

**SUPERIOR COURT OF  
CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE**



**2007-2012  
STRATEGIC PLAN**

# **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Superior Court of California, County of Riverside will, in a fair, accessible, effective, and efficient manner, resolve disputes arising under the law and will interpret and apply the law consistently, impartially, and independently to protect the rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitutions of California and of the United States.

# VISION STATEMENT

The Riverside County Superior Court will be recognized as one of the most dynamic, progressive courts in the nation. The court will strive to provide the highest quality of justice. The court will use appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms and techniques to manage and resolve cases in a timely manner. Courthouses will be safe environments where the public can conduct their business. The court will implement innovative programs that use modern technology. Court staff will be known for their expertise, esprit de corps, and commitment to ensuring public trust and confidence in the judicial system. All members of the public will have equal and convenient access to court services that are efficient and delivered in a highly professional manner by the judicial officers and court staff.

## **GOAL I – QUALITY OF JUSTICE**

Judicial and ministerial services will be:

- Responsive to the needs of the public;
- Delivered in a manner that ensures the public has trust and confidence that the basic trial court functions are conducted expeditiously, fairly, and with integrity;
- Understandable to all court users; and
- Fair, impartial, and efficient.

### **I. JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE**

- 1 – Maintain the court’s institutional integrity.
- 2 – Uphold the Constitution and the law regardless of pressure to do what is popular or expedient.
- 3 – Provide leadership within the judicial branch.
- 4 - Evaluate and address judicial recruitment/retention issues.
- 5 - Actively support judicial diversity so the bench mirrors the people it serves.
- 6 - Give individual attention to cases, deciding them consistently and upon legally relevant factors.
- 7 - Address the effect of the executive and legislative branches in the independence of the judiciary.
- 8 - Be independent and accountable.
- 9 – Inform the public about the importance of judicial independence and coordinate these efforts with other interested parties (e.g., local bar associations).

### **II. JUDICIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS SHALL:**

- 1 - Encourage a competent, responsive, and ethical judiciary.
- 2 - Provide and encourage a comprehensive program of ongoing judicial education and training that addresses essential needs/requirements including access, fairness, and diversity.
- 3 – Incorporate the topics of quality service and procedural and outcome fairness in all judicial officer education programs.

### **III. STAFF RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, AND RETENTION**

- 1 - Identify, recruit, and acquire people who are well qualified upon entry, are able to develop new skills and abilities, and can be promoted.
- 2 - Retain highly qualified individuals.
- 3 – Select employees through fair hiring practices.
- 4 – Treat employees fairly.

### **IV. STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS SHALL:**

- 1 - Provide education and training programs for all court personnel.
- 2 - Foster a work environment that recognizes employees’ value and promotes professional growth, development, and employee well-being.
- 3 - Promote expectations for court personnel to demonstrate

high standards of professionalism, ethics, and personal behavior.

**4** – Include the topics of quality service and procedural fairness in all court staff education programs.

**V. ENSURE FAIR AND EQUAL ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE TO ALL**

**1** – Ensure procedural and substantive fairness in family, juvenile, and traffic matters and in all other case types.

## **GOAL II – SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC**

The court will emphasize assisting the public as a priority by:

- Simplifying court services and procedures to better accommodate court users;
- Ensuring that all who appear before the court are given the opportunity to participate effectively without undue hardship or inconvenience;
- Maintaining adequate facilities in order to conduct court business;
- Educating the public about court services and procedures; and
- Obtaining the public's feedback on how to modify and improve services to better meet their needs.

### **I. SIMPLIFICATION OF SERVICES**

**1** - Implement services and procedures that any member of the public can understand and follow.

### **II. ACCESS**

**1** - Ensure that the court and the justice it delivers are accessible and are perceived by the public as accessible.

**2** – Be courteous and responsive to the public and accord respect to all court users.

**3** – Make the costs of access to the trial court's proceedings and records - whether measured in terms of money, time, or the procedures that must be followed - reasonable fair, and affordable, including advocating for the increased availability of affordable legal representation.

**4** – Expand court services to non-English speaking members of the public.

### **III. SERVICE DELIVERY**

**1** - Provide services and facilities that meet the needs of all residents of the county and which promote the effective and efficient use of the judiciary and staff.

### **IV. JURY** – Pursue efforts to improve the jury system:

**1** - Enhance services provided to jurors by supporting legislation with this intent.

**2** - Make jury service as convenient and non-disruptive as possible.

**3** - Ensure jury lists are representative of the jurisdiction from which they are drawn.

### **V. EXPANSION OF ASSISTANCE TO SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS**

**1** - Enhance the services of the Family Law Assistance Centers

**2** - Pursue efforts to expand such services to other functional areas in an effort to provide all court users with the same level of service and equal access to the courts.

**3** – Increase the services available to self-represented litigants who do not speak English.

**VI. COMMUNITY OUTREACH** - Increase the public's understanding of the judicial system and thereby increase their trust and confidence in the judicial system:

- 1** - Actively pursue and facilitate effective communication between the court and the community.
- 2** – Develop and implement programs that are responsive to the justice-related needs and concerns of the community.
- 3** - Inform the community of the court's programs.
- 4** – Utilize jury service and other venues of contact with the public as an opportunity to educate the public about the courts.

**VII. COLLABORATIVE JUSTICE COURTS AND SERVICES**

- 1** - Pursue the creation of the Unified Family Court concept (one judge, one family for juvenile, domestic violence restraining orders, and family law) in a manner consistent with the geography and demography of Riverside County and the court's goal of providing increased access to services.
- 2** - Continue the Juvenile Dependency Mediation Program.
- 3** – Obtain consistent funding for and expand all collaborative justice courts.

## **GOAL III - MODERNIZATION**

The court will:

- Employ sound management practices that foster the efficient use of public resources and enhance the delivery of court services;
- Anticipate new conditions or emergent events and adjust its operations as necessary;
- Implement creative and innovative programs;
- Utilize technology to maximize operating efficiency and effectiveness; and
- Cultivate good working relationships with all justice system members and community partners.

### **I. TECHNOLOGY**

**1** - Continue to pursue a “file-less” (without a physical file) work environment.

**2** - Implement technologies that (1) reduce operating expenses, (2) enhance the court’s ability to gather statistical information, (3) increase operating efficiency, (4) simplify processes, (5) reduce/eliminate manual processes, (6) provide the judicial officers, staff, and public with accurate and timely information, and (7) increase the public’s access to court services.

**3** – Improve and enhance the courts’ use of the Internet for disseminating information and conducting court business.

**4** – Implement a system to allow trial courts statewide to share records so that Riverside County judicial officers have more information when someone appears before them.

**5** – Coordinate restraining orders and other cases (e.g., juvenile, family law, criminal) among our own courts and with courts from other counties.

### **II. FISCAL POLICY**

**1** - Seek, use, and account for public resources.

**2** - Maintain prudent fiscal controls over spending.

**3** - Identify ways to enhance revenue.

**4** - Pursue the collection of fines, fees, and forfeitures.

**5** - Ensure the court disburses funds promptly and accurately pursuant to statute.

### **III. INTERAGENCY RELATIONSHIPS**

**1** - Expand and enhance relations with other agencies providing services to or interacting with the court system in order to ensure that justice and services of the highest quality are provided to all court personnel and users.

**2** - Follow the principles of goodwill in the court’s relations with all governmental and community entities.

**3** – Identify and correct gaps in services and duplication of services.

#### **IV. LEGISLATION**

- 1 - Review proposed legislation to ensure it is consistent with the court's mission.
- 2 - Promptly implement changes in law and procedure.
- 3 - Use the AOC and CJA to make our concerns heard about legislation that affects the court.

#### **V. RESOURCES**

- 1 - Effectively manage all resources.

## **GOAL IV – CASE MANAGEMENT**

The court will manage its cases in a timely, efficient, and effective manner. In its case management, the court will keep abreast of changes in case processing procedures and best management practices and will utilize collaborative justice principles, innovative ideas, and streamlined procedures to ensure the highest quality of justice and public service.

### **I. COMPLIANCE WITH COURT ORDERS**

- 1 – Make decisions that unambiguously address the issues presented to the court.
- 2 – Explain decisions and orders so compliance can be achieved.
- 3 - Take appropriate responsibility for the enforcement of court orders.

### **II. ACCURACY OF RECORDS**

- 1 - Ensure records of all relevant court decisions and actions are accurate and properly preserved according to statute.

### **III. CASE PROCESSING**

- 1 - Establish innovative practices to reduce delays, eliminate unnecessary continuances, and improve case processing.
- 2 - Establish and comply with recognized guidelines for timely case processing while keeping current with the incoming caseload.

### **IV. UNIFORMITY IN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

- 1 - Ensure that procedures faithfully adhere to relevant laws, procedural rules, and established policies.
- 2 - Establish countywide uniformity in policies and procedures in order to ensure the efficient operation of the court system, a reduction in confusion for court users, and streamlined operations.
- 3 – Obtain countywide resolution of any conflicts in policies and procedures and avoid institutional inconsistencies.

### **V. ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

- 1 - Support the appropriate development, maintenance, and expansion of alternative dispute resolution programs administered either by the court or in conjunction with other organizations.

## **GOAL V – COURT SECURITY**

Provide a safe environment for members of the public and court employees.

### **I. SAFETY**

- 1** - Ensure the court conducts its proceedings and other public business openly in court facilities that are safe, accessible, and convenient to use.
- 2** – Ensure the adequacy of security screening equipment and procedures.
- 3** – Ensure that security staff members are properly trained in security protocol.