

ACTION PLAN TO ASSIST SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS

Background and Demographic Data

Glenn County, incorporated on March 11, 1891 from a portion of Colusa County, was named for Dr. Hugh J. Glenn, often referred to as “The Wheat King.” Tehama County lies to Glenn County’s north; Butte Count to the east; Colusa and Lake counties to the south; and Lake and Mendocino counties to the west. Some of Mendocino National Forest lies in the western part of the county.

Once predominantly a wheat raising area, today rice is the major crop, while most of the Ladino clover seed grown in the United States comes from the area or Orland, which is also the site of the first federal irrigation project. Livestock ranching and dairying are other major sources of the economy, as is natural gas production.

Willows has always been the county seat. In 1980 the county’s population was 22,500. With an area of 844,288 acres, or 1,314 square miles, that gave it a population density of 17 persons per square mile. Current census 2000 data indicates the county’s population to be 26,453 demonstrating an approximate 15% population increase to date with a projected year 2020 population of 46,500 effectively doubling the county’s population.

Glenn County Population Distribution

<i>Race & Hispanic Origin, 2000</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
White	18,988	71.2%
Black/African American	155	0.6%
American Indian/Alaska Native	552	2.1%
Asian	893	3.4%
Pacific Islander	35	0.1%
Other race	4,810	18.2%
Two or more races	1,020	3.9%
Hispanic origin, total	7,840	29.6%
Mexican	6,973	
Puerto Rican	39	
Cuban	4	
Other Hispanic	824	
Total Population	26,453	100%
<i>Gender, 2000</i>	xxxxxxxxx	
Male	13,373	
Female	13,080	
<i>Age, 2000</i>	xxxxxxxxx	
Under 5 year	1,992	4.8%
18 years and over	18,312	44.2%
12 years and over	17,224	41.6%
65 years and over	3,431	8.3%
85 years and over	434	1.05%
Median age	33.7 years	

Education

There are a total of 10 school districts providing services to a total of 6,167 enrolled students. Student performance on the standardized Stanford 9 Scores, an evaluation tool which attempts to represent that percent of students scoring at or above the 50th National Percentile Rank, reflects the following data:

<i>Area / Subject Matter</i>	<i>Percentile</i>
3 rd grad reading	43rd
3 rd grade math	55th
7 th grade reading	47th
7 th grand math	58th
11 th grade reading	30th
11th grade math	36th

The average 12th grade student SAT score in our county is 456 for verbal and 472 for math. This however only reflects the 29.8% of enrolled students who went through the evaluation process. The Superintendent of Schools for Glenn County is Joni Samples.

County Governance

A general law form of governance prevails within Glenn County.

As of February 2001 the county had 11,483 registered voters equating to 43.4% of the population. Democrats claim 4,316 or 37.6% with Republicans accounting for 46% of the 5,285 registered voters. The county’s eight (8) legislative districts are comprised of two Congressional, four State Senatorial and two State Assembly districts.

Public Safety personnel consists of a Sheriff in combination with forty-three (43) sworn officers, twenty-nine (29) of them within the sheriff’s department, the remaining personnel, as of 1999, being distributed between both the Willows and Orland Police Departments. The resources of the CHP are also utilized for public safety enforcement. Total crimes for year 2000 are reported to be 785 with 80 (10.1%) described as violent crimes.

Income & Poverty Information

The median household income per 1997 available data was estimated to be \$28,649.

Types of Households

<i>Type of Household</i>	<i># Households</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
With person under 18	3,802	41.5%
With person over 65	2,473	27.0%
Family households	6,733	73.4%
Single Person households	2,022	22.0%
Receiving Public Assistance	n/a	
Receiving Social Security	n/a	
Persons per Household	2.84	
Persons per Family	3.33	
Institutionalized Population	310	
Total Households	9,172	

Housing & Construction

<i>Housing Units, 2000</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
TOTAL	9,982	
Occupied	9,171	92.0%
Seasonal / Recreational Use	142	1.4%
Single Family Units	n/a	
Owner Occupied Units	5,855	58.7%
Renter Occupied Units	3,317	33.2%
Median Value Single Family	n/a	
Median Rent	n/a	
Persons per Family	n/a	
<i>New Private Housing Units Authorized by Permit</i>		
1998	19	
1999	27	
2000	31	

Introduction

The court’s Chief Executive Officer, Assistant Executive Officer and an independent planning consultant met numerous times to develop this Action Plan. Despite its limited resources, the court’s officers and staff were able to conduct surveys of customers and staff to assist them in assessing the current challenges and conditions facing self-represented litigants as they attempt to seek resolution of their legal issues through the facilities and services provided to them by the court.

1. Description of Need:

Available Court Information. Although the sampling period was somewhat hampered by time limitations, it is worth of note that 100% of customer respondents indicated that they were at the courthouse to deal with issues of Family Law as indicated in table 1 below.

Table 1

<i>Case Type</i>	<i>#Responses</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
Civil	0	0
Small Claims	0	0
Probate	0	0
Guardianship	2	12.5
Conservatorship	0	0
Traffic	0	0
Juvenile Dependents	0	0
Juvenile Delinquency	0	0
Criminal	0	0
Divorce	4	25
DA Child Support	4	25
Child Custody Unmarried Parents	6	37.5
Domestic Violence	0	0
Unlawful Detainer	0	0
Other: <i>Adoption-Family Research- Custody-Civil Harassment</i>	0	0
Total	16	100%

These filings alone do not represent the full scope of demands for information and service self-represented litigants present to the court. Many hours of court resources and staff time are extended to court users who may not actually become litigants.

Additional Data Gathering. The Court finds itself serving a county population with a median household income of \$28,649*. Many county residents are the product of an educational system whose student’s performance in the math and reading components of the Stanford 9 Score evaluation tool fall from 58% and 47% respectively in the 7th grade, to 36% and 30% respectively by the time they reach the 11th grade. Only 29.8% of students attempt the SAT evaluation.

Given this level of academic achievement, it is not surprising that a mere 12.9% of the county's \$32,849,079 annual budget is supported by its tax base with 67.6% of the remaining budget supplied through aid from other governmental agencies. The following highlights of the research findings conducted by the court provide a comprehensive description of the challenges faced by the court as it attempts to meet the needs of self-represented litigants in Glenn County.

Self-Represented Litigants Needs:

- Overwhelming, 69.2% of customer respondents report their purpose for being at the courthouse was to get information.
- Despite this expressed intention, 61.6% of customers report having visiting the courthouse between 5 to 8+ times. It might appear that either their need for information went unsatisfied or perhaps their ability to understand and/or utilize the information they did receive proved insufficient.
- Staff reflected an almost universal lack of knowledge and comprehension by self-represented litigants about court procedures.
- Another interesting finding is that while 58.3% of respondent reported not trying to get legal help for their issues, of the remaining 41.7% who did seek assistance, they sought it primarily from friends or relatives.
- The court however proved to be the provider of most of the assistance eventually accessed with 41.7% of respondents reporting having received help from the court in one form or another.
- A significant finding is that none of these customer survey respondents came to be represented by counsel with 66.7% reporting costs as the reason.

Growing Population of Self-Represented Litigants:

- Staff report an overall 73.3% increase in self-represented litigants seeking services from the court over the past five-year period.
- None reported a decrease.

Available Court Resources:

- Although a majority of court staff (45%) feel they are prepared to meet the increasing demand for information and services presented by self-represented litigants, it is important to note a significant number (40%) also reflect the need for increased training.
- This desire for more training appears to be supported by, in large part, a history of training experiences (36.4%) based on chance "learn as you go" rather than through a concerted training program.
- The need for more effective staff training is further supported by 29.4% of staff requesting more training to bolster their confidence and increase their understanding about how much help they can give self-represented customers.

2. **Program Areas:** As a result of the research conducted and the numerous planning sessions attended by the court’s executive officers, the following program areas have been identified to best address the need of self-represented litigants in Glenn County.

- 1) *Establish a Self-Help Center*
- 2) *Expand Technological Access*
- 3) *Improve Access to Legal Services*
- 4) *Training Via Education*
- 5) *Facilities Expansion*

3. **Program Action Plans:**

Program Area: 1.0 Establish a Self-Help Center

a. **Program Description:**

As they search for information about legal remedies, process and procedures available to them to address their legal issues, self-represented litigants seek out this information from a multiplicity of sources. In an effort to provide a one-stop location for them to access the comprehensive, timely, accurate and precise information required to respond effectively, as well as to efficiently access and secure due process for their legal affairs, a Self-Help Center is to be established.

b. **Program Partners:**

Local Bar	California Rural Legal Assistance	Family Law Facilitator
Other Courts	Ongoing Customer Base	

c. Program Plan: 1.0 Establish a Self-Help Center

<i>Task</i>	<i>Resources Required</i>	<i>Person/Org. Responsible</i>	<i>#FTE Hrs / Time</i>
1a. Point-of-Contact FTE Research funding	FTE Hrs.	Administration Staff	56 Hrs/ 12 months
1b. Apply for applicable grant funding.	FTE Hrs.	Administrative Staff	40 Hrs. over period of 1 year
1c. Write job specifications	FTE Hrs. / Consultant Help	Administration Staff Consultant	20 <u>20 Hrs</u> 24 Hrs / By: 90 Days after funding
1d. Recruit and Hire	FTE Hrs.	Administration Secretary	90-150 days after funding POC
	Advertise / Post Interview Panel	Administration Interview Panel	4 weeks 1 week
1e. Job Expectations gathered for POC position	Administration Judges	Administration Judges	8.0 Hrs. / From To By: Post POC funding
1f. Increase funding for increase in FLF hours	FTE Hrs.	Administration	40 Hrs. / 12months

d. Existing Resources That Will Be Used:

- *Baseline budget funding - one time only*
- *Law library on-line resources*
- *Grand funding – SHARP (To fund video conferencing and attorney FTE project position)*
- *Family Law Facilitator*
- *Physical facilities*
- *Administrative and staff FTE resources*
- *Judicial input and review*
- *Outreach / Advertising funds*

e. Additional Resources Needed:

- *Funding*
- *Physical facilities*
- *Staffing Funds – Point of Contact FTE – IT staff – Court staff – Paralegals*
- *BAR support*
- *Legal Aid Services*
- *Hardware / Software*

f. **Evaluation:**

The impact of the Self-Help Center efforts and programs will be monitored through a variety of methodologies including but not limited to:

- *Judicial feedback relating to the types and frequency of cases heard, conduct of litigants, and time spent on each case.*
- *Survey responses from court staff will be periodically applied addressing a variety of variables to be determined by administration and staff.*
- *Customer feedback from comment cards.*
- *Family Law Facilitator feedback before and after the center is operational.*
- *Case Management System comparisons before and after center is operational.*
- *Tracking of physical traffic before and after center is operational.*
- *Comparison of the public relations image held by customers and the community before and after the center is operational.*

Program Area: 2.0 Expanding Technological Access

a. **Program Description:**

In an effort to expand the breadth of information and services available to self-represented litigants, as well as the opportunity to accessing this information beyond regular court business the court will expand its Internet resources to support access from remote sites on a twenty-four basis three hundred sixty-five day a year.

b. **Program Partners:**

Technology Venders	Users	Other Courts
Community College	Local Libraries	AOC
Chico State		

c. Program Plan: 2.0 Expand Technological Access

<i>Task</i>	<i>Resources Required</i>	<i>Person/Org. Responsible</i>	<i>#FTE Hrs / Time</i>
<p>2a. Computer access to all legal information Assess technological requirements and resources required.</p> <p>2a1. Fax Filing, Credit Card Payments, ATM Access, Phone or Internet payments.</p> <p>2a2. Glossary Assess existing glossaries</p> <p>2a3. Expand Case Management System PC access for all</p>	<p>Point of Contact SHC FTE Information Technology Staff Administration Judges FTE Hrs.</p> <p>Hardware, Software</p> <p>FTE Hrs.</p> <p>Information technology staff Administration Supervisory</p>	<p>POC</p> <p>Administration</p> <p>Admin. Analyst Family Law Facilitator POC Supervisors Judges</p> <p>Vendors Administration Information technology staff</p>	<p>480 Hrs. / From: 6/02 To: 9/03 By: 9/03</p> <p>By: 9/03</p> <p>40 Hrs. / From: 3-4 mos. To By: 9/03</p> <p>270 Hrs. / From: 7/02 To By: 9/03</p>
2b. Assess existing in-house Judicial Council forms packets & instructions for current content accuracy and layout consistency	Clerks Family Law Facilitator Administrative staff	Administration POC Supervisory staff Clerks	40.0 Hrs. / From 2 – 3 mos. To
2c. Language Assistance Assess needs via survey data	Staff survey Language Line	Lead interpreter / coordinator Supervising Lead Administration Staff	8.0 Hrs. / From: 7/02 To: Ongoing By: Post POC FTE funding
2d. Reference Materials Assess all available in-house reference materials	Supervisor Family Law Facilitator Administrative Analyst	Supervisory staff Administrative analyst Nancy	2.0 Hrs. / From: 2 months To By: Sept. 30/02
2e. Automated Phone System Assess available systems: What's available & When What are the costs? Are there facilities requirements?	Information Technology staff Supervisor Leads Administration Line staff	Information Technology staff Supervisor Leads Administration Line staff	160 Hrs. / From: 7/02 To: 12/02 By: 12/31/02
2f. Typewriter access	Supervisory	Supervisors Administrative Analyst	Completed
2g. Case Management System Expand AGS data	Vendor FTE Hrs.	IT staff Administration Supervisors Vendors	270 Hrs. / From: 7/02 To: 9/03 By:
2h. Seminars with facilitator since '99 on-going plus teleconferencing	2 –3 year grant	Judges Family Law Facilitator Attorney FTE Administration	Hrs. / From: 5/02 To: 5/04 By: 5/04

d. Existing Resources That Will Be Used:

- *Computers*
- *Web-Site Grant*
- *Forms*
- *Telephones*
- *Typewriters*
- *Reproduction Equipment*
- *FTE funding*
- *Law Library Software*
- *Fax & Credit Card Payments*

e. Additional Resources Needed:

- *Funding*
- *IT staffing ongoing past term position*
- *Equipment*
- *Physical facilities*
- *Software*

f. Evaluation Methodology:

Our efforts to expand access to information and legal services through technology will be monitored through a variety of methodologies including but not limited to:

- *Tracking the number of Web-site hits per area by case type.*
- *Automated phone tracking of increase / decrease in case type per area.*
- *Visual observations of real time traffic.*
- *Tracking changes in FTE resources applied to file review activities.*
- *Application of periodic survey / comment cards from physical customers & on line users.*
- *Tracking the increase / decrease in credit card payments.*
- *Tracking electronic forms retrieval, forms infill and case filings.*

Program Area: 3.0 Improve Access to Legal Services

a. Program Description:

In an effort to improve access to legal information and services, innovative approaches must be explored. These approaches will address procedural access as well as the physical and cognitive dimensions of accessibility.

b. Program Partners:

Local Bar	County Government	ADA Federal & State Agencies & Experts
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c. Program Plan: 3.0 Improve Access to Legal Services

<i>Task</i>	<i>Resources Req.</i>	<i>Person/Org. Responsible</i>	<i>#FTE Hrs / Time</i>
3a. Unbundled Services Assess receptivity from: Bench Bar	FTE Hrs.	Administration Administration Bench Bar POC	Hrs. / From To By: After funding for POC
3b. Assess ADA Compliance: Physical Cognitive Assess facility compliance: re. paper work, forms preparation, interpreters, video conferencing, and pictorials.	FTE Hrs.	POC as part of program development POC	Hrs. / From To By: After funding for POC

d. Existing Resources That Will Be Used:

- *Local Bar*
- *Judicial Officers*
- *Family Law Facilitator*
- *Technology*
- *Court Staff*
- *Facilities: Building/Grounds Maintenance Staff*
- *Interpreters*
- *Mediator Staff*

e. **Additional Resources Needed:**

- *Facilities consultant / architect*
- *Interpreters*
- *Funding – General*
- *Consultant for ADA cognitive component guidelines / criteria*

f. **Evaluation:**

Periodic surveys, ongoing comment cards and issue specific assessments will be applied as needed.

Program Area 4.0 Training Via Education of Public and Court Staff

a. **Program Description:**

Educate the general public, with a particular focus upon potential and actual self-represented litigants, and court staff about the services, processes and procedures comprising the courts functions as it relates to self-represented litigant issues. The resources currently being absorbed to bridge the gap in knowledge held by court customers and staff will then be able to be redirected to other demands made upon the already scarce court resources.

b. **Program Partners:**

Family Law Facilitator	AOC	Local Teachers
Colleges	School Districts	

c. Program Plan: 4.0 Training via Education: Public, Students, Court Staff

<i>Task</i>	<i>Resources Req.</i>	<i>Person/Org. Responsible</i>	<i>Time #FTE Hrs. / Span</i>
4a. Assess Need: Public Student Staff & Management	FTE Hrs.	POC	80 Hrs. / From To
		POC	By 7/15/02???
4b. Develop curriculum in case of grant or if wanting to do in-house. Public: re. PR about Center, courtroom protocol, forms & how to use them. Students	FTE Hrs. Materials & Equipment Existing grant funds	Administration POC	40 Hrs. / 6 months for each curriculum Complete 1-2 yrs. after funding POC 80 Hrs. / From To By: 6-8 month after funding POC hire 1 year for student thru existing grant
4c. Locate resources to provide training	FTE Hrs.	Administration	80Hrs / 1-2 yrs. after funding

d. Existing Resources That Will Be Used:

- *OAC Satellite Facilities and Courses*
- *Teleconferencing Capabilities*
- *Judicial Education Grant for Youth*
- *On-line Self-Help Center - AOC Website*
- *Flyers and Brochures from AOC*
- *CJER Programs*
- *California State University*
- *Butte College*
- *Equipment*
- *Judicial and Court Staff*

e. Additional Resources Needed:

- *Funding for: Point of Contact Attorney FTE Position
Curriculum Development and Delivery
Increased Training Resources – All Types*
- *Physical Facilities*
- *IT Support and Equipment*

f. Evaluation Methodologies:

The impact of our training / educational efforts and programs will be monitored through a variety of methodologies including but not limited to:

- *Tracking the increase in the number of courses provided by the Department of Education.*
- *Periodic surveys, comment cards and assessments will be applied to participants before and immediately after attending educational programs as well as at the courthouse to assess the effectual operational impact of these programs.*
- *Survey feedback from the general public to assess perception of court held by the public.*
- *Periodic application of customer surveys.*

Program Area: 5.0 Dedicate Facilities for Self-Help Center

a. Program Description:

Provide physical facilities allowing access for all self-help litigants to the court’s full spectrum of services.

b. Program Partners:

Architects	County Court Trades Orgs.	Venders for fixtures
Real Estate Agents	Federal /State ADA Experts	

c. Program Plan: 5.0 Secure Dedicated Facilities for Self-Help Center

<i>Task</i>	<i>Resources Required</i>	<i>Person/Org. Responsible</i>	<i>#FTE Hrs / Time</i>
5.1 Assess existing in-house space	FTE Hrs.	Administration	40 Hrs. / 1-2 years after funding POC
5.2 Assess existing off site options with ADA considerations	FTE Hrs.	Administration	160Hrs / 1-2 years after funding POC

d. Existing Resources That Will Be Used:

- *Courthouse Facilities*
- *General Services Maintenance Staff*
- *Administrative Staff*
- *Court Courthouse Construction Funds*
- *Non-Trial Court Trust Fund Monies*
- *Any Available Equipment*

e. Additional Resources Needed:

- *Facilities Funding*
- *Hardware*
- *Fixtures*
- *Architectural Assistance*

f. Evaluation Methodologies:

The impact of the Self-Help Center's physical facility upon our court's ability to deliver our self-help services and programs will be monitored through a variety of methodologies including but not limited to:

- *Customer comment card after using center.*
- *Direct contact solicitation from Self-Help Center users via comment cards and telephone follow-up.*
- *Direct verbal and survey feedback from court staff.*
- *Assessment for comprehensive ADA compliance.*

4. State Support:

Mandated funding for Self-Help Center staffing and certified interpreters.	Promote and support the education of Bar members relating to the unbundling of legal services and the Court’s programs to assist Self-Represented Litigants.
Clarification of Judicial Council and Chief Justice priorities as well as the role of the Glenn County Superior Court.	Public education and public relations support for our SRL programs.
Clarification of Standards & Practices and the role of the role of the Judicial Council.	Resource support for a mobile access unit to provide information and services to populations in remote locations.
Facilities expansion.	Department of Education CJER support.
State wide survey information access.	

5. Unique Approaches:

Mobile unit access for remote populations.	Use of Kiosks.
Active participation by court staff in community events.	Harnessing of existing strong community cohesiveness.
Coordination of SRL and programs with other Courts.	Childcare made available to Family Law Facilitator customers.
Extensive staff involvement in the design and implementation of all SRL programs.	Education of officials via Website.
Online filing, filling out of forms, payment of fees.	Use of teleconferencing and video resources within and between agencies.
Unbundling of legal services.	Comprehensive ADA compliance: Physical-Visual-Auditory-Cognitive
Collaborative education grant for youth.	Use of court “Trading Cards”.
Community education policing.	“Ask the Judge” articles and Website questions.
Open house tours of court facilities.	

6. Sustaining the Action Plan:

Glenn County Superior Court intends to support this action plan through the application of its current baseline budgetary resources and a continuing tenacious effort to acquire the ongoing funding develop the qualified staffing required to enhance the real success of our SRL programs by: creating and delivering public outreach to generate support for the court’s efforts: expanding the court’s physical facilities through a Courthouse remodeling program currently in it’s initial design phase; developing a comprehensive, content current, accurate, precise and well maintained Website; aggressively engaging members of the local Bar, judiciary, and court staff to pro-actively support our the plan.