Goal 2: Independence and Accountability**

Twelve percent of the trial court operational plan objectives fall into this strategic goal. Of the 125 trial court objectives in this strategic goal, five common themes emerged from the analysis. They are:

1. Use of Resources/Accountability
2. Funding
3. Staffing/Workloads
4. Independence/Transfer from the County
5. Local Governance/Policy Making

Specific examples of sub-categories follow below.

**Use of Resources/Accountability.** Trial court operational plan objectives in this category include: (1) ensure optimal and cost-effective use of all available resources, (2) allocate court resources in accordance with court user needs, (3) develop tools to improve public accountability, (4) develop partnerships/coordinate with other courts in the region, and (5) reduce costs and improve efficiency.

**Funding.** Objectives in this category include: (1) have adequate and stable court funding; (2) work with the Judicial Council to obtain and increase financial resources; (3) acquire funding for specific needs (e.g., ADR program, new equipment, new positions such as a public information officer, and improved facilities) and other innovations; and (4) increase the court’s baseline budget.

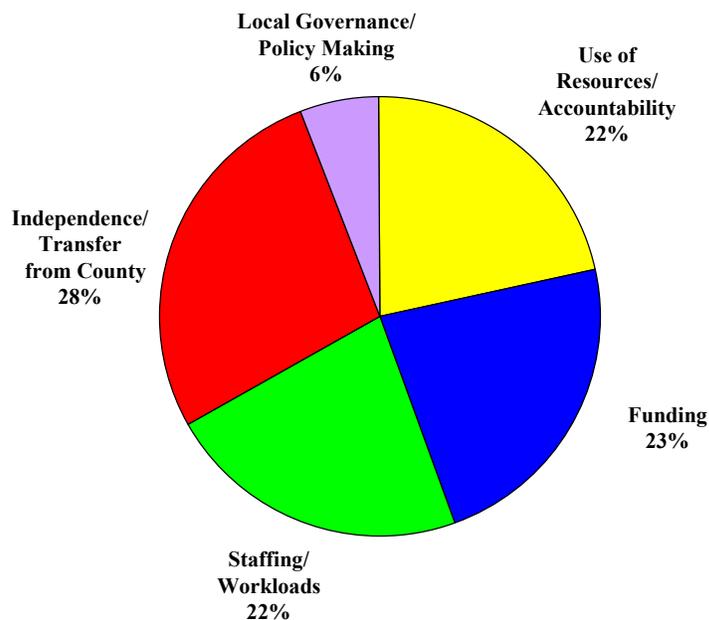
**Staffing/Workloads.** Objectives in this category include: (1) have a sufficient number of judges to handle caseloads; (2) ensure that the court is adequately staffed; (3) improve staffing levels to meet service demands (e.g., court reporters, administrative staff, judicial officers, and support staff); (4) rely on workload analysis to monitor staffing levels; and (5) distribute work more evenly throughout the court.

**Independence/Transfer from County.** Examples of objectives in this category are: (1) establish independence of the court from the county; (2) evaluate services provided by the county to determine what the court can handle to provide autonomy from the county; (3) migrate from/transfer services (e.g., human resources, accounting, payroll) from the county to the court; and (4) remain independent of county services.

**Local Governance/Policy Making.** Examples of objectives in this category are: (1) enhance policy-making processes; (2) delineate responsibilities among judicial officers, central office, and district management personnel; (3) ensure stable and efficient court governance and management; and (4) implement legislation and Judicial Council/AOC mandates.

Exhibit 3 below shows the proportional distribution of trial court objectives by sub-categories for this strategic goal. See the two charts in Appendix E that show the proportion of objectives by level of priority and implementation status.

**Exhibit 3**  
**Independence and Accountability**  
**Sub-Categories from Operational Plans**  
Percent of Objectives (n=125)



## Observations and Findings: Independence and Accountability

1. Twelve percent of the trial courts' objectives fall into this strategic goal, ranking fourth among the six branch strategic goals.
2. The trial court operational plan objectives in this strategic goal are evenly distributed across four of the five sub-categories.
3. The Independence/Transfer from the County sub-category has the largest proportion of trial court objectives (28 percent), followed by Funding (23 percent), Use of Resources/Accountability (22 percent), and Staffing/Workloads (22 percent).
4. *Independence/Transfer from the County*: Many objectives in the trial court operational plans include preserving court independence by transferring services from the county to the court.
5. *Funding, Use of Resources/Accountability, and Staffing/Workloads*: Trial court plans also include objectives for:
  - Having adequate and stable funding, acquiring funding for specific service needs, and increasing the baseline budget;
  - Allocating resources effectively, developing tools to be more accountable, reducing costs, and improving efficiency; and
  - Having adequate numbers of judges and staff and distributing workloads more evenly.
6. Eighty percent of the APR objectives in this strategic goal are identified as a high priority, the highest proportion of high priority objectives of any of the strategic goals.
7. Twenty-one percent of the objectives have been fully implemented (completed or ongoing) and 57 percent have been partially implemented. Combined, the APR objectives in this strategic goal represent the largest proportion of fully or partially implemented objectives of any of the strategic goals (78 percent).

### Recommendations for Improving Public Trust and Confidence:

1. *Measure and Report on Performance*: Measure, track, and report to the public on court performance.
2. *Realign Internal Resources*: Shift resources within the court to (1) adequately handle requests for information; (2) provide assistance to court users; (3) better handle, manage, and resolve family/juvenile and parking/traffic cases; and (4) make technological improvements (e.g., Web site, doing business from remote locations).
3. *Demonstrate Judicial Independence*: Take proactive steps to demonstrate that judicial officers are independent (not influenced by political considerations), fair, and honest.

4. *Secure Additional Funding*: Continue to pursue and acquire adequate funding for specific needs (e.g., expanded courthouse hours, expanded self-help services and ADR programs, enhanced uses of technology).

### **Strategic Goal 3: Modernization of Management and Administration**

Twenty-four percent of the trial court operational plan objectives fall into this strategic goal. This strategic goal has the second highest proportion of trial court operational plan objectives of the six strategic goals. Nine common themes (categories) emerge from the analysis of the 253 objectives. The categories are:

1. Facilities Transfer
2. Internal Operations/Best Practices/Performance Measurement
3. Succession Planning
4. Organizational Culture
5. Collection/Compliance with Orders
6. Human Resources (Labor Relations, Recruitment, Pay, and Classification)
7. Financial Management (Local)
8. Adequate Facilities (New Facilities, Renovations, and Facilities Planning)
9. Court Security/Safety (Emergency Preparedness)

Specific examples of the objectives included in each of these sub-categories follow.

**Facilities Transfer.** Examples of trial court operational plan objectives in this category include: (1) transition court facilities from county to state; (2) support statewide court facilities transition effort; and (3) work with Judicial Council, state, and county to transfer facilities.

**Internal Operations/Best Practices/Performance Measurement.** Examples of objectives in this category are: (1) identify and implement best practices; (2) establish creative/innovative approaches to doing business; (3) evaluate and revise court processes to improve productivity and efficiency and eliminate redundancy; (4) improve internal operations (e.g., records management/records destruction, establish and document policies and procedures, standardize procedures, streamline processes, improve caseflow management, improve calendaring, eliminate waste); (5) improve courtwide policies and procedures; (6) improve management information, reporting, and evaluation; and (7) develop performance indicators to measure/monitor court performance.

**Succession Planning.** Objectives in this category include: (1) establish a succession planning program consisting of mentoring and cross-training, (2) implement a succession plan to provide for continuity and consistency of leadership in key roles, and (3) implement succession planning for judicial officers and staff.

**Organizational Culture/Positive Work Environment.** Objectives in this category include: (1) establish collaborative relationships between the court and employees, (2) improve internal communication, (3) develop a common organizational culture, (4) maintain harmonious

employee relations, (5) develop an employee recognition program, (6) improve job satisfaction and participation of staff, (7) strengthen internal court culture, and (8) assess the satisfaction levels of staff.

**Collections/Compliance with Court Orders.** Objectives in this category include: (1) implement a uniform collection program, (2) increase the number of payments made through the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system and Internet, (3) expand payment of fines and fees, (4) achieve compliance with court orders, (5) maximize revenue collection, and (6) support statewide collection goals.

**Human Resources (Labor Relations, Recruitment, Pay, Classification).** Objectives in this category include: (1) improve labor relations communication, (2) establish court job classifications, (3) improve career/professional development program, (4) enhance and modernize all human resources services, (5) maintain the capability to recruit and retain personnel, (6) update and enhance personnel practices, (7) address staffing and pay-parity issues, and (8) improve the personnel evaluation system.

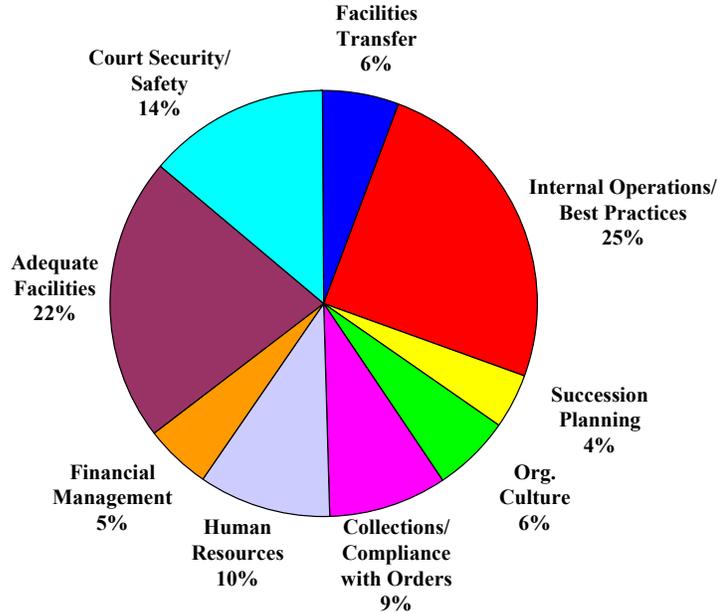
**Financial Management (Local).** Examples of the trial court operational plan objectives in this category are: (1) improve financial management information, (2) strengthen internal control/auditing procedures, (3) review and modify the court's fiscal procedures, and (4) improve fiscal and financial planning of the court.

**Adequate Facilities.** Examples of objectives in this category are: (1) provide adequate court facilities; (2) renovate/modernize facilities (e.g., add new courtrooms, remodel current facility, upgrade existing courtrooms, add child care facility); (3) construct and open new facilities; (4) develop a master facilities plan and plan long term for facility needs; (5) maximize use of court space; and (6) provide adequate parking for court users.

**Court Security/Safety/Emergency Preparedness.** Objectives in this category include: (1) improve physical security in and around the courthouse; (2) ensure the safety of court staff and court users; (3) maximize use of bailiffs to improve safety and security; (4) provide uniform security at all sites; (5) develop emergency, disaster recovery, and continuity of operations plans; and (6) develop security guidelines for court employees.

Exhibit 4 below presents the proportional breakdown of each of the sub-categories within this strategic goal. The priority level and implementation status of APR objectives for this and other strategic goals are shown in Appendix E.

**Exhibit 4**  
**Modernization of Management and Administration**  
**Sub-Categories from Operational Plans**  
**Percent of Objectives (n=253)**



**Observations and Findings: Modernization of Management and Administration**

1. Twenty-four percent of the trial courts’ objectives fall into this strategic goal, ranking second among the six branch goals.
2. Internal Operations/Best Practices and Adequate Facilities are the two sub-categories in this strategic goal with the largest proportion of objectives (25 and 22 percent respectively).
3. *Internal Operations/Best Practices*: Many objectives focus on improving the internal operations of the courts by being more efficient, implementing best practices, streamlining processes, improving policies and procedures, and developing measures to monitor court performance.
4. *Adequate Facilities*: Many trial court operational plans also include objectives to improve court facilities by renovating antiquated facilities, constructing new courthouses, developing a master facilities plan, and maximizing the use of space.
5. Seventy percent of the APR objectives in this strategic goal are identified as a high priority—the second highest proportion of high priority objectives of the strategic goals.
6. Eighteen percent of the APR objectives in this strategic goal have been fully implemented (completed or ongoing) and 42 percent have been partially implemented. Together the APR

objectives in this strategic goal represent the smallest proportion of objectives that have been fully or partially implemented of any of the strategic goals (60 percent).

7. Forty percent of the APR objectives in this strategic goal are in the planning stage or have been set aside or dropped, which is the largest proportion of any of the strategic goals.
8. This strategic goal has the second highest proportion of trial court objectives and the second highest proportion of high priority objectives. It has the smallest proportion of objectives that have been implemented and the largest proportion of objectives that are in the planning stage or have been set aside or dropped.

### **Recommendations for Improving Public Trust and Confidence:**

1. *Improve Internal Operations:* Continue to improve internal operations, with an emphasis on reducing delay, improving the timeliness of services, and making changes that will positively influence perceptions of procedural fairness.
2. *Measure Court Performance:* Develop and/or use tools to measure court performance.
3. *Foster a “Customer Serving” Organizational Culture:* Institutionalize an organizational culture and values that embrace the highest level of customer service (e.g., helping court users, providing understandable information, treating people with dignity and respect).
4. *Enhance the Performance Appraisal System:* Enhance the personnel performance evaluation system to include higher levels of customer service as a job expectation and reward staff that exceeds customer service expectations.

### **Strategic Goal 4: Quality of Justice and Service to the Public**

Twenty-eight percent of the trial court operational plan objectives are grouped into this strategic goal. This branch strategic goal has a plurality (the highest proportion) of trial court objectives of the six strategic goals. Of the 286 objectives, seven common themes, or sub-categories, emerge from the analysis. They are:

1. External Education/Public Understanding/Community Outreach
2. Collaboration with Partners
3. Families/Children/Juveniles/Domestic Violence
4. Jury Management
5. Specialty/Treatment Courts
6. Improved/Expanded Services
7. Better Customer Service/Timeliness

Specific examples of the objectives included in each of the sub-categories follow.

**External Education/Public Understanding/Community Outreach.** Objectives in this category include: (1) understand the needs of community stakeholders; (2) enhance/expand the court's outreach efforts and public education programs; (3) improve the public's understanding of court operations; (4) educate youth/students about the court (e.g., conduct mock court trial programs, establish youth internships, and develop a program on the dangers of drinking and driving); (5) expose teachers to the justice system; (6) provide parent education for family court; (7) involve the community in strategic planning efforts; (8) ensure that the community and stakeholders understand and support the mission of the court; (9) improve informational/educational materials for the public; and (10) provide educational resources to the community.

**Collaboration with Partners.** Objectives in this category include: (1) enhance working relationships with the AOC, Judicial Council, county, and local stakeholders; (2) enhance coordination and collaboration with community agencies and justice system partners (e.g., schools, bar association, and county); (3) improve communication/flow of information to and from justice partners; and (4) improve relations, communication, and interaction between the courts and the media.

**Families/Children/Juveniles/Domestic Violence.** Examples of objectives in this category are: (1) improve services to families and children; (2) provide children's waiting rooms; (3) improve management of dependency and delinquency cases; (4) improve processing of domestic violence restraining orders; (5) consolidate family law services to one area; (6) implement a comprehensive and integrated approach to juvenile justice; (7) unify/consolidate and better coordinate family and children's cases (e.g., create a coordinated family court service delivery model, implement a unified family system); (8) increase the efficiency and effectiveness of juvenile court proceedings; (9) implement a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program; (10) establish a Family Law Center to support mediation and other services; (11) provide supervised visitation for Family Court clients; and (12) expand Family Court Services programming.

**Jury Management.** Examples of objectives in this category are: (1) enhance juror compliance, (2) improve the management of jurors, (3) provide current and easy to access information for jurors, (4) increase the percentage of juror response, (5) communicate effectively with prospective jurors, (6) continue to improve services to jurors, (7) increase juror satisfaction, and (8) develop a juror orientation video.

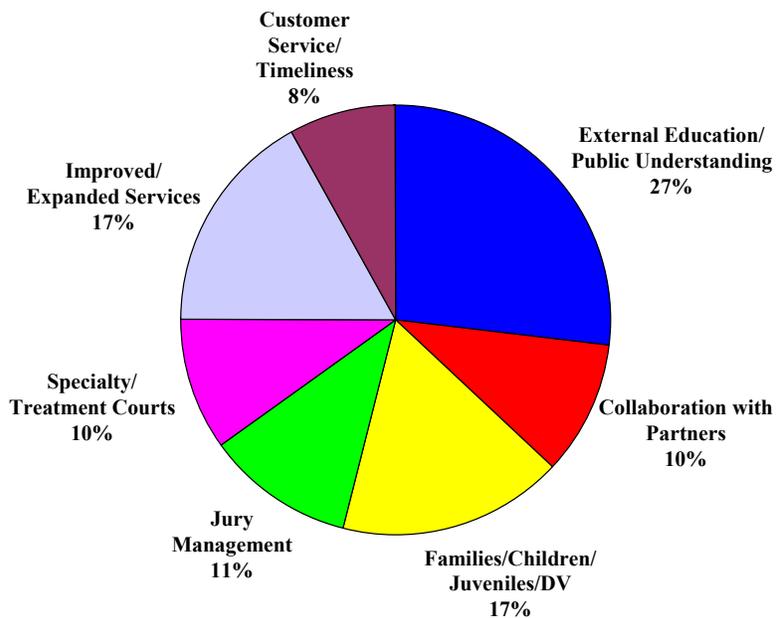
**Specialty/Treatment Courts.** Objectives in this category include: (1) implement mental health, DUI, adult and juvenile drug, teen, truancy, homeless, domestic violence, and other treatment courts; (2) address quality of life issues in neighborhoods; (3) address domestic violence problems in our community; (4) conduct a study to assess the feasibility of expanding specialty/treatment courts; (5) address the problem of substance abuse in the community; (6) coordinate drug court programs under one judge; (7) explore and develop the use of specialty calendars/departments; (8) support the development of specialty and collaborative courts; and (9) assess and implement non-traditional judicial service models.

**Improved/Expanded Services (Night Court, Self-Help, ADR).** Objectives in this category include: (1) improve service delivery to the public by expanding hours and restoring Night Court services; (2) expand and increase effectiveness of the self-help center program/services; (3) expand alternative dispute resolution and mediation programs; (4) offer extensive, comprehensive services to clients; (5) increase the number and diversity of court user programs; and (6) develop kiosk and multimedia centers throughout the county.

**Better Customer Service/Timeliness.** Objectives in this category include: (1) enhance customer service, (2) provide better and more timely services to the public, (3) use customer response cards/administer exit questionnaires to court users, (4) process civil matters more efficiently, (5) reduce delay in civil and other cases, (6) foster an atmosphere of courtesy and respect for all persons in the courthouse, (7) facilitate a more user-friendly environment, (8) reduce backlog, and (9) resolve disputes in a timely manner.

Exhibit 5 below shows the proportional breakdown of the sub-categories in this strategic goal. The priority level and implementation status of APR objectives for this and other strategic goals are shown in Appendix E.

**Exhibit 5**  
**Quality of Justice/Service to the Public**  
**Sub-Categories from Operational Plans**  
 Percent of Objectives (n=286)



## Observations and Findings: Quality of Justice and Service to the Public

1. Ranking first among all of the branch strategic goals, 28 percent of the trial courts' objectives fall into this strategic goal.
2. The External Education/Public Understanding sub-category has the largest proportion of objectives in this strategic goal (27 percent).
3. *External Education/Public Understanding*: Many trial court operational plan objectives focus on enhancing and expanding the courts' outreach and public education efforts generally, educating youth and others about the courts, involving the community in strategic planning efforts, and improving informational and educational materials.
4. Forty-six percent of the APR objectives are identified as a high priority, the smallest proportion of high priority objectives of any of the strategic goals.
5. Twenty-four percent of the APR objectives in this strategic goal have been fully implemented (completed or ongoing). Thirty-nine percent have been partially implemented. Combined, the APR objectives in this strategic goal represent the second lowest proportion of objectives that have been fully or partially implemented by the trial courts (63 percent).
6. Thirty-six percent of the APR objectives in this strategic goal are in the planning stage or have been set aside or dropped—the second largest proportion of any of the strategic goals.
7. The largest proportion of the trial courts' objectives fall into this strategic goal, but it has the smallest proportion of high priority objectives of any of the strategic goals. Further, this goal has the second lowest proportion of objectives that have been fully or partially implemented and the second largest proportion of objectives that are in the planning stage or have been set aside or dropped.

### Recommendations for Improving Public Trust and Confidence:

1. *Connect with Communities*: Continue to be involved and in touch with local communities (e.g., continue community-focused court planning, participate in justice system task forces, collaborate with community leaders and justice system partners, participate in community events).
2. *Assume a More Visible Leadership Role*: Take an active, more visible leadership role in addressing and solving community problems (i.e., judicial leadership as appropriate, court executive officers) such as jail overcrowding, quality of life issues, and dealing with youth and families, domestic violence, mental health, and substance abuse issues.
3. *Enhance Relationships with the Media*: Develop effective relationships with the news media and develop interesting, sellable stories to get positive press coverage (television, new programs, newspapers, magazines).

4. *Enhance Perceptions of Procedural Fairness in the Family/Juvenile and Parking/Traffic Areas:* Take affirmative steps to influence perceptions of procedural fairness of court users and attorneys in these areas including (1) being unbiased in case decisions; (2) treating people with dignity and respect; (3) listening to what people have to say; (4) taking the needs of people into account; (5) resolving cases in a timely manner; (6) being open at convenient times; (7) ensuring fair, honest, and independent judicial officers; (8) helping the public understand what takes place in courts; and (9) helping people feel more comfortable about going to court.
5. *Improve Jury Management/Services:* Continue to make enhancements/maintain improvements that have been made to the jury system to positively influence the perceptions of people who serve as jurors.
6. *Improve Services to Victims, Witnesses, and Litigants:* Take affirmative steps, similar to changes that have been made to the jury system, to influence perceptions of procedural fairness and approval ratings of victims, witnesses, and litigants.
7. *Improve and Expand Court Services:* Bolster efforts to make the courts more convenient, user-friendly, and understandable. For example, expand hours, self-help services, ADR programs, and assistance to non-English speakers.
8. *Focus on Timeliness:* In addition to enhancing access and expanding services, it is important for courts to reduce delay, reduce wait times, and ultimately resolve cases and provide services to court users in a timely manner. This includes implementing effective caseflow management practices, streamlining operations, realigning resources to high volume areas, and finding innovative ways to provide timely services.

### **Strategic Goal 6: Education**

This strategic goal has the least number of trial court operational plan objectives of the six branch goals. Eight percent of the trial court objectives fall into this category. Three sub-categories emerge from the analysis of the 80 objectives in this strategic goal:

1. Staff
2. Judicial Officers
3. Both Judicial Officers and Staff

Specific examples of the trial court operational objectives included in this strategic goal are as follows.

**Staff.** Examples of trial court operational plan objectives in this category are: (1) expand opportunities for staff training; (2) provide comprehensive education and training programs for all court personnel; (3) ensure a knowledgeable/highly skilled workforce; (4) ensure court personnel participate in AOC educational programs; (5) provide training to supervision teams;

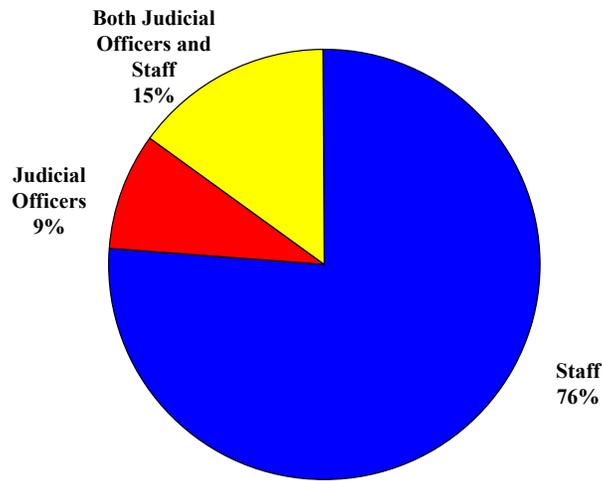
(6) provide training in specific areas (e.g., customer service, customer relations, harassment, cultural awareness, violence in the workplace, ethnic and gender bias, ethics, technology, management skills); (7) cross-train staff; (8) develop a new employee orientation program; (9) provide on-the-job training; (10) upgrade necessary management skills; (11) provide personal and professional development programs for staff; (12) improve workforce through increased training, diversity, and career development; and (13) provide training for arbitrators, mediators, and court technology staff.

**Judicial Officers.** Objectives in this category include: (1) support the continued training and professional development of judges; (2) update Bench Guides; (3) improve new judicial officer training and orientation programs; and (4) encourage judicial officers to avail themselves of video, audio, and Internet educational programs.

**Both Judicial Officers and Staff.** Example of objectives in this category are: (1) develop education that enhances effectiveness, efficiency, and consistency for judicial officers and staff; (2) foster leadership potential of all bench officers and court personnel; (3) develop a judicial and management training program; (4) ensure that staff and bench officers are well trained and professionally/technically competent; (5) provide race, cultural, and gender sensitivity training program for judges and staff; and (6) participate in Center for Judicial Education and Research (CJER) and Continuing Judicial Services Program (CJSP) training opportunities.

Exhibit 6 presents the proportional distribution of the sub-categories for this strategic goal. The priority level and implementation status of APR objectives for this and other strategic goals are shown in Appendix E.

**Exhibit 6**  
**Education**  
**Sub-Categories from Operational Plans**  
**Percent of Objectives (n=80)**



**Observations and Findings: Education**

1. Ranking sixth among the branch's six strategic goals, 8 percent of the trial courts' operational plan objectives fall in this goal.
2. Of the objectives included in this strategic goal, an overwhelming proportion focuses on educating court staff (76 percent). When considered with the sub-category of Both Judges and Staff, over 90 percent of the objectives in this strategic goal include education of staff.
3. *Staff*: Most of California's trial courts have objectives focusing on the need to educate and train court staff including the need to expand opportunities for staff training and development, ensure a knowledgeable and skilled workforce, train managers and supervisors, and provide training in specific job-related areas.
4. Fifty-six percent of the APR objectives in this strategic goal are identified as a high priority.
5. Twenty-six percent of the APR objectives have been fully implemented/completed or fully implemented/ongoing and 47 percent have been partially implemented. Combined, the APR objectives in this strategic goal represent the second largest proportion of objectives that have been fully or partially implemented by the trial courts (73 percent).
6. Twenty-seven percent of the APR objectives in this strategic goal are in the planning stage or have been set aside or dropped.
7. This strategic goal has the smallest proportion of trial court operational plan objectives and the second largest proportion of objectives that have been fully or partially implemented.

### **Recommendations for Improving Public Trust and Confidence:**

1. *Educate on the Significance of Procedural Fairness:* Educate/sensitize judicial officers and staff about the significance of perceptions of procedural fairness and local factors that are associated with perceptions of procedural fairness.
2. *Provide Customer Service Training:* Provide staff with customer service training, where skill deficiencies exist.
3. *Provide Courtroom Decorum Training:* Provide judicial officers with courtroom decorum training, where skill deficiencies exist.
4. *Assign Mentors:* Assign new judicial officers and frontline staff with mentors to help orient them to customer service standards, expectations, and practices.

### **Strategic Goal 7: Technology**

Eighteen percent of the trial court operational plan objectives are grouped into this strategic goal. Of the 183 objectives in this strategic goal, three common themes emerge from the analysis. They are:

1. Statewide Systems/Statistical Reporting
2. Web Site/Electronic Filing/Public Access to Information/Document Imaging
3. Other Local Technology/Systems/Data Improvements

Specific examples of the objectives included in each of the sub-categories follow.

**Statewide Systems/Statistical Reporting.** Examples of trial court operational plan objectives in this category are: (1) participate in the AOC's statewide systems (CCMS, CARS, CHRIS); (2) implement the new Uniform Court System Traffic Module; (3) implement the AOC certified Criminal/Traffic system; (4) implement the Judicial Branch Statistical Information System (JBSIS); (5) participate in the LAN/WAN project with the AOC; (6) generate monthly statistics that are reliable, accurate, and timely for all case types; (7) comply with the technology guidelines set by the AOC; (8) adopt fiscal procedures and court management systems that correspond with State recommendations and guidelines; and (9) enhance data collection, retention, and reporting.

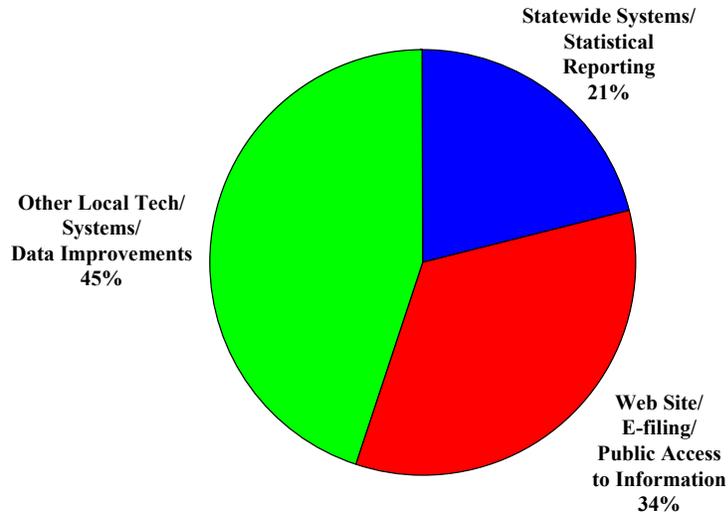
**Web Site/Electronic Filing/Public Access to Information/Document Imaging.** Objectives in this category include: (1) increase public access to the court through use of automation tools/technology; (2) make justice information accessible through common, well-understood technology; (3) create an interactive Internet site; (4) develop and implement electronic filing for all case types; (5) expand the number of agencies that file documents with the court

electronically; (6) improve the court's Web site; (7) establish a secure site for public access to court information; (8) provide a link on the court's Web site to provide information in Spanish; (9) develop an electronic filing and imaging project; and (10) improve records management by reducing paper through imaging.

**Other Local Technology/Systems/Data Improvements.** Objectives in this category include: (1) create a comprehensive and integrated justice information system; (2) automate payment of attorney claims; (3) reduce costs of county-provided IT services; (4) strengthen the technology infrastructure; (5) enhance evidence and exhibit presentation through video conferencing and video arraignments; (6) implement asset management software and track IT assets; (7) keep computer systems working efficiently; (8) develop a helpdesk to provide user assistance; (9) install an updated telephone system; (10) implement thumbprint scanning in courtrooms; (11) update technological documentation; (12) renegotiate IT service agreement with the county; (13) centralize payment processing; (14) develop, expand, and maximize technology resources/ existing technologies; (15) develop a Virtual Private Network (VPN) plan for remote access by judges and managers; (16) implement a pilot wireless project; (17) improve access to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV); (18) maintain/establish computer security policy; (19) develop a technology strategic plan; (20) expand the video arraignment communication system; (21) establish infrastructure for satellite download (e.g., for Center for Judicial Education and Research training); and (22) install courtroom operation systems, including video and computer projection and real-time reporting.

Exhibit 7 shows the proportional distribution of objectives by sub-categories for this strategic goal. The priority level and implementation status of APR objectives for this and other strategic goals are shown in Appendix E.

**Exhibit 7**  
**Technology**  
**Sub-Categories from Operational Plans**  
Percent of Objectives (n=183)



**Observations and Findings: Technology**

1. Eighteen percent of objectives fall into this goal, ranking third among the branch's six strategic goals.
2. The largest proportion of trial court objectives in this strategic goal is in the other Local Technology/Systems/Data Improvements sub-category (45 percent).
3. *Local Technology/Systems/Data Improvements*: Many trial courts include objectives in their operational plans that focus on making local technology, systems, and data improvements. Examples include strengthening the technology infrastructure, developing an integrated justice information system, using video conferencing and arraignments, implementing a helpdesk, updating telephone systems, developing remote access capabilities for judges and staff, improving access to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), and the like.
4. Fifty-nine percent of the APR objectives in this strategic goal are identified as a high priority.
5. Twenty-one percent of the APR objectives have been fully implemented/completed or fully implemented/ongoing and 47 percent have been partially implemented.
6. Nearly one third of the APR objectives in this strategic goal are in the planning stage or have been set aside or dropped.

### **Recommendations for Improving Public Trust and Confidence:**

1. *Enhance Web sites/Access to Information:* Continue to improve the information available on courts' Web sites and remote access to information.
2. *Enhance the Use of Technologies:* Continue to implement technologies that make the courts more accessible, convenient, and user-friendly.
3. *Report on Court Performance:* Use technology and other tools to collect data and measure, track, and report on court performance.

## **II. ANALYSIS OF AOC STRATEGIC PROJECTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING PUBLIC TRUST AND CONFIDENCE**

### **Section Overview: Summary and Findings**

- The AOC is working on 58 strategic projects, 54 of which are included in this analysis. The analysis includes project activities reported between July 2004 and May 6, 2005.
- The AOC's strategic projects are closely aligned with the branch's strategic and operational plans and many of the projects support the findings from the Public Trust and Confidence survey.
- Thirty-five percent – or the largest proportion – of the AOC's projects fall into the Quality of Justice/Service to the Public strategic goal and 24 percent fall into the Independence/Accountability strategic goal. Four percent—the smallest proportion—are in the Access, Fairness, and Diversity strategic goal.
- Ninety-six percent of the project milestones were achieved between July 2004 and May 2005, demonstrating progress on most projects.
- Of the 54 projects, 4 are in the planning stage, 44 have been partially implemented, 3 are ongoing, and 2 have been fully implemented.
- Recommendations for improving public trust and confidence:
  1. Continue efforts to secure adequate and stable funding for the branch so courts are better able to meet the service needs and expectations of court users and the public.
  2. Report on branch performance, and assist trial courts in measuring and reporting on court performance.
  3. Provide additional or reallocate resources to the family, juvenile, parking, and traffic areas.
  4. Provide education/training on the significance of, and ways to influence, perceptions of procedural fairness as well as customer service skills.
  5. Expand pilot projects, learning laboratories, and databases on promising, best, and innovative practices.
  6. Expand uses of proven and cutting-edge technologies, expedite enhancements to the state court Web sites, and assist trial courts in the development/enhancement of local Web sites.
  7. Make changes that will address statewide factors that are linked to perceptions of procedural fairness and help trial courts respond to local factors that affect perceptions of procedural fairness.
  8. Eliminate barriers/potential barriers to taking cases to court.

## **Introduction and Overview**

This section of the report presents a summary of the findings from an analysis of the AOC's strategic projects. It also includes a comparative analysis of the AOC's strategic projects and the Public Trust and Confidence survey results. Specifically, this section includes:

1. An overview of the AOC's strategic projects, which are helping to implement the branch's strategic and operational plans, and the methodology used to analyze the projects;
2. The findings from an analysis of the projects in each of the branch's strategic goals; and
3. Recommendations for improving public trust and confidence.

## **Overview of the AOC's Strategic Projects and Methodology**

The AOC is currently working on 58 strategic projects that are directly aligned with the branch's strategic and operational plans. Only 54 of the AOC's strategic projects are included in this analysis, since four of the projects were not updated by the reporting deadline of May 6, 2005.

This analysis includes implementation activities on the AOC's strategic projects from July 2004 through May 6, 2005. The data used for this analysis was provided by AOC staff via the AOC projects database, which is used to record and track project activities and status on an ongoing basis.

### **Methodology**

The methodology used to analyze the AOC's strategic projects is as follows.

First, the projects were grouped into similar categories by each of the branch's six strategic goals. That is, the projects were organized by themes into similar categories (e.g., Resources/Accountability, Human Resources/Labor Relations/Benefits, Funding). Once sorted and grouped into similar categories, the distribution of the projects within each of the strategic goals and within the three parts of the branch's operational plan was reviewed.

Second, the status of each of the projects was reviewed. All of the projects were reported as in the planning stage, partially implemented, ongoing, or fully implemented.

Third, the number of project milestones achieved was reviewed. Project milestones represent significant project tasks completed by targeted deadlines. Milestone completion indicates that progress is being made on the projects according to project plans. Milestone completion *does not* necessarily mean that projects are completed or nearly completed.

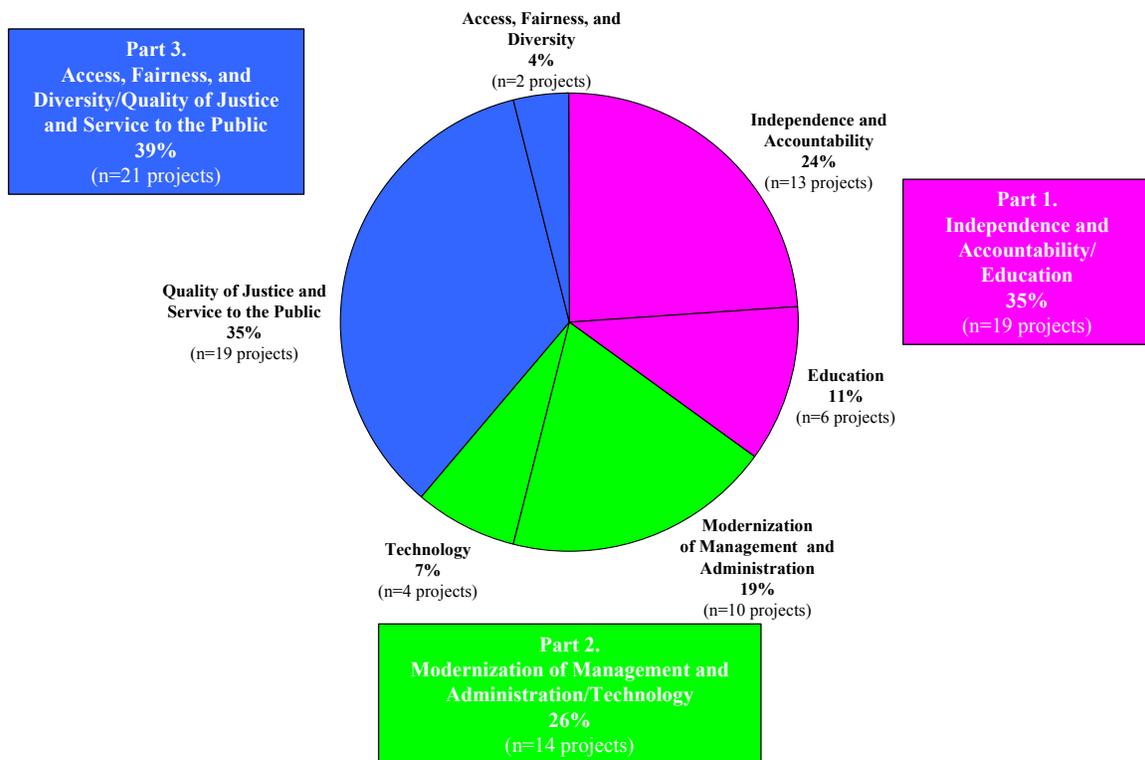
Fourth, a comparative analysis was conducted between the AOC's strategic projects and the results of the Public Trust and Confidence survey. See Appendix D for a summary of relevant survey findings. Recommendations for improving public trust and confidence in the courts are included in the discussion below.

## The AOC's Strategic Projects: Analysis, Findings, and Recommendations

Below are findings and recommendations from an analysis of the AOC's strategic projects.

Exhibit 8 below shows the AOC's strategic projects grouped by the branch's six strategic goals and the three parts of the branch's operational plan.

**Exhibit 8**  
**AOC Projects by Branch Strategic Goals**  
Percent of AOC Projects (n=54)



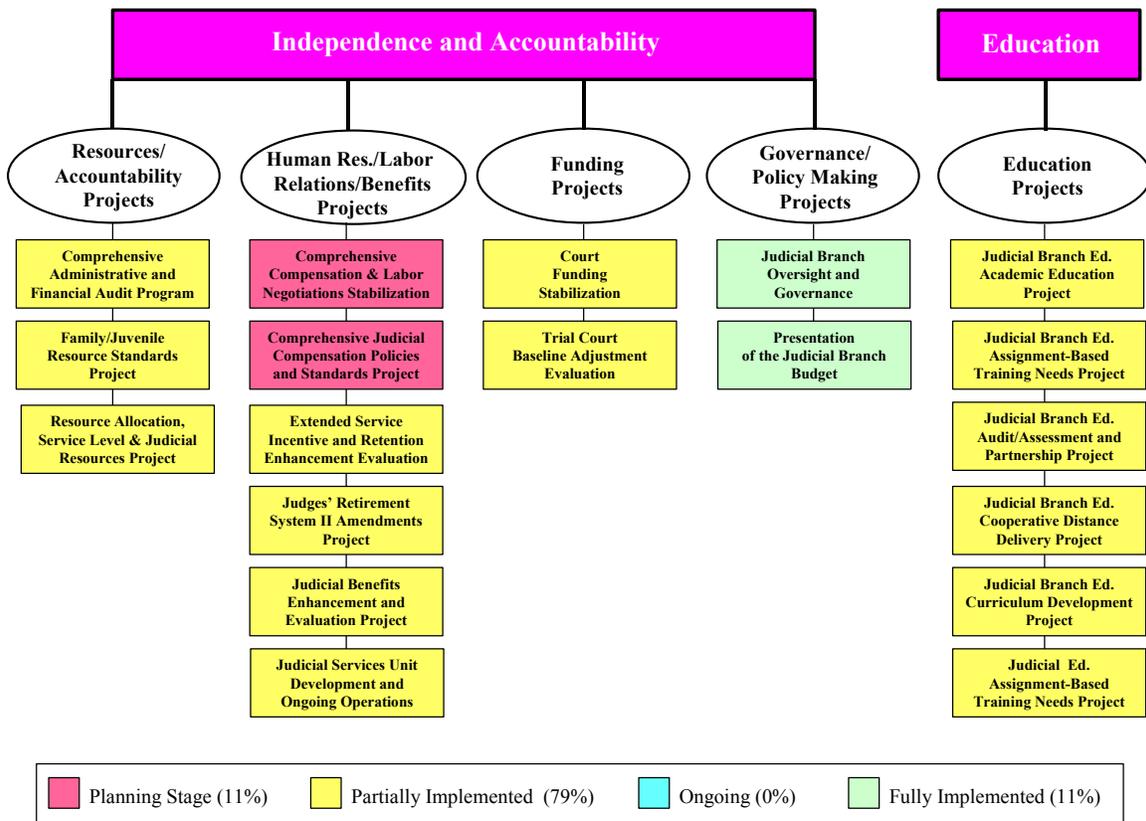
### Observations and Findings:

1. Thirty-five percent—the largest proportion—of the AOC's strategic projects falls into the Quality of Justice and Service to the Public strategic goal and 24 percent fall into the Independence and Accountability strategic goal.
2. Four percent of the AOC's projects are in the Access, Fairness, and Diversity strategic goal and 7 percent are in the Technology strategic goal.

3. A total of 133 milestones were in the project database for the 54 strategic projects. Overall, 96 percent of the milestones were achieved per the report run on May 6, 2005, suggesting that progress is being made on the AOC's strategic projects.
4. The AOC's strategic projects are closely aligned with the branch's strategic and operational plans and many of the projects support the findings from the Public Trust and Confidence survey.

Exhibits 9-11 below list the AOC's strategic projects by general categories for each of the branch's six strategic goals. The implementation status is also shown.

**Exhibit 9:**  
**Part 1: Independence and Accountability and Education Strategic Goals**  
**List of AOC Strategic Projects by Categories and Implementation Status**  
 (n=19 Projects)



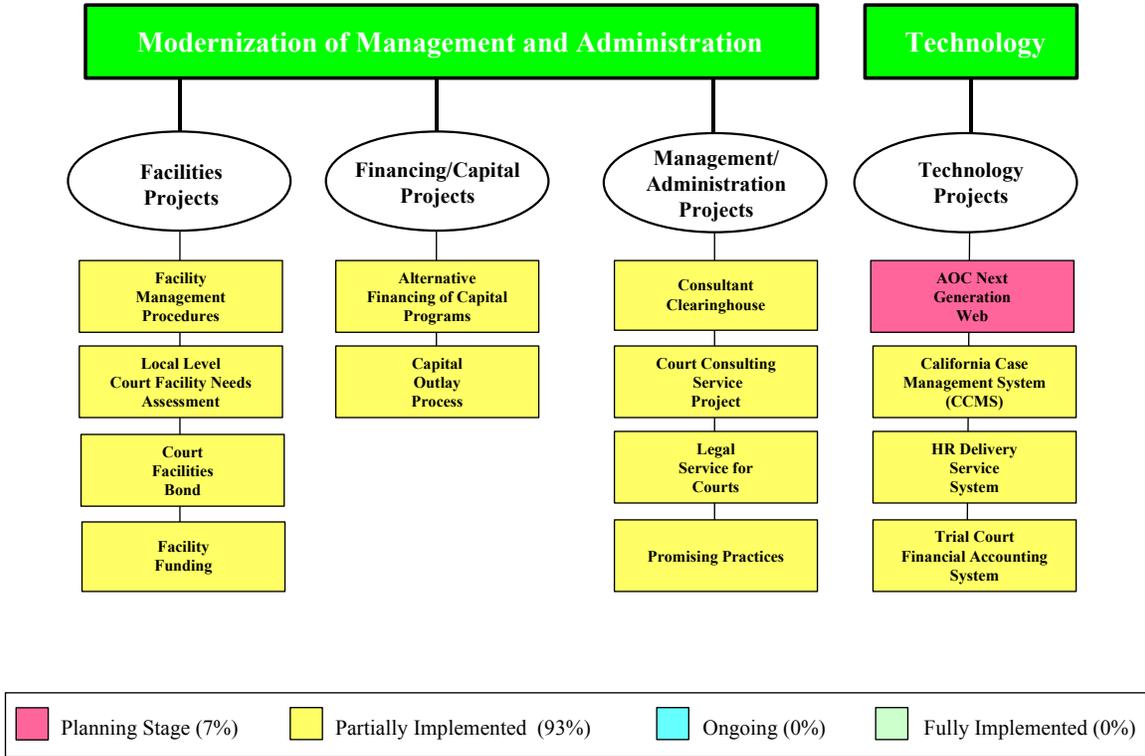
## Part 1 Observations and Findings:

1. Thirty-five percent of the AOC's strategic projects fall into Part 1 of the branch operational plan.
2. The AOC is working on 13 projects related to the Independence and Accountability strategic goal and six projects related to the Education strategic goal.
3. Seventy-nine percent of these projects are partially implemented, 11 percent are in the planning stage, and 11 percent have been fully implemented.

## Recommendations for Improving Public Trust and Confidence:

1. *Secure Adequate and Stable Funding:* Continue efforts to secure adequate and stable funding for the branch so courts are better able to meet the service needs and expectations of the public and court users.
2. *Report on Branch Performance:* Measure and report to the public (and others) on branch performance (e.g., conduct a survey of court users, develop a branch performance measurement system that includes a balanced set of critical measures). Measures might include fiscal accountability, fairness, timeliness, and customer and employee satisfaction.
3. *Allocation of Resources:* Shift internal resources to the family, juvenile, parking, and traffic areas to positively influence perceptions of procedural fairness.
4. *Demonstrate Independence of the Branch:* Continue to educate others and demonstrate the independence of the judicial branch. Hold judicial officers accountable for their actions and for following the rules/procedures.
5. *Provide Targeted Education/Training on Significance of Procedural Fairness and Customer Service/Relations:* Provide statewide training to judicial officers and staff on the significance of, and ways to influence, procedural fairness and customer service skills (e.g., courtroom decorum, treating parties with dignity and respect, telephone etiquette). Begin a customer service campaign throughout the courts. Work with the State Bar to train/educate bar members as well.
6. *Implement a Mentor Program:* Develop and implement a mentor program for new judicial officers and staff to orient them to the branch's customer service philosophy.
7. *Expand Professional Development Programs/Opportunities:* Implement a 360-degree feedback system for judicial officers, executives, and managers throughout the state.

**Exhibit 10:**  
**Part 2: Modernization of Management and Administration and Technology Strategic Goals**  
**List of AOC Strategic Projects by Categories and Implementation Status**  
 (n=14 Projects)



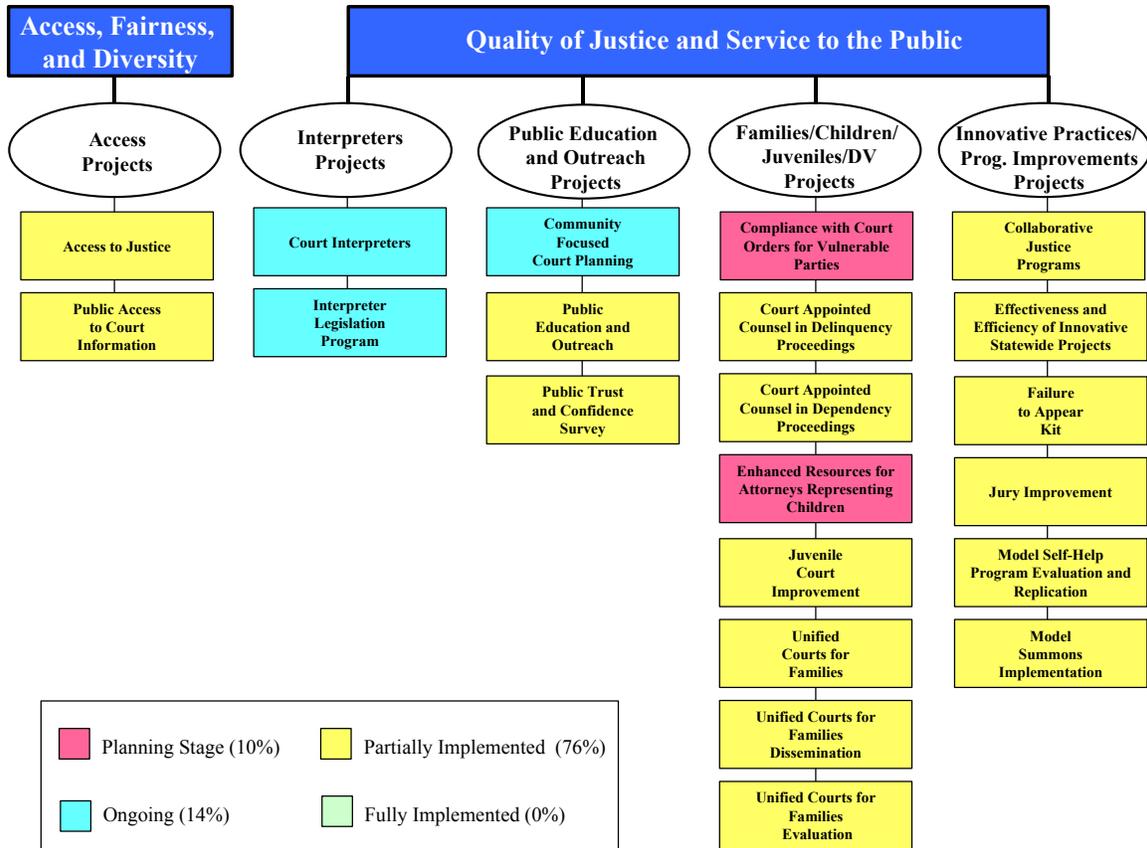
**Part 2 Observations and Findings:**

1. Twenty-six percent of the AOC’s strategic projects fall into Part 2 of the branch operational plan.
2. The AOC is working on 10 projects related to the Modernization of Management and Administration strategic goal and four projects related to the Technology strategic goal.
3. Ninety-three percent of these projects are partially implemented and one project—7 percent—is in the planning stage.

## **Recommendations for Improving Public Trust and Confidence:**

1. *Promote Best/Innovative Practices:* Expand pilot projects, learning laboratories, and databases on promising, best, and innovative practices specifically related to (1) operations and services that will positively influence perceptions of procedural fairness; (2) resolving cases and providing services in a timely manner; (3) enhancing services to victims, witnesses, and litigants; and (4) serving people involved in family, juvenile, parking, and traffic cases.
2. *Assist Trial Courts in Measuring Court Performance:* Provide trial courts with the technologies, tools, and resources to measure and report on court performance.
3. *Enhance the Human Resources/Personnel System:* Improve the human resources and personnel system to ensure that competent staff will be recruited, retained, and motivated. Improve the staff performance appraisal system (e.g., increase performance standards/expectations on customer service).
4. *Expedite Enhancements to Web sites:* Expedite enhancements to the state court Web sites and assist trial courts in the development/enhancement of local Web sites.
5. *Expand Uses of Technology:* In addition to continuing to develop and support the branch and trial courts' technology infrastructures, pilot and implement cutting-edge technologies that can improve access to the courts and services to court users/the public.

**Exhibit 11:**  
**Part 3: Access, Fairness and Diversity/Quality of Justice & Service to the Public Strategic Goals**  
**List of AOC Strategic Projects by Categories and Implementation Status**  
**(n=21 Projects)**



**Part 3 Observations and Findings:**

1. Thirty-nine percent of the AOC’s strategic projects fall into Part 3 of the branch operational plan.
2. The AOC is working on two projects related to the Access, Fairness, and Diversity strategic goal and 19 projects related to the Quality of Justice and Service to the Public strategic goal.
3. Seventy-six percent of these projects are partially implemented, 10 percent are in the planning stage, and 14 percent are ongoing.

## **Recommendations for Improving Public Trust and Confidence:**

1. *Improve Procedural Fairness:* Make changes that address statewide factors that are linked to perceptions of procedural fairness and help trial courts respond to local factors that affect perceptions of procedural fairness. Examples include taking proactive steps to (1) protect constitutional rights; (2) ensure public safety; (3) assist those who want to act as their own attorney; (4) report to the public on job performance; (5) make sure judges follow the rules and are honest, fair, and independent; (6) resolve cases in a timely manner; (7) enable courts to be open at convenient times; (8) help the public understand the courts; (9) continue to encourage trial court leaders to be in touch with their communities; and (10) help the courts be more convenient, understandable, and user-friendly. Specific examples are holding judges accountable for their actions and for following the rules; measuring and reporting on branch performance; improving statewide policy on the assistance that can be provided to self-represented litigants; assisting trial courts in improving services to self-represented litigants; and making statewide policy/changes to the jury system to ensure juries are representative of the communities; developing a branch performance measurement system and reporting annually; and surveying court users to assess confidence, approval, and satisfaction levels.
2. *Eliminate Barriers:* Work to improve statewide policies, procedures, rules, and legislation that will help minimize or eliminate barriers to taking cases to court. For example: (1) work with the State Bar and local providers to ensure quality and affordable legal representation for all parties; (2) limit court fees; (3) expand funding for ADR and expand ADR programs; and (4) help courts make improvements to facilities (e.g., make ADA accessible, add child care facilities).
3. *Enhance Diversity/Culturally Appropriate Services:* Work to enhance the diversity of judicial officers and court staff, and study, evaluate, and develop best practices on culturally appropriate services.
4. *Encourage Court Involvement with Communities:* Continue to fund court-community partnerships and collaboration, and encourage trial court leadership to be involved in their communities.
5. *Bolster Resources to Family, Juvenile, Parking, and Traffic Areas:* Provide additional or reallocate resources to these areas to influence perceptions of procedural fairness.
6. *Re-focus on Timeliness of Case Disposition and Services:* Re-focus efforts on reducing delay and providing timely services to court users/the public including renewed commitment to case-processing time standards and implementing operational and technological innovations.
7. *Enhance Relationships with the Media:* Develop effective relationships with the news media and develop interesting, sellable stories to get positive press (television news programs, newspapers, magazines).

## **CONCLUSION**

The operational plans of California's trial courts are aligned closely with the strategic and operational plans of the judicial branch. Despite challenging times, the trial courts continue to work on most of the objectives included in their operational plans and annual progress reports (APRs), according to information they submitted to the AOC in early 2005.

As direct providers of justice services to the people, businesses, and communities of California, it is not surprising that the largest proportion of the trial courts' operational plan objectives focus on local issues, local operations, and providing improved justice and other services to all court users.

The AOC's strategic projects are also closely aligned with the strategic and operational plans of the judicial branch. Addressing statewide issues, the AOC's projects are distributed across all of the branch's six strategic goals. Further, a very high proportion of project milestones were achieved between July 2004 and May 2005, indicating that progress is being made on most of the strategic projects, and most have been partially implemented, according to an update provided by AOC staff in early May 2005.

A comparative analysis of (1) the trial court operational plans and APRs and (2) the AOC's strategic projects to the Public Trust and Confidence survey findings shows that California's trial courts and the AOC are working on many priorities that address some of the findings from the recent public opinion and attorney survey. However, the analysis also reflects that some gaps exist in what is being done currently suggesting there are opportunities that can be seized by both the trial courts and the AOC in the future.

The findings and recommendations included in this report will help members of the Judicial Council as well as AOC and trial court leadership in establishing future strategic and operational priorities for the branch and trial courts, resulting in improved justice for all in California. Moreover, this information will assist state and local leadership in making additional incremental and sweeping changes at both the state and local levels that will positively affect approval ratings of and overall confidence in California's courts.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Trial Courts That Submitted Operational Plans**

(In alphabetical order)

Below are the 53 trial courts in California that submitted their operational plans to the Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts by March 31, 2005. Ninety-one percent of all trial courts submitted their plans by this deadline.

- |                 |                     |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Alameda      | 28. Orange          |
| 2. Alpine       | 29. Placer          |
| 3. Amador       | 30. Riverside       |
| 4. Butte        | 31. Sacramento      |
| 5. Calaveras    | 32. San Benito      |
| 6. Del Norte    | 33. San Bernardino  |
| 7. El Dorado    | 34. San Diego       |
| 8. Fresno       | 35. San Francisco   |
| 9. Glenn        | 36. San Joaquin     |
| 10. Humboldt    | 37. San Luis Obispo |
| 11. Imperial    | 38. San Mateo       |
| 12. Inyo        | 39. Santa Barbara   |
| 13. Kern        | 40. Santa Clara     |
| 14. Kings       | 41. Santa Cruz      |
| 15. Lake        | 42. Shasta          |
| 16. Lassen      | 43. Sierra          |
| 17. Los Angeles | 44. Siskiyou        |
| 18. Madera      | 45. Solano          |
| 19. Marin       | 46. Sonoma          |
| 20. Mariposa    | 47. Stanislaus      |
| 21. Mendocino   | 48. Trinity         |
| 22. Merced      | 49. Tulare          |
| 23. Modoc       | 50. Tuolumne        |
| 24. Mono        | 51. Ventura         |
| 25. Monterey    | 52. Yolo            |
| 26. Napa        | 53. Yuba            |
| 27. Nevada      |                     |

The five courts that did not submit their operational plans by March 31, 2005 were Contra Costa, Colusa, Plumas, Sutter, and Tehama.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Trial Courts That Submitted Annual Progress Reports**

(In alphabetical order)

Below are the 46 trial courts in California that submitted their annual progress report to the Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts by April 30, 2005. Seventy-nine percent of all trial courts submitted their reports by this deadline.

- |                 |                     |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Alameda      | 24. Orange          |
| 2. Butte        | 25. Placer          |
| 3. Calaveras    | 26. Riverside       |
| 4. El Dorado    | 27. Sacramento      |
| 5. Fresno       | 28. San Benito      |
| 6. Humboldt     | 29. San Bernardino  |
| 7. Imperial     | 30. San Diego       |
| 8. Inyo         | 31. San Francisco   |
| 9. Kern         | 32. San Joaquin     |
| 10. Kings       | 33. San Luis Obispo |
| 11. Lake        | 34. San Mateo       |
| 12. Lassen      | 35. Santa Clara     |
| 13. Los Angeles | 36. Shasta          |
| 14. Madera      | 37. Sierra          |
| 15. Marin       | 38. Siskiyou        |
| 16. Mariposa    | 39. Solano          |
| 17. Mendocino   | 40. Sonoma          |
| 18. Merced      | 41. Stanislaus      |
| 19. Modoc       | 42. Tulare          |
| 20. Mono        | 43. Tuolumne        |
| 21. Monterey    | 44. Ventura         |
| 22. Napa        | 45. Yolo            |
| 23. Nevada      | 46. Yuba            |

The 12 courts that did not submit their annual progress reports by April 30, 2005 were Alpine, Amador, Colusa, Contra Costa, Del Norte, Glenn, Plumas, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, Sutter, Tehama, and Trinity.

**APPENDIX C: Summary of Trial Court Operational Plan Objectives Compared to the Branch's Six Strategic Goals**

	<i>Number of Objectives (n=)</i>	<i>% of All Objectives/ % within Goal</i>
<b>Strategic Goal 1: Access/Fairness/Diversity</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>11%</b>
Interpreters	15	14%
Self-Represented Litigants	22	20%
Access to Facilities	20	18%
Diversity/Culturally Appropriate Services	7	6%
Equal Justice/Fairness	4	4%
General Access/Information	42	38%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>
<b>Strategic Goal 2: Independence/Accountability</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>12%</b>
Use of Resources/Accountability	27	22%
Funding	29	23%
Staffing/Workloads	27	22%
Independence/Transfer from County	35	28%
Local Governance/Policy Making	7	6%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>
<b>Strategic Goal 3: Modernization of Management</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>24%</b>
Facilities Transfer	14	6%
Internal Operations/Best Practices	64	25%
Succession Planning	9	4%
Organizational Culture/Work Environment	15	6%
Collections/Compliance with Orders	22	9%
Human Resources	26	10%
Financial Management	12	5%
Adequate Facilities	55	22%
Court Security/Safety/Emerg. Preparedness	36	14%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>
<b>Strat. Goal 4: Qual. of Justice/Svc. to the Public</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>28%</b>
External Education/Public Understanding	76	27%
Collaboration with Partners	28	10%
Families/Children/Juveniles/DV	48	17%
Jury Management	32	11%
Specialty/Treatment Courts	29	10%
Improved/Expanded Services	50	17%
Better Customer Service/Timeliness	23	8%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>
<b>Strategic Goal 5: Education</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>8%</b>
Staff	61	76%
Judicial Officers	7	9%
Both Judicial Officers and Staff	12	15%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>
<b>Strategic Goal 6: Technology</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>18%</b>
Statewide Systems/Statistical Reporting	38	21%
Web Site/E-filing/Public Access to Info.	62	34%
Other Local Tech/Systems/Data Improvements	83	45%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>
<b>Other Local Priorities</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.1%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,038</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **APPENDIX D – 3 pages**

### **Relevant Findings: Public Trust and Confidence Survey**

#### **Overall Ratings**

1. New immigrants have very low levels of contact with the courts and have the most favorable/positive perception of the courts. They have a high level of confidence in the courts and believe that court procedures are fair.
2. Serving as a member of a jury is associated with increased confidence in the courts. Members of the public who had served as a jury member also gave the courts the highest approval ratings and the highest ratings on procedural fairness.
3. Experience in a court case other than a juror (e.g., litigant, witness, victim, respond to a jury summons) is associated with both lower approval ratings of the courts and lower ratings on perceptions of procedural fairness. Victims and litigants gave the lowest approval ratings of the courts.
4. Members of the public who are more familiar with the courts are the least positive/have the least confidence in the courts.
5. Attorneys who do business with the courts on a daily basis tend to be the least positive in their assessments of the courts.

#### **Where Respondents Get Information About the Courts and the Utility of the Information**

6. The majority of people get information about the courts from television/news programs, newspapers/magazines, and televised trials. A third of the people indicated that they get information about the state courts from the courts themselves. Nearly a quarter said that they get information from the Internet.
7. Members of the public and attorneys who contact the courts for information via the Internet, phone, or in-person are generally more satisfied than dissatisfied with their experience. However, both groups are most dissatisfied with their experience when they have phone contact.
8. A majority of members of the public gets information about the courts in their counties from the courthouse/courthouse personnel. Slightly more than a third gets information from court Web sites and the Internet.
9. A large proportion of members of the public and attorneys rated the information provided by Web sites and courthouse personnel as useful/somewhat useful. Despite these high ratings, the biggest area for improvement in ratings is the usefulness of information provided by courthouse personnel.

## **Procedural Fairness**

10. The strongest influence on public opinions of the courts is the perception of fairness in the procedures used by the courts. Factors that are associated with procedural fairness include (1) being unbiased in case decisions, (2) treating people with dignity and respect, (3) listening carefully to what people have to say, and (4) taking the needs of people into account.
11. *Statewide factors* that influence perceptions of procedural fairness include (1) protecting constitutional rights, (2) ensuring public safety, (3) assisting those who want to act as their own attorney, (4) reporting to the public on job performance, and (5) making sure judges follow the rules (note: there are some differences among demographic groups).
12. *Local factors* that influence perceptions of procedural fairness include (1) conducting cases in a timely manner, (2) being open at convenient times, (3) judges being honest and fair, (4) judges who are independent (not influenced by political considerations), (5) the average citizen being able to understand what takes place in courts, (6) juries being representative of the community, (7) the courts being in touch with the community, (8) overcoming feelings of reluctance/uneasiness about going to court (note: there are some differences among demographic groups).
13. Attorneys practicing in the family law area rated the courts the lowest on procedural fairness.
14. Members of the public gave the lowest ratings on procedural fairness in the Family/Juvenile and Parking/Traffic areas. Litigants in parking or traffic cases gave the lowest ratings on procedural fairness.
15. Information requests satisfactorily answered by court staff are associated with higher levels of court approval and perceived procedural fairness.

## **Barriers/Potential Barriers to Taking a Case to Court**

16. Survey respondents were asked to rate eleven potential reasons that did or might keep a person from taking a case to court. Members of the public rated the 11 potential barriers to taking a case to court as follows (from highest to lowest frequency): (1) cost of hiring an attorney (69 percent), (2) the time it takes away from work/home, (3) availability of another way to solve the problem, (4) the court fees that are required, (5) the time it takes to get a court decision, (6) uneasiness about what might happen at court, (7) the hours or days the court is open, (8) the lack of child care facilities at the court, (9) travel distance to court from home, (10) physical problems make using the court difficult, and (11) difficulty with the English language (11 percent).
17. The three most frequently identified barriers to taking a case to court of new immigrants (i.e., in the U.S. for less than 10 years) are: (1) cost of hiring an attorney (62 percent); (2)

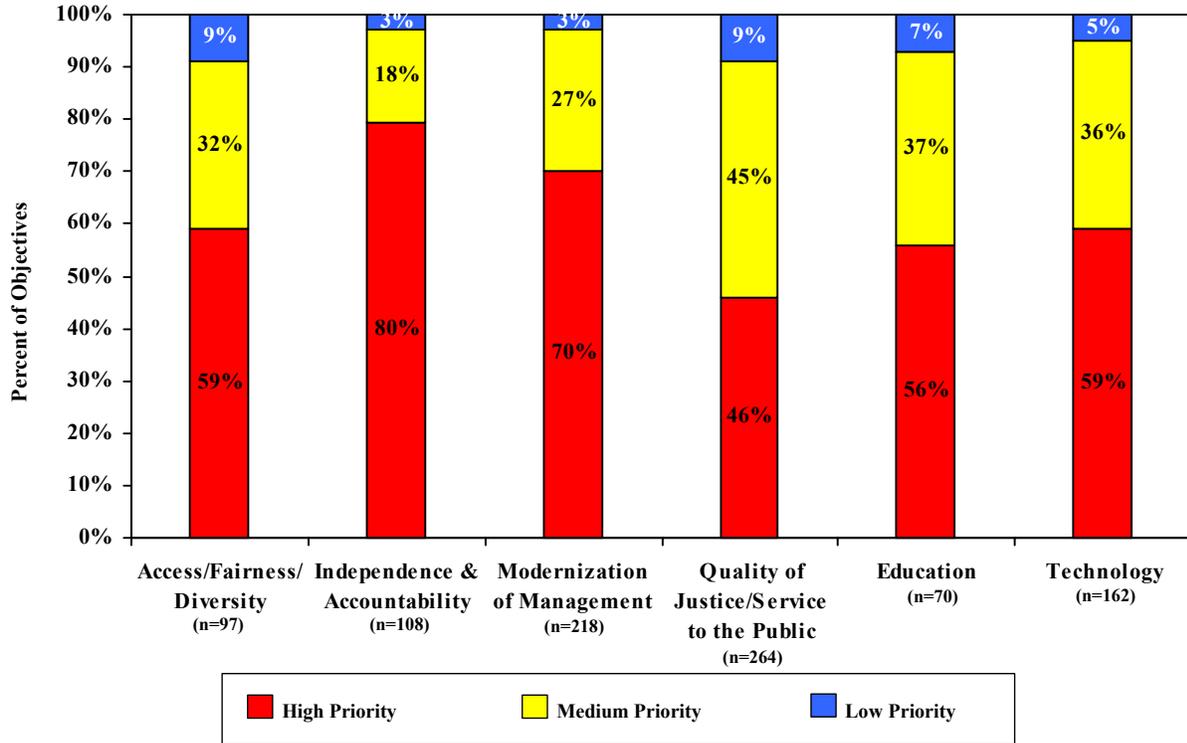
difficulty reading, speaking, or understanding English; and (3) uneasiness about what might happen at court (50 percent).

### **Areas with the Biggest Unmet Expectations and Areas Where Resources Should be Expended**

18. Members of the public were asked: “In order to do their job well, how important is it for courts to spend enough resources to” do a variety of things. Members of the public indicated that it is very important for courts to spend enough resources to (from highest to lowest frequency): (1) protect constitutional rights (82 percent), (2) ensure public safety, (3) conclude cases in a timely manner, (4) provide leadership in dealing with community problems, (5) stay open at times convenient for working people, (6) offer other ways to resolve disputes besides trials, (7) report regularly on their job performance to the public, and (8) assist those who want to act as their own attorney (38 percent).
  
19. An analysis of the survey data reveals “unmet expectations” of members of the public. Unmet expectations are defined as the areas of responsibility that members of the public agreed were important for courts to spend resources on but disagreed that courts were doing a good job. The three biggest unmet expectations of members of the public are: (1) reporting to the public on job performance, (2) local courts being open at convenient times, and (3) local courts concluding cases in a timely manner.

**APPENDIX E - 2 pages**

**Priority of APR Objectives within Strategic Goals**  
**Percent of Objectives (n=920)**



**APPENDIX E - Continued**

**Implementation Status of APR Objectives within Strategic Goals**  
 Percent of Objectives (n=920)

