

Funding

VISION STATEMENT

In the 21st Century, the Iowa Judicial Branch is fully funded at levels necessary to fulfill its mission to the people of Iowa. Court operations are primarily funded by the state; appropriations to the Judicial Branch for ongoing operations are not dependent on the courts' ability to generate revenue. Facilities continue to be primarily funded by the counties or other governmental entities. Court business is conducted in facilities that lend dignity and respect to the judicial process and which provide a modern, efficient and safe work environment.

As a co-equal branch of government, the Judicial Branch works in partnership with the Legislative and Executive branches to deliver justice to Iowans. The judicial budget is considered on an equal basis with the budgets of the Legislative and Executive branches. The three branches are jointly responsible for the effective allocation of resources for the state court system. The decisional independence of the courts is maintained while interbranch cooperation, communication and accountability to support the public good are fostered. Judicial independence and fiscal accountability are not considered mutually exclusive. The Judicial Branch budget is evaluated and funded on a need-oriented basis. Although court fees continue to be charged for services, they do not block access to justice. The cost of justice is borne by all.

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The court system focuses on its core mission and divests itself of functions not essential to the judicial process. The court system recognizes and honors its responsibility to the people of the state to operate in the most effective and cost-efficient manner, conserving scarce resources and improving the quality and efficiency of the justice process, whenever possible. The courts are free to manage resources. To this end, the courts have developed and implemented objective criteria for measuring and monitoring work loads and other relevant performance measures throughout the system. Resource allocation for every court is tied to these criteria. Court policies encourage and reward good fiscal management and innovations that result in greater efficiency and quality service within the system. Judges and court personnel are fairly compensated at a rate that attracts and retains quality employees. Judges and court personnel are provided with appropriate opportunities for personal and professional development.

The Judicial Branch is actively involved in informing and educating both the Executive and Legislative branches, as well as state agencies and the public, about the role and operation of the courts so that they can better assess the need for court resources and understand the societal repercussions of an underfunded system. The Judicial Branch develops the data and information necessary to effectively communicate the resources it needs to fulfill its mission.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SOURCES OF FUNDING

1.1 Maintain State/County Funding — Judicial Branch operations should continue to be primarily funded by the state, while court facilities should continue to be primarily funded by the counties or other governmental entities. The counties and courts should address the needs for which funding responsibility is not clearly delineated.

Rationale: Since the final implementation of the State Reorganization Act in 1987, the operating costs and related functions of Iowa's courts have been funded by the state, while trial court facilities and offices have continued to be funded by counties. State and county funding responsibilities for the courts are set out in Iowa Code sections 602.1302 and 602.1303.

State funding of operations has benefited Iowa's courts in many ways: providing costs savings through economies of scale; improving the ability to shift resources and personnel where needed; allowing standardization of personnel and financial management practices; reducing funding inequities between courts; and reducing the financial burden on county governments. At the same time, there have been drawbacks to state funding, including: less-than-clear delineation of some funding responsibilities (e.g., county law libraries); a decrease in local officials' influence on court budget matters; and the coupling of court funding to state politics and the health of the state's economy. Despite this situation, the advantages of state funding far outweigh the disadvantages.

Although Iowa's current court funding mix appears to be working well, in some counties there are needs not being met. For example, there are some court facilities around the state in need of renovation or repair. If county finances become tighter, as is expected, it will become even more difficult to properly maintain and improve these facilities. Furthermore, as the state court system adapts to meet future demands for justice, including the incorporation of advanced information technologies in the delivery of justice, court facilities will require significant renovations and improvements.

The Judicial Branch should work closely with local officials to identify current and future needs for court facilities and to delineate both state and local responsibilities in addressing these. Counties may also seek to share funding responsibilities with each other to provide court facilities that better serve citizens at the local level. Court facilities at all levels should be safe, efficient, and should lend dignity to the judicial process.

- **Implementation priority:** Ongoing
- **Related recommendation:** Technology 3.2

1.2 Allocate Funds Based on Need — The Legislature should evaluate and fund the Judicial Branch budget based on need. Appropriations for court operations should not depend on the courts' ability to generate revenue.

Rationale: Providing justice is a government responsibility. The notion that the quality of justice is dependent on the court system's ability to pay for itself is contrary to the principles of our tripartite form of government. Reliance on collected court revenues for ongoing court operations inherently calls into question the independence, integrity and fairness of the judicial process. Any movement in this direction would be a throwback to the time of the "justice of the peace courts," when the compensation of some judicial officials was based, in part, on the amount of revenue they collected. If Judicial Branch operations are tied to the courts' ability to generate revenue, the public may perceive that the courts are more interested in collecting fines and fees than in serving justice. This could have serious ramifications for the trust that members of the public currently have in the courts and in their government.

- **Implementation priority:** Short-term

1.3 Recommend Adjustments to Court Fees — The state court administrator should periodically review fees charged for court services, and make recommendations to the Legislature for adjustments. Fees should be based on the reasonable cost of providing a given service and should not unfairly restrict access to justice.

Rationale: Courts have traditionally charged fees for a variety of services, e.g., the filing of civil petitions and liens, copying of records, and provisions for court reporter services. A court system cannot and should not be supported by user fees. However, it is anticipated that the state will continue to assess fees for certain court services.

Fees should not be set so high that they create barriers to public access to the courts. The courts should always have the discretion to waive fees for people who cannot afford to pay them.

Fees for court services should be reviewed regularly and adjusted to reflect current economic conditions. When making changes or recommending changes to the Legislature, the state court administrator should be careful to distinguish between fees charged for judicial processes and fees charged for non-judicial services and the collection of information. Fees for services not integral to the judicial process could be set at amounts that reflect the cost of providing them.

- **Implementation priority:** Medium-term

1.4 Support Collection of Fines and Fees — The Legislature should provide the Judicial Branch with sufficient resources to collect fines and fees in order to ensure the integrity of court orders and maintain citizen accountability.

Rationale: Although the Commission believes strongly that the Judicial Branch budget should not be dependent upon the revenues it generates, the integrity of the court system requires effective enforcement of all orders, including orders setting fines.

Not surprisingly, effective enforcement requires the dedication of significant resources. At the same time, collection activities should be cost-effective. The courts should not spend valuable resources trying to collect fines that are uncollectible. The courts should develop a procedure for “writing off” uncollectible fines.

Enforcement of fines should be a joint effort of all branches of state government and between state and local government. The courts should assume a leadership role in developing strategies for cooperative, effective collection efforts. Adequate resources should be allocated by the Legislature to the courts and state agencies for the staff and technology necessary to effectively enforce fines.

Successful cooperative efforts already exist, such as the state’s tax intercept procedure and central collection unit, both of which are administered by the Department of Revenue and Finance in cooperation with the Judicial Branch. Also, many county attorneys aggressively pursue the collection of fines.

- **Implementation priority:** Short-term

Success Story: Collection of Fines

In recent years, Iowa’s Judicial Branch has strengthened its commitment to effective fine enforcement and set in motion a host of programs aimed at improving collection. At the request of the Chief Justice, each judicial district developed or enhanced its own fine collection program. Many court personnel, including clerks of court and their staff, magistrates and judges, stepped up their efforts to collect delinquent fines. More fines are being collected with the help of computers. Cooperative efforts with other government bodies have also proved successful.

1.5 Seek Alternative Funding Sources — The Judicial Branch should actively seek out alternative sources of funding to supplement state general fund appropriations. The courts should continue to look for supplementary sources of funds, such as federal grants; they should also look for new sources, such as private-sector grants.

Rationale: As revealed by the Commission’s public opinion survey, the amount of money spent by the state of Iowa to administer the state court

system is far less than is commonly believed. Today's courts account for less than 3 percent of the total state budget. Yet, forecasts indicate a long-term probable trend of increasing case loads and related demands and pressures on the courts. Without proportionate increases in the state court budget to prepare for and address such demands, the delivery of justice in Iowa, and the stability it brings to government and society in general, may be compromised. In reality, some of this future funding may have to come from alternative, even non-traditional sources.

Although the primary source of funding for court operations is, and should continue to be, state appropriations, the Judicial Branch should continue to seek out alternative sources of funding to enhance its budget. Federal funds and grants, as well as specially earmarked monies, can provide some insulation in times of tight budgets, and resources for innovative programs.

For example, the Judicial Branch Court Technology Fund, established in 1994, is a dedicated fund for technology, domestic abuse and mediation projects. Over the years, the State Justice Institute, a federally funded program, has provided many grants for projects that have benefited Iowa's Judicial Branch. Currently, federal grants administered through the Governor's Alliance on Substance Abuse (GASA) are helping fund development of a justice system automation network in Polk County and a statewide, domestic abuse protection-order registry.

Court funding cannot be accomplished in any way that suggests that justice can be purchased or compromised.

While alternative and non-traditional sources may account for a larger share of the court system budget in the future, such funds must be obtained with the utmost care and scrutiny. Because an effective judicial system requires impartiality in decision-making, no funds should be acquired which will destroy or diminish the courts' impartiality, or which will undermine public trust in the court system.

Court funding cannot be accomplished in any way that suggests that justice can be purchased or compromised. Even the appearance of impropriety must be scrupulously avoided.

- **Implementation priority:** Short/medium/long-term

1.6 Explore Sale of Court Databases — The Judicial Branch should explore the sale of court databases and information retrieval systems to help partially offset the costs of new information technologies required to establish such services.

Rationale: Most of Iowa's court records are open to the public. Except for a few types of confidential records, all Iowans have the right to examine, copy and disseminate court records. The law allows the custodian of a public record to charge a fee for copying the record.

As the courts' use of technology increases, it will be able to collect, compile, maintain and collate data in new and unique ways. The courts should carefully study whether or not to charge fees for public access to electronic court records. If the courts determine that fees are appropriate, the fees should be reviewed and adjusted pursuant to Funding Recommendation 1.3

Iowa law provides that a governmental body that maintains a geographic database is not required to permit access to the database except upon the terms and conditions of the governmental body. Court-developed databases and information retrieval systems may be valued by commercial users of court information. The courts should explore the sale of its databases.

Finally, some of the courts' information may qualify for copyright protection. The laws that regulate copyrighted information differ from the laws that regulate public records. It is possible that the Judicial Branch may sell its copyrighted records for a profit. This should also be explored.

- **Implementation priority:** Short/medium/long-term
- **Related recommendation:** Technology 2.4

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND BUDGETING

2.1 Assign New Appropriation Subcommittee — The Legislature should review the Judicial Branch budget as part of the same subcommittee that reviews the operating budgets of the Legislature and the Office of the Governor.

Rationale: The Judicial Branch exists as a co-equal branch of government, working in partnership with the Legislative and Executive branches to deliver justice to Iowans. The three branches are jointly responsible for the effective allocation of resources for the state judicial system.

Currently, the Judicial Branch budget request is reviewed in the Legislature by the Justice Systems Joint Appropriations Subcommittee, which also considers budget requests by the Attorney General and a variety of criminal justice agencies. This arrangement results in a narrow focus on the courts as a criminal justice agency only, and diminishes the Judicial Branch's status as a co-equal branch of government.

The Executive and Legislative budgets, on the other hand, are considered jointly by the Administration and Regulation Joint Appropriations Subcommittee, which also reviews the budgets of the Executive Council, Secretary of State, Treasurer, and the departments of General Services, Management, Personnel, and Revenue and Finance.

It is important to the mission and function of the courts that the co-equal status of Iowa's Judicial Branch include co-equal treatment of its budget. Moving legislative oversight of the Judicial Branch budget from the Justice Systems Joint Appropriations Subcommittee to a new subcommittee that oversees the operating budgets of the Legislature and Governor would place the courts in a more equal position.

- **Implementation priority:** Short-term

2.2 Allocate Funding for Long-Range Planning — The Legislature should allocate funds for the staff and resources necessary to implement the recommendations of this Commission and to permit the Judicial Branch to engage in strategic long-range planning.

Rationale: Progressive and well-respected court systems throughout the country rely on the services of professional planners. The Iowa Supreme Court must stress the priority of this need in its annual budget negotiations with the Legislature. The Legislature must respond with a commitment of resources for court planning. Otherwise, the substantial work of this Commission and its citizen members will not be fulfilled.

- **Implementation priority:** Short/medium/long-term
- **Related recommendations:** Planning and Public Education 1.1, 1.2, 1.4

2.3 Integrate Budgeting and Planning Functions — The Judicial Branch should integrate the established budgeting process with an ongoing strategic planning process to ensure that scarce resources are allocated to the highest priority needs.

Rationale: The annual budgeting process of the Judicial Branch currently serves as the primary form of planning undertaken by the state court system. While the budgetary process is a critically important function of the courts, it is also somewhat limited in its ability to assess the long-term needs and resources of the courts or to incorporate such information into the annual allocation of resources. The courts need to think and behave more strategically when making critical resource allocation decisions. Specifically, budget decisions should take into consideration emerging trends and issues, and be based on long-range priorities consistent with the court's mission and values.

Planning ensures the continuity of any institution's mission, values and long-range vision. It helps organizations anticipate emerging conditions, set long-term directions and adjust their operations accordingly. As recommended by the Commission, the Judicial Branch should establish and fund an ongoing planning function that provides the long-range, strategic context currently missing from its annual budgeting and resource allocation process.

To take advantage of this function, however, the budgeting process must be directly tied to the planning process. To further this goal, administrators should be educated in long-range and strategic planning in order to use it in the budget process. Additionally, regular communication between policy-makers, administrators and planners must take place in order to ensure that strategic information developed through the planning function is carefully considered in budgetary decisions.

- **Implementation priority:** Short-term
- **Related recommendations:** Planning and Public Education 1.1, 1.5

2.4 Collect Information on Impact of Legislation — The Judicial Branch should collect more information about the amount of time and resources devoted to processing cases and providing other court services. This information should be used to support the Judicial Branch’s budget request, measure the potential impact of proposed legislation, and analyze the effect of newly enacted legislation.

Rationale: The Iowa Legislature, like many state legislatures, has a process for developing information about the potential impact of proposed legislation. In Iowa, the Legislative Fiscal Bureau analyzes the fiscal impact of certain bills under consideration. The Bureau routinely uses information provided by other agencies and entities, including the Judicial Branch. However, these impact statements do not ensure that the Judicial Branch receives the resources it needs to implement new legislation. Nor do they stop legislators from voting in favor of laws that make good public policy or bills that are strongly favored by constituents. Nonetheless, fiscal notes are an important part of the Legislature’s fact-finding process and the data provided by the Judicial Branch should be as informative as possible.

The types of information collected by the Judicial Branch for measuring the impact of legislation are limited to basic case filing and case disposition numbers. Often the Judicial Branch relies on anecdotal information. The Judicial Branch should collect more empirical data to help measure the effect of legislation before and after it is approved. The same data used for

establishing work load measures for personnel as recommended in Funding Recommendation 2.5 can be used to help determine the fiscal impact of legislation.

The Supreme Court should ask legislative leaders to develop a protocol for the Judicial Branch to provide the Legislature with information about the other kinds of effects that proposed laws have on the courts in addition to fiscal impacts.

The Supreme Court should also examine the idea of tying its requests for new funding to the effects of newly enacted legislation. For instance, technology could be used to collect information on the amount of time used by judges and court personnel to process a newly enacted criminal offense or civil proceeding. This information could be used to support requests for more judges and staff. Again, the information used for work load measures could be used for this purpose.

- **Implementation priority:** Short-term
- **Related recommendations:** Planning and Public Education 2.1, 2.3

2.5 Establish Need Formulas for Personnel — The Judicial Branch should establish benchmarks for levels of service and work load measures to help determine the number of judges and other court personnel needed.

Rationale: In order to be effective and useful, budget requests at all levels of the system — from local to district offices, from districts to the Supreme Court, and finally from the Supreme Court to the Legislature — must be based on objective criteria and corresponding information that facilitates the evaluation of resources requested. Such an approach can greatly simplify and enhance the budgetary decision-making process.

The Judicial Branch currently uses a weighted work load formula and staffing protocol to determine budgeted clerk of court positions. Similar

Random or inconsistent application of judgeship formulas tends to undermine their effectiveness.

formulas should be developed and employed for all major personnel categories, including magistrates, juvenile court officers, and juvenile, district associate and district court judges. In addition, requests for new judges should never be viewed in isolation, i.e., without regard for necessary support staff, equipment and travel expenses. New judgeships should include all the tools and resources needed to effectively and efficiently carry out the responsibilities of their office.

Iowa also has formulas for judges and magistrates. The district court judgeship formula, for example, is based on the number of case filings and population in judicial election subdistricts. The reality is that this formula is frequently disregarded by the Legislature. Random or inconsistent application of judgeship formulas tends to undermine their effectiveness, and can contribute to arbitrary budget decisions.

Statutory judgeships (including district associate judges, associate juvenile judges, probate judges and magistrates) and formulas should be re-examined as part of a comprehensive Supreme Court study of overall judgeship needs. Since this Commission has also recommended that the Supreme Court establish a task force to evaluate Iowa's existing trial court structure and clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of every type of judicial officer (see Administration Recommendation 2.4), any study of judgeship formulas should be part of—or at least undertaken in coordination with—such a task force.

- **Implementation priority:** Short-term
- **Related recommendations:** Delivery of Justice 3.3; Administration 2.4, 2.5, 2.8

2.6 Provide Fiscal Management Incentives — The Judicial Branch should provide incentives to promote good fiscal management, encouraging and supporting initiatives and projects that address the distinct needs of local courts in a manner consistent with state policies.

Rationale: Judicial independence and fiscal accountability are not mutually exclusive. The stewardship of public funds requires efficient manage-

ment and involves public scrutiny. However, the Judicial Branch should be given managerial freedom in the use of resources to ensure that they are allocated to priority needs, to facilitate planning, and to promote efficient utilization of resources.

Managers will not effectively pursue cost control or organizational change unless there are incentives to do so. Performance incentives and rewards enhance efficiency and productivity. The Judicial Branch, its districts and individual offices must share in the benefits of cost control and be rewarded for good cost control behaviors. For example, the personnel system could provide financial rewards for efficiency, savings, and innovations; districts and local offices could be allowed to retain a portion of any budget savings; and a portion of savings could be carried over into the next fiscal year.

The provision of fiscal management incentives to promote new efficiencies and productivity must preserve a careful balance between uniformity and flexibility. In a complex organization like the state court system, some procedures and practices are so universally effective in promoting good management that they lend themselves to system-wide application; ultimately, such “best practices” become the basis of uniform policy. At the same time, some procedures and practices need to be customized in order to respond to unique local conditions and requirements; such flexible applications honor organizational diversity and allow local innovation to thrive. Paradoxically, local innovation often leads to system-wide best practices. The Judicial Branch needs both.

- **Implementation priority:** Short/medium/long-term
- **Related recommendations:** Administration 2.9, 3.3

COMMUNICATION AND CONSTITUENCY BUILDING

3.1 Present Annual Budget Rationale — The Judicial Branch should provide a detailed rationale for budget requests in a report accompanying the Chief Justice’s annual State of the Judiciary address to the Legislature.

Rationale: At the start of each legislative session, the Chief Justice is invited to address a joint session of the Legislature and state officials on the state of the Judicial Branch. The text of the Chief Justice’s message is disseminated to the Governor, legislators, judges, clerks of court, bar leaders and the media. Additional materials that support and further explain the message, including statistics and clearly-stated justifications for budget requests, add to its effectiveness.

The State of the Judiciary message is a highly visible tool for discussing matters of concern to the Judicial Branch. The Judicial Branch should use this occasion to the fullest to promote its concerns.

- **Implementation priority:** Ongoing

3.2 Promote Public Understanding of Court Needs — The Judicial Branch, as part of its public education function, should promote awareness of the benefits of a fully funded court system and the resulting societal costs of underfunding the system.

Rationale: Currently, the operation of the state court system accounts for less than three percent of Iowa’s state budget. This single fact and its implications for the future delivery of justice is little known or appreciated by Iowans. In fact, the Commission’s public opinion survey revealed a distinct lack of knowledge regarding court funding on the part of the public. Only 50 percent of survey respondents would venture an opinion on this subject. Of those who did, four out of five grossly overestimated the amount of funding actually allocated to the courts. Compared to public perceptions and expectations, the reality of court funding is stark.

As demands on the courts continue to increase, it will become even more difficult for the court system to deliver the prompt, fair and efficient adjudi-

cative services Iowans expect and have come to depend upon. It is important that the Judicial Branch be a strong advocate for a fully funded court system. Securing funding for the courts means that Judicial Branch budgets must be developed, advocated and defended. If Iowans continue to expect a high level of court services, it follows that they be asked to support court funding. It is legitimate that the Judicial Branch inform citizens of its funding needs and encourage their support. Such advocacy need not conflict with the highest standards of judicial independence and integrity, nor be conducted in a self-serving manner.

The Judicial Branch should make concerted efforts to make the public itself an advocate for the courts. This would include educating citizens on the needs and resource requirements of the court system. It would also include informing them of the significant social benefits of a fully funded court system — as well as the potential social costs of underfunding that system. Such information should be an integral part of ongoing public outreach and education efforts sponsored by the Judicial Branch.

- **Implementation priority:** Short-term
- **Related recommendations:** Delivery of Justice 3.3; Planning and Public Education 3.1, 3.3, 3.5

3.3 Strengthen Intergovernmental Dialogue — The Judicial Branch should assume a leadership role in strengthening the ongoing dialogue between the three branches of government and local officials to encourage continuing reform and innovation in the courts.

Rationale: Providing Iowans with a fair and effective court system is a mission shared by the three branches of government. The strength of Iowa's justice system depends on the strength of the partnership that exists and must exist between the three branches. Good communication is the key to maintaining a good partnership.

Currently, the Judicial Branch has a legislative program that is set and directed by the Supreme Court. The Court has a legislative liaison who works with legislators primarily during the session. On a daily basis, court staff members track the status of bills affecting the courts, provide information

about the fiscal impact of bills to the Legislature, circulate bills and legislative reports to a large group of judges and court staff for comment, and respond to questions from lawmakers. The Chief Justice gives an annual State of the Judiciary message, and justices, chief judges, and district court administrators periodically meet with legislators about Judicial Branch concerns.

In addition, several judicial districts have annual informational meetings for their area legislators. Such meetings provide the opportunity for judges and court personnel to get better acquainted with lawmakers, to pass on information about the court system, and to discuss matters of common interest.

Success Story: Conference on Court Funding

In fall 1995, members of Iowa's three branches of government attended the National Interbranch Conference on Funding the State Courts in Minneapolis. The conference provided a forum for the sharing of best practices and new ideas from other jurisdictions. This gave Iowa's representatives an opportunity to become acquainted and gain insight into the perspective of other branches of government.

Chief judges should communicate regularly with area lawmakers and local officials about issues of mutual concern. The Supreme Court should explore other ways to build a foundation for dialogue between the three branches. For example, some state court systems offer judicial ride-along programs, which allow lawmakers a chance to accompany a judge during a day at court.

In the past, effective communication between the courts and other branches of government has not always been a reality. While the Judicial Branch must maintain its independence in decision-making, this does not—nor should not—preclude regular, consistent communication with other government officials regarding matters of mutual concern. It is important that the Judicial Branch and the Supreme Court in particular take a leading role in establishing and enhancing such a dialogue.

- **Implementation priority:** Short/medium/long-term
- **Related recommendations:** Technology 2.3; Planning and Public Education 1.6

3.4 Expand Internal Communication on Legislative Issues — The Judicial Branch should expand its internal communication system to inform judges and other court personnel in a more effective and timely manner of legislative issues that affect the courts, including the Judicial Branch budget.

Rationale: Interested parties, including legislators, frequently ask judges and court personnel questions about pending legislation. In many instances, judges and court personnel are not sufficiently conversant to respond knowledgeably. Uninformed judges and court personnel create a less than coherent picture of Judicial Branch legislative priorities and may lead to confusion or a lack of support for the courts' legislative initiatives. This lack of knowledge also does not speak well for the internal communication of the courts.

It is in the best interest of all concerned that a regular channel of communications is opened so that correct information can be imparted to those making the request. The courts should develop a system for quickly communicating legislative matters concerning the Judicial Branch, as well as court system policy matters.

This system must be encouraged and supported at both the state and local level. Possible techniques for expanded communication on legislative issues include special judicial or other personnel briefing sessions, statewide communiqués, facsimiles or even phone trees. Regardless of the technique employed, a commitment to expanded communication is critical to the success of future court legislative initiatives.

- **Implementation priority:** Short/medium/long-term
- **Related recommendations:** Planning and Public Education 2.3

3.5 Broaden Membership of Judicial Advisory Committees —
The Judicial Branch should broaden the membership of its advisory and/or planning committees to include representatives of the Executive and Legislative branches, local officials and representatives of the public-at-large, whenever feasible.

Rationale: The efforts of this Commission have demonstrated that Iowans who are not directly involved in the courts have important information and ideas regarding the functioning of the court system. Beyond state court judges and other personnel, there are other groups of Iowans who have valuable experiences, information or expertise that may improve the day-to-day functioning of the courts. Such perspectives should be incorporated by the court system. Involving citizens from diverse backgrounds is also an effective tool for building a constituency for the court system.

Involving citizens from diverse backgrounds is an effective tool for building a constituency for the court system.

The Judicial Branch should encourage and learn from such perspectives by expanding the membership of its advisory and planning bodies. Lay members should be carefully selected to provide a broad range of interests, perspectives and backgrounds. At the same time, it should be recognized that certain committees, such as those involved in highly technical administrative or legal questions, may require more limited or specialized memberships. An advisory committee on rules of evidence, for example, would probably not lend itself to expanded citizen representation.

- **Implementation priority:** Short-term
- **Related recommendations:** Administration 2.3; Technology 1.1; Planning and Public Education 1.6

3.6 Bring Judicial Branch Perspective to Government Committees
— The Judicial Branch should increase its representation on all government advisory boards, commissions and committees that make decisions affecting court resources, work loads and the administration of justice.

Rationale: Just as it is important to bring outside citizen and consumer perspectives into the ongoing operation of the courts, it is equally important to communicate Judicial Branch perspectives to the other branches and government bodies.

Government boards, commissions and committees frequently make decisions that directly or indirectly affect the courts. Judges and court personnel should serve on advisory boards, commissions and committees of other government bodies to ensure that court perspectives are understood and represented. Judicial Branch representatives should be drawn from all areas of expertise within the court system in order to provide useful, balanced and accurate information on every aspect of the courts.

- **Implementation priority:** Short/medium/long-term
- **Related recommendation:** Planning and Public Education 1.6



SUMMARY OF TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS		IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES				OTHER TEAMS' RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS
		Ongoing	Short Term (1-2 yrs.)	Medium Term (3-5 yrs.)	Long Term (6+ yrs.)	
1.	Sources of Funding					
1.1	Maintain State/County Funding	✓				Technology 3.2
1.2	Allocate Funds Based on Needs		✓			
1.3	Recommend Adjustments to Court Fees			✓		
1.4	Support Collection of Fines and Fees		✓			
1.5	Seek Alternative Funding Sources		✓	✓	✓	
1.6	Explore Sale of Court Databases		✓	✓	✓	Technology 2.4
2.	Resource Management and Budgeting					
2.1	Assign New Appropriation Subcommittees		✓			
2.2	Allocate Funding for Long-Range Planning		✓	✓	✓	Planning 1.1, 1.2, 1.4
2.3	Integrate Budgeting and Planning Functions		✓			Planning 1.1, 1.5
2.4	Collect Information on Impact of Legislation		✓			Planning 2.1, 2.3
2.5	Establish Need Formulas for Personnel		✓			Delivery 3.3; Administration 2.4, 2.5, 2.8
2.6	Provide Fiscal Management Incentives		✓	✓	✓	Administration 2.9, 3.3

3. Communication and Constituency Building						
3.1	Present Annual Budget Rationale	✓				
3.2	Promote Public Understanding of Court Needs		✓			Delivery 3.3; Planning 3.1, 3.3, 3.5
3.3	Strengthen Intergovernmental Dialogue		✓	✓	✓	Technology 2.3; Planning 1.6
3.4	Expand Internal Communication on Legislative Issues		✓	✓	✓	Planning 2.3
3.5	Broaden Membership of Judicial Advisory Committees		✓			Administration 2.3; Technology 1.1; Planning 1.6
3.6	Bring Judicial Branch Perspective to Government Committees		✓	✓	✓	Planning 1.6

Planning and Public Education

VISION STATEMENT

In the 21st Century, the planning process is motivated and inspired by an overall vision for the courts, a vision that is regularly evaluated and updated.

The State of Iowa now funds planning and public education functions within the court system to anticipate the future and not merely react to it. In a non-adversarial environment, unbiased professionals collect information from within the system and monitor trends outside the system, so that Iowa's court system can respond to the needs of its citizens.

The Judicial Branch routinely measures and evaluates, internally and externally, the individual and systemic performance of its players. Judicial decision makers address the evolving dispute resolution needs of society. Managerial decision makers uniformly administer the court system. Adjudicators and managers alike are adequate in number, sufficiently trained and properly equipped.

Communication occurs in an open, responsive and confident climate. Dialogue flows freely and uncensored among all personnel within the Judicial Branch and between it and other branches of government. All personnel in Iowa's court system are stakeholders in the planning process, actively consulted, esteemed, and recognized for contributions. The Judicial Branch demonstrates its commitment to the consumers of judicial services and continues to involve them in the planning process.

Public education has engendered awareness, respect and support from citizens for "their" court system. Law and civic education curricula are provided through the schools in order to promote public understanding of the courts, the rule of law, and the responsibilities of judges, lawyers and citizens. In addition to its own public outreach program, the courts actively support these educational efforts.

Team Members

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RECOMMENDATIONS

JUDICIAL BRANCH PLANNING

1.1 Establish Planning Function — The Iowa Supreme Court should establish and fund a planning function that engages in long-range strategic planning, continually measures the performance of the Judicial Branch, actively consults with all levels of the judicial system, and collaborates with other branches of government.

Rationale: Historically, the courts have been a “reactive” institution, governed by precedent, bound by tradition, and focused on the adjudication of pending disputes. As a consequence, they have not fully developed the experience or resources necessary to anticipate or plan for the future. As accelerating social change places intense new pressures and demands on the courts, they must develop the capacity to respond swiftly to identify emerging trends and issues, and implement long-range institutional reforms. Otherwise, courts will be unable to fulfill their historic mission as guardians of our constitutional democracy.

Currently, the Judicial Branch lacks any coordinated long-range planning process, let alone one that is inspired and motivated by an overall vision for the courts. No one in the Judicial Branch currently performs (or has the means, expertise or opportunity to perform) long-range strategic planning. The Judicial Branch needs such planning in order to prepare itself for the changes and challenges it faces now and in the not-so-distant future. The Judicial Branch similarly lacks any method to evaluate its performance in the delivery of judicial services. Accordingly, it cannot account to itself or to Iowa’s citizens as to how it uses its resources or whether it meets the needs or expectations of the public.

The Judicial Branch needs a dedicated planning function to identify and document valid needs. As competition for resources (especially state funding) intensifies, the presentation of facts and plans will mean the difference between appropriations granted and denied. An internal long-range strategic planning process would promote the capacity to anticipate and plan for the

future. The periodic process of assessing the courts' internal and external operating environments, tracking emerging trends, developing and prioritizing clearly defined goals, and monitoring the implementation of such goals would provide the courts with an ongoing system for navigating an environment of rapid change.

- **Implementation priority:** Short-term
- **Related recommendation:** Funding 2.2.

1.2 Employ Planning Staff — The Judicial Branch should employ professional planning staff who can assist the courts in anticipating and preparing for the future.

Rationale: Court personnel currently lack the experience or expertise to carry out the independent long-range strategic planning function proposed for the Iowa courts by this Commission. While current court staff do engage in annual budgetary and operational planning, no staff members are currently charged with or specifically trained to undertake longer-range planning activities.

In order to implement many of the proposals and concepts developed by this Commission and to establish an independent planning function, full-time professional planning staff will be required. Such staff must be familiar with basic long-range planning concepts and skilled in such specific planning activities as data gathering, environmental scanning and trend analysis, survey and consumer research techniques, organizational development, group facilitation and training, basic computer and telecommunication technology, writing, editing and public speaking.

This staff must also be granted sufficient autonomy to immunize them from day-to-day, short-term operational pressures, permitting them to neutrally gather and assess relevant data and information, and to effectively develop and implement long-range strategic plans. Employing such staff is a necessary prerequisite to carrying out the planning functions and activities proposed in this report. It is an immediate implementation priority.

- **Implementation priority:** Short-term
- **Related recommendation:** Delivery 3.3.

1.3 Establish Planning Advisory Committee — The Supreme Court should establish a Planning Advisory Committee to provide leadership, ideas and user perspectives for the planning function.

Rationale: Iowa's Judicial Branch currently has little or no direct communication with users of the courts. However, access to consumer-based ideas and information drawn from outside the organization is a critical element in the implementation of an independent planning function. Such input would establish a direct link between court planners, court users, and other stakeholders in the justice system, providing critical knowledge for the planning function.

Access to consumer-based ideas and information drawn from outside the organization is a critical element in the implementation of an independent planning function.

The formation and use of a Planning Advisory Committee would enable the courts to be more responsive to citizen perceptions and needs. Such a committee would serve as an ongoing resource for the planning function—providing information on current public issues affecting the courts; communicating concerns and perspectives of groups and constituencies outside the court system; gathering and analyzing information on court performance; reviewing and commenting on the effects of pending legislation; and serving as a source of ideas and suggestions for improving court operations.

The Planning Advisory Committee should be comprised of people who represent the courts' various constituency groups and reflect the state's demographics. Initially, the committee should be drawn from members of the Commission on Planning for the 21st Century in order to ensure continuity in implementing its recommendations. Committee members should serve staggered terms and be replaced, as their terms expire, by the Supreme Court.

- **Implementation priority:** Short-term
- **Related recommendation:** Delivery of Justice 2.5.

1.4 Acquire Planning Systems and Resources — The Judicial Branch should acquire and employ state-of-the-art systems and resources necessary to gather and analyze the information required for effective planning.

Rationale: In the past, the Judicial Branch has been slow to adopt reasonable, reliable, and proven technologies. In addition, established methods of data and information collection have been insufficient to support quality planning. As the courts enter the next century, and societal and technological change continues to accelerate apace, new technological systems and resources will be required for the effective functioning of the courts. Such resources will also be essential if the courts are to establish and maintain the independent planning capability necessary to manage such change.

Planning for the future of the courts will require state-of-the-art computers and software, access to sophisticated databases, advanced telecommunication capabilities, modern meeting facilities and audio-visual equipment, and related planning tools and technologies. Providing Judicial Branch planners with the best tools possible will help ensure that they are able to carry out the function with which they are charged. It is critical that the Judicial Branch secure these resources.

- **Implementation priority:** Medium-term
- **Related recommendations:** Delivery of Justice: Access and Quality 3.3; Technology 2.2.

1.5 Develop Strategic Plans — The Judicial Branch should develop and implement long-range strategic plans with the involvement and strong commitment of top leadership. These plans should be amenable to continuous modification and improvement, and supported by annual operational plans.

Rationale: The end-product of an institutional planning function—such as that proposed for the Iowa court system—is a strategic plan. While a *vision* is intended to articulate the long-term ideal state of an institution—ten, fifteen, twenty-five years into the future, a *strategic plan* is designed to actually move an institution in the direction of its vision over a shorter period of time—two to five years, for example. A strategic plan is usually comprised of a series of

specific goals, strategies and actions that can be assigned, budgeted for, monitored and measured. In reality, it may take an institution a span of several strategic plans to achieve its overall vision. As such, long-range strategic planning represents a continuing “iterative” process—one that is carried out in an ongoing, periodic fashion.

The regular development of strategic plans for the Judicial Branch would serve as a basis for the future delivery of justice, expanding the courts’ perspective beyond the immediate adjudication of current cases. This would require and engender more effective management of the courts and greater accountability. A comprehensive institutional “road map” with explicit “guideposts” will position the Judicial Branch to effectively compete for the resources necessary to implement its goals. A proactive court system that knows where it wants to be and how it intends to get there will gain and maintain the respect and the support of its ultimate constituency—the public.

- **Implementation priority:** Short/medium/long-term
- **Related recommendation:** Funding 2.2.

1.6 Promote Effective Communication — The Supreme Court should implement policies to create open and responsive communication within the Judicial Branch and with other branches of government.

Rationale: Effective planning cannot occur without enthusiastic support and input from personnel at all levels of the court system. Likewise, long-range planning requires that the Judicial Branch freely and regularly communicate with other branches of government— both to gather the data and other information necessary to effective forecasting, and to generate the political and financial support essential to the implementation of long-range goals. Unfortunately, the current managerial climate within the court system stifles, rather than stimulates, internal and external communications.

The hierarchical structure and adjudicatory independence of the court system permeates its managerial climate as well. As a result, present and organizational charts and structures artificially impede the flow of communication. Court personnel often hesitate to speak out or to each other, whether for fear of sanction or for lack of systemic encouragement.

Fear of ceding judicial independence similarly hampers inter-branch communication. Court personnel often hesitate to interact with other branches of government to avoid any appearance of impropriety. Yet, such external communication is essential to effective management and successful planning

Success Story: Upgraded Newsletter

After receiving requests over the years from judicial districts for more information on Judicial Branch operations, the State Court Administrator decided to improve internal communication with judges and other court personnel. A new Judicial Branch newsletter, *The Bench Press*, was chosen as the vehicle. A new design and layout were developed to allow for greater coverage, special projects, committees, budgeting, court rules, and personnel. Publication was increased from quarterly to bi-monthly, with special issues to be devoted to important topics. Plans are underway to ensure that the newsletter is distributed to all Judicial Branch employees.

In sum, improved intra- and inter-branch communication will assist the Judicial Branch in integrating participatory management principles into its operations. This, in turn, will lead to a more effective, and increasingly satisfying, planning process.

- **Implementation priority:** Short/medium/long-term
- **Related recommendations:** Funding 3.3, 3.5, 3.6.

1.7 Facilitate Organizational Change — The Judicial Branch should utilize the services of professionals to address the human issues that will arise as the courts institute the managerial, administrative, technological, and communication changes incident to long-range strategic planning.

Rationale: Change is difficult, but it also is necessary. As the Iowa court system moves into the next century, the pressures on the courts to effectively navigate their way through accelerating societal change will be great. External forces driving such change will be many: a changing population; a growing number of court cases; new demands from the “consumers” of justice services; and efforts to develop new approaches to the resolution of disputes.

Today, planning for a rapidly changing world calls for a different approach. While the court system as an institution will continue to honor its basic tradi-

tions and guiding principles, it must be willing to address the human impact of organization change and to engage in ongoing training and education.

Such a transformation will likely place intense pressures and demands on judges, administrators and other court employees. It must also be guided with the utmost purpose, skill and sensitivity. Fortunately, there is a growing body of thought and skilled practitioners devoted to managing organizational change. Experts can provide the knowledge, information and skills needed to facilitate such a process while minimizing disruptions. The Judicial Branch should retain the services of professionally trained “change management” specialists on a selective basis to help guide such a process.

- **Implementation priority:** Short/medium-term
- **Related recommendations:** Delivery of Justice 3.4; Administration 3.2, 3.3.

“The real difficulty in changing the course of any enterprise lies not in developing new ideas but in escaping from old ones.”

—John Maynard Keynes

DATA AND INFORMATION GATHERING

2.1 Analyze External Trends — The state court administrator should periodically assess and analyze external forces and trends and the impact they may have on the court system.

Rationale: Identifying emerging trends and innovations that could have significant impact on the court system will enhance management with foresight, and will bring issues to the attention of decision makers early enough to support timely, effective responses. For example, if increases in juvenile crime were detected early, the courts would be able to adopt policies and procedures to manage the increase effectively.

- **Implementation priority:** Short/medium/long-term
- **Related recommendation:** Funding 2.3.

2.2 Conduct Needs and Attitude Survey — The Judicial Branch should conduct a confidential survey of all employees to establish a baseline for planning. This survey would assess the internal environment of the court system and solicit input as to immediate and long-term priorities.

Rationale: A needs and attitude survey is a necessary prologue to effective planning—the first step in assessing the internal environment of the Judicial Branch. Such a survey would be conducted on a periodic basis to improve the communication, managerial, work and relational environments of the courts.

This environmental assessment would give court leadership a clearer picture of the working environments; support the need for more modern management capabilities within the Judicial Branch; identify serious problems that need to be confronted and resolved; prioritize opportunities for improving the internal environments of the Judicial Branch; establish a baseline for evaluating the courts' future managerial and adjudicative performance; and supply information that will support future budget requests.

This survey would be implemented in a confidential, non-retaliatory manner. Thus, employees would not feel at risk due to the nature or content of their comments.

- **Implementation priority:** Short/medium/long-term

2.3 Anticipate and Assess New Legislation — The Judicial Branch should anticipate and plan for new legislation, assess its impact on the court system, and identify the additional resources necessary to manage that impact.

Rationale: Notwithstanding the use of “fiscal notes”—the current method used to project the budgetary consequences of proposed laws—the Legislature often passes bills without sufficient information to assess their long-term, comprehensive impact on the Judicial Branch. As a result, judges, court administrators and personnel are often unaware of the ramifications of new laws until after they have been passed. At the same time, the courts have no system to monitor and evaluate the impact of new legislation after it has taken effect.

For example, Iowa legislators enacted domestic abuse legislation in the early 1990s that made it easier for petitioners to obtain a civil protection order without an attorney. Despite the critical need for such legislation, it has resulted in dramatic and unanticipated increases in “pro se” domestic abuse filings that continue to overwhelm the courts. As a result, the number of such petitions jumped from 188 in 1990 to 5,583 in 1995. A foresight mechanism could have helped forewarn both the Judicial Branch and the Legislature of the anticipated consequences and enabled both branches of government to cooperate in determining the resources necessary to effectively implement the law. In addition, continued monitoring of the results would have enabled the Judicial Branch to request the additional resources necessary to deal with this increased case load.

Establishment of a judicial foresight mechanism, i.e., the ability to plan for, monitor and evaluate new legislation and its impact, would enable the Judicial Branch to better respond to emerging social issues and legislative attempts to address those issues. Such a mechanism would be incorporated into the Judicial Branch’s planning function and linked to its ongoing legislative and budgeting processes.

- **Implementation priority:** Medium-term
- **Related recommendations:** Funding 2.3, 3.4.

EDUCATION

3.1 Establish Public Education Function — The Supreme Court should establish a public education function to effectively educate the public about the Judicial Branch. This function should assist in the development of educational programs for teachers and children, users of the court system, and other public constituencies of the courts.

Rationale: It is an article of democratic faith that an informed public is the best guardian of liberty. As indicated by the Commission’s public opinion survey, Iowans with a higher level of knowledge about the courts evaluate Iowa’s courts more positively and express greater trust in the courts than do

those with less knowledge. Unfortunately, the same survey suggests that many Iowans are poorly informed or simply not interested in the workings of the courts. It is essential to the future of our democracy that citizens, and young people in particular, be better educated in these matters.

Current efforts to educate the public about the court system are random and usually provided by organizations outside the Judicial Branch. Iowa is fortunate to have many teachers and schools working to improve understanding of the democratic process and the courts, and a center for law-related and civic education dedicated to working with them to promote and enrich their efforts. There is an inherent public interest in supporting this educational mission with public funds.

Success Story: IOLTA Funding

In recent years the Iowa Supreme Court has approved Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts (IOLTA) funding for projects designed to enhance public awareness and understanding of the state court system. Examples: Curriculum developed by the Iowa Center for Law & Civic Education at Drake University to match students with clerks of court as part of a community service project; a matching grant for printing and distributing 10,000 copies of a pro se guide called "How to Protect Yourself from Domestic Abuse Without a Lawyer"; and the Iowa State Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division "Trial by Jury" program at the Iowa State Fair.

Many additional avenues exist for collaborative efforts in educating the public about the courts. Public schools, community colleges and universities, the legal profession and civic organizations are all natural allies in the goal of increasing the public's awareness of our democratic institutions and the responsibilities of citizenship in general and justice and the courts in particular. However, in order to take advantage of these opportunities, a dedicated education function must be funded and staffed within the Judicial Branch itself.

To this end, the courts must secure the funding and staffing necessary to undertake such initiatives. The courts must find new ways to increase both their service and their relevance to the public. Courts must reach out in innovative ways to touch the lives of more people in a positive and construc-

tive manner. The courts need to be recognized as a significant factor in the life environment of Iowa citizens and the political environment of the Iowa Legislature. Educating the public will aid in generating this visibility and recognition by increasing public understanding of, support for, and confidence in the courts.

- **Implementation priority:** Medium/long-term
- **Related recommendations:** Delivery 2.5; Funding 3.2.

3.2 Educate Public on Multi-Option Justice — The Judicial Branch should develop educational programs on multiple forms of dispute resolution available in Iowa.

Rationale: The Commission is proposing that the Judicial Branch establish and administer multiple forms of dispute resolution as part of the Iowa court system. Under this system, dispute resolution would take many forms, including not only formal litigation, but also mediation, arbitration and even the automated processing of simple cases.

The Commission's public opinion survey indicates growing public interest in and desire for alternative dispute resolution (ADR). While only 16 percent of survey respondents currently report having utilized some form of ADR, 70 percent of these individuals were highly satisfied with their ADR proceedings and outcomes. Moreover, fully 81 percent of all survey respondents would prefer using ADR to going to court, while more than half feel these techniques should be available within the formal court system itself.

In order to respond to public desire for greater access to ADR and to enable the public to both better understand and more effectively utilize these options, the Judicial Branch should promote and support comprehensive public education on multi-option justice. Citizens must be educated and informed about available dispute resolution options, their use, cost, and potential advantages and disadvantages.

In addition, the Judicial Branch should develop simple, user-friendly educational and training systems to help orient potential multi-option justice

system users in the actual use of available ADR methods and techniques. To this end, it should work with educational experts and state-of-the-art knowledge to develop and disseminate the best user-orientation techniques and information possible.

- **Implementation priority:** Medium/long-term
- **Related recommendations:** Delivery of Justice 1.2; Technology 3.4.

3.3 Promote Juror Education and Feedback — The Judicial Branch should develop and implement a juror education and feedback program to inform jurors about the judicial system and to gather information on their experience as jurors.

Rationale: Juries are one of the courts' most important and valued constituencies. The Commission's public opinion survey found that nearly one-quarter of Iowa's adult population had served as jurors. Unfortunately, the survey also found that these people were no more positive toward the courts than those who had never been jurors. These findings suggest that the Judicial Branch has overlooked a significant opportunity to enhance public awareness and support among a substantial number of Iowans.

The Commission's public opinion survey found that nearly one-quarter of Iowa's adult population had served as jurors.

Jurors represent a "captive audience" while engaged in jury duty. Educating them about court operations and their important role as jurors could be simple and cost-effective. Jury service also presents a unique opportunity for the public to evaluate the quality of the courts' performance, as well as to offer suggestions for change and improvement. Because the Judicial Branch oversees the jury process, it is best situated to generate, control, and effectively administer such juror education.

- **Implementation priority:** Short/medium/long-term
- **Related recommendations:** Delivery of Justice 2.5, 3.5; Funding 3.2.

3.4 Support Court Education by Schools — The Judicial Branch should encourage and support Iowa’s schools in the development, funding and implementation of programs on the role of the courts, the importance of citizen participation in the judicial process, and awareness of societal problems confronting the courts.

Rationale: Iowa’s youngest citizens are perhaps the state’s greatest asset. The future of Iowa’s courts is in the hands of these young people, who will as citizens serve as jurors or witnesses, work for the judiciary, or more generally, serve as trustees of the public faith in our legal process. A recent Harris Poll revealed that many young people feel that they can be involved in developing solutions to problems facing the courts and the criminal justice system through volunteer work and service projects. Schools and the judiciary can be partners in helping achieve mutual objectives. The courts and the bar should play an active role in assisting schools in educating the nation’s youngest citizens about the responsibilities of citizenship and how essential it is to the future of our state that Iowans understand and fulfill these responsibilities. Iowa is fortunate to have many teachers and schools working to improve understanding of the courts and democratic processes and a center dedicated to working with them to promote and enrich their efforts. There is an inherent public interest in having public funds support this educational mission in law-related and civic education. The Judicial Branch should support ongoing efforts at public education on the courts, including that provided by Drake University’s Center for Law-Related Education, as well support legislative funding of such efforts.

- **Implementation priority:** Medium/long-term

3.5 Utilize Media for Education — The Judicial Branch should utilize television, newspaper, and radio media to educate Iowa citizens about the justice system and their role in it.

Rationale: According to the Commission’s public opinion survey, television news is the most frequently used source of information about the courts. Four out of 10 Iowans surveyed report they frequently use television news

and local newspapers as their primary source of information concerning the Judicial Branch. Indeed, the survey results show that formal education is now being replaced by the mass media, particularly TV news, as the main source of knowledge about the courts.

The increasing role of the mass media in public education mandates that the Judicial Branch attempt to utilize that media more frequently and effectively in its efforts to educate Iowans about the courts and the justice system.

Regular outreach through the media may aid in educating a broader cross-section of the community than is accomplished by the formal education system. It may also generate greater and more diverse public support and input on issues affecting the Judicial Branch.

- **Implementation priority:** Short/medium-term
- **Related recommendation:** Funding 3.2.

3.6 Develop Court Internet Home Page — The Judicial Branch should establish a home page on the Internet to educate and inform the public.

Rationale: As we move into the next century, the Internet will in all likelihood become an increasingly more viable mechanism for the dissemination and gathering of selected information by public institutions. It is entirely appropriate that the Judicial Branch take advantage of this mechanism as a means to educate and inform the public on the Iowa courts and justice system, and to solicit public feedback.

Via a court Internet “home page,” judges, lawyers, students, researchers, citizens and the media could have efficient and uniform access to Iowa court decisions and rules. Other pertinent information, such as this report, judicial studies, the organization of Iowa’s courts, key personnel, hours and locations of operation, court dockets and procedures, forms and rules, could be available for ready public access. The home page presents another medium through which the Iowa courts could communicate with court personnel, jurors, support services, and allied government bodies.

The Internet also could provide the opportunity for judges, lawyers and citizens to access the decisions of other court systems. County law libraries could be greatly supplemented by Internet access to legal materials.

- **Implementation priority:** Short-term
- **Related recommendation:** Technology 2.4.



"The future is not completely beyond our control. It is the work of our own hands."

—Robert F. Kennedy

SUMMARY OF TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS		IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES				OTHER TEAMS' RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS
		Ongoing	Short Term (1-2 yrs.)	Medium Term (3-5 yrs.)	Long Term (6+ yrs.)	
1.	Judicial Branch Planning					
1.1	Establish Planning Function		✓			Funding 2.2, 2.3
1.2	Employ Planning Staff		✓			Delivery 3.3; Funding 2.2
1.3	Establish Planning Advisory Committee		✓			Delivery 2.5
1.4	Acquire Planning Systems and Resources			✓		Delivery 3.3; Technology 2.2; Funding 2.2
1.5	Develop Strategic Plans		✓	✓	✓	Funding 2.3
1.6	Promote Effective Communication		✓	✓	✓	Administration 3.2, 3.5; Technology 3.1; Funding 3.3, 3.5.3.6
1.7	Facilitate Organizational Change		✓	✓		Delivery 3.4; Administration 3.2, 3.3, 3.5
2.	Data and Information Gathering					
2.1	Analyze External Trends		✓	✓	✓	Technology 1.4; Funding 2.4
2.2	Conduct Needs and Attitudes Survey		✓	✓	✓	Administration 3.5
2.3	Anticipate and Assess New Legislation			✓		Funding 2.4, 3.4

3. Education						
3.1	Establish Public Education Function			✓	✓	Delivery 2.5; Administration 1.1; Funding 3.2
3.2	Educate Public on Multi-Option Justice			✓	✓	Delivery 1.2, 1.3; Technology 3.4
3.3	Promote Juror Education and Feedback		✓	✓	✓	Administration 1.2, 2.6; Delivery 2.5, 3.5; Funding 3.2
3.4	Support Court Education by Schools			✓	✓	
3.5	Utilize Media for Education		✓	✓		Funding 3.2
3.6	Develop Court Internet Home Page		✓			Technology 2.4

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The Commission gratefully acknowledges the contributions made by the following individuals and organizations through the Committee on Justice in the 21st Century, a charitable corporation.

Adair County Bar Association	Lee Enterprises, Inc.
Anderson-Erickson Dairy	John B. Martin
Ball & Lynch, Bloomfield	Maytag, Inc.
Bremer County Bar Association	Mid-America Foundation
Kate Corcoran	Linda K. Neuman
Jim and Pattie Cownie Charitable Trust	Norwest Foundation
Deere & Company	Page County Bar Association
Des Moines County Bar Association	Donna L. Paulsen
Dubuque County Bar Association	Pella Rolscreen Foundation
Employers Mutual Charitable Foundation	C.K. Pettit
Farm Bureau Insurance	Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc.
Greene County Bar Association	Polk County Bar Association
Mark Haverland	Rockwell International Corporation
Ted M. Hutchison	Scott County Bar Association
Hy-Vee Food Stores, Inc.	John R. Silko
IBP, Inc.	Bruce M. Snell, Jr.
Iowa Bankers Insurance & Services	State Justice Institute
Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO	R. Kurt Swaim
Iowa Judges Association	Janelle L. Swanberg
Iowa State Bar Foundation	Marsha K. Ternus
Iowa Trial Lawyers Association	The Principal Financial Group Foundation, Inc.
Dwight W. James	Thomas N. Urban
Johnson County Bar Association	U.S. WEST Foundation
Mary Kramer	West Publishing Company

This project could not have been completed without the generous contribution of time, talent and resources of the following individuals and organizations.

Doug Allaire
Iowa City

Prof. Michael P. Forrest
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