

19th Judicial Circuit
Circuit Court of Lake County

Accomplishment – 2009 Strategic Plan Task Update

January – November, 2009

December 1, 2009

Strategic Plan Task Update

January 1, 2009 – November 30, 2009

STRATEGY A: **Develop and update a master facilities plan which documents courtroom and staff space needs.**

- Lake County's Operational Efficiency Study is underway and will be completed 2nd quarter 2010.
- Short and Long Term Space Committee efforts – internal report with recommendations submitted for consideration, prioritization and implementation.
- Parking lot expansion at Mundelein – added approximately 60 – 65 parking positions
- Reorganization of the Detention Center kitchen's mechanical room and receiving area has resulted in an expanded and secure storage space for non-food items. The delivery process as well as order check-in has become more efficient in the well-lighted, safety-marked space.
- Relocation of DV and CF courtrooms -- November 2009 start
- Forcible Entry Cases to C150 -- November 2009 start

STRATEGY B: **Continue to improve the court's website with particular emphasis on interactive functionality that enables court users to transact business without the necessity of appearing in person.**

- Release of the new and improved Circuit Website.
- Virtual Annual Report/ Report of the Judiciary completed.
- Online Juror Management System is now active. Process improvement thus far:

As a prospective juror this page provides you the ability to:

- Complete your juror questionnaire and profile form online.
- Request a one time schedule change.
- Request to be disqualified or excused under certain circumstances (*based on specific criteria and documentation requirements*)
- Verify your jury service report date.
- Update/Change your juror information data

STRATEGY C: **Promote the expansion of and types of court services offered in the branch courts as a convenience and to improve accessibility by the public and the Bar.**

- Foreclosure case moved to Park City branch court facility.
- Foreclosure help desk established at Park City facility.
- Back-up generator installation at Mundelein and Round Lake Beach branch court facilities began.
- Juvenile Probation officers' work schedules and county vehicle use were evaluated and restructured allowing for the strategic use of the Round Lake and Park City satellite courts and Adult Probation's Waukegan offices; this has increased client contact hours, reduced travel, and made officers more accessible in the community.

STRATEGY D: **Promote accessibility of court facilities by continually improving signage, directories, displays of calendars and receptionist services.**

- New and upgraded functionality assistive listening system began in November with contract awarded to vendor providing installation. This program will cover main courthouse courtrooms and juvenile complex.

STRATEGY E: **Effectively use technology to make the services of the court more accessible, secure, convenient to use and cost effective.**

- Jury imaging program started in support of those jurors not using online system and services.
- Developed and implemented automated answering phone tree for juvenile complex and main courthouse - Administrative Office.
- Payment coupon voucher for defendants being supervised by compliance unit.
- Updated Emergency Contact Information utilizing a browser-based application developed in-house.
- GIS data countywide mapping of Probation, Compliance, Pretrial and Juvenile clients.
- Implementation of digital ink technology for Pretrial Bond Reports: Enhancements are being made to add the domestic violence form to the digital ink technology and to add the print on demand feature to retrieve existing record
- For Adult Probation – standardized client photo processing for the new case management system.
- With assistance from JIS staff, a process for photographing Detention and Probation youth has been fully designed, and cameras and software have been installed. Staff has been trained and the Intake unit routinely photographs youth during the intake process. Photo records will deter minors from claiming to be other individuals and prohibit risk of releasing the wrong person.

- Juvenile Probation officers actively utilize Tracker case management applications to record case notes, schedule appointments and contacts, and enter other data. In addition, social investigation and review reports can be system-formatted, utilizing information entered in other sections of the database.
- Following extensive assessment of Detention Center educational programming, it has been decided to implement a technology-based education system. The APEX system has been researched and approved by the Regional Office of Education and the area school districts and is expected to be fully functional in 2010.
- Thin Client technology to be implemented – December 2009 – Juvenile Detention and FACE-IT programs.
- NOMAD Phase III project completed in November.
- ManagePro - Tracking and monitoring application for the Strategic Plan and Projects – user training in December 2009.
- Transition from fax machines to desktop (personal computer based) fax service. Elimination of older fax machines to reduce operational cost.
- Pilot testing and using Skype technology in Drug Court to reduce/eliminate service provider traveling from Chicago to Lake County Courthouse, thus saving time and energy. Technology also being tested in other courtrooms as need arises.
- Digital pen technology and voice recognition technology being pilot tested by judges in support of their work. Go-forward decision due in January 2010.

STRATEGY F: **Continue and expand training of judges and court staff to promote improved customer service, technical skills and professional development.**

- Conducted series of orientation briefing on the Court's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).
- Developed Emergency Procedures/Protocols for Branch Courts, Adult Probation and Juvenile Probation/Court wing. Training on new procedures will be completed 1st quarter 2010.
- Division of Adult Probation began a Management/Leadership Mentoring Program in support of the Court's direction in succession planning.
- Division of Adult Probation now has two staff members that are certified trainers for the program entitled "Thinking for a Change" – COG. They are being used to train staff from Lake County as well as in other counties in Illinois.
- Adult Probation conducted Evidence Based Practices training for several probation agencies around the state.
- Detention Center/FACE-IT staff developed and implemented annual staff training schedules as a system of planned sessions to review and discuss policies and procedures. This systematic approach provides opportunities through regular meetings for staff communication and development.

- In-house Detention Center trainers were re-certified this year to teach the Handle With Care safe intervention techniques as well as First Aid, CPR and AED. The in-house trainer of the challenge course facilitators also completed staff re-training this year and will be re-certified as a trainer during the 2nd quarter of 2010.
- Juvenile Probation officers trained in COG methods successfully facilitated the first “Thinking For A Change” community-based client group this summer. This innovative program has been effective in helping both adolescent probation clients and FACE-IT residential program participants modify negative behaviors and thinking. Remaining Juvenile Probation officers and other Juvenile Division staff will be trained in November 2009.
- Developed an automated system that gathers staff information of completed training and evaluation data of the seminars/workshops and the like.
- Training was completed for the TIM (Therapeutic Intensive Monitoring) Court team via federal grant funds received by the Court.

STRATEGY G: **Improve caseflow and reduce delay by implementing the caseflow management plan.**

- Family Division Judges initiated a grant funded mediation program for never married parents.
- Completed a review of the arbitration program that compares participant attitudes and views today to the results of a similar study completed shortly after the program began.

STRATEGY H: **Improve services and programs to assist self-represented litigants.**

- Foreclosure brochure was developed and published in English and Spanish and is available in hardcopy as well as on the internet via court’s website.

STRATEGY I: **Improve court forms and procedures to promote ease of use by judges, court staff, the public and the Bar.**

- Comprehensive Court Forms Review Project was initiated - completion due December 2009.
- The policy ordering client payment of Public Defender’s fees in juvenile cases has been revised. This is expected to improve revenue.
- In an effort to reduce unpaid fees and increase revenue, Juvenile Probation developed a program to notify client families of upcoming court dates and remind them of their obligation to pay court-ordered fees. The program was implemented with the Victim Assistance and Restitution Program (VARP) officer utilizing specially trained volunteers.
- Internal staff reassignment has made it possible for a Spanish-speaking male officer to join the Juvenile Probation unit. Conducting social investigations with Spanish-speaking families of youth will be a key responsibility.
- A part-time position was converted to an additional full-time Spanish interpreter in Judicial Operations.

STRATEGY J: **Collaborate with stakeholders, ancillary justice agencies and private support providers to ensure that judges have sufficient information to make informed decisions.**

- Safe Haven Grant received – Supervised Visitation/Neutral Exchange site planning for this program is in progress. Other phases of this effort have been initiated.
- Collaborated with Lake County's Major Crime Task Force in establishing a child abduction team to investigate persons who may be involved in a child abduction crime.
- Pretrial warrant apprehension program was initiated in collaboration with the Lake County Sheriff's Department.
- The Juvenile Division has become actively involved with the Lake County Gang Task Force. Two representatives from the Division will attend monthly meetings, serving as liaisons with the Task Force, with the goal of increasing communication and providing a focus on safety.
- The Juvenile Division's community relationships and collaborations yield many benefits that enhance our youth programs, provide access to resources, and expand staff training opportunities. Examples include:
 - Vernon Area Library provides many new books for detention and FACE-IT youth with funds received as part of an annually renewed grant. Librarians also facilitate targeted reading skills development programs for all residents which are funded by another grant.
 - OMNI Youth Services collaborates not only via experiential opportunities for probation clients but continues to be a key partner in the Division's successful Girl-Wise Conferences.
 - OMNI also facilitates two successful grant-funded programs with FACE-IT residents: the Aggression Replacement Training group addresses the issues of anger and aggressive behavior; the Seven Challenges Substance Abuse group addresses causes of substance use and abuse and helps youth develop confidence to resist peer pressure and develop positive self-images without using drugs or alcohol.
 - Kids' Hope United offers the Multi-Systemic Therapeutic (MST) program, an evidence-based program for minors and families on probation. The program works with youth in the community as well as youth in transition from the FACE-IT residential program back to their homes as part of aftercare. MST is in the 2nd year of the two year grant-funded program.

STRATEGY K: **Continually improve external communications, especially with the public, Bar, funding agencies and justice partners.**

- Frank Morelli (adult probation) assumed duties of President for the Illinois Probation and Court Services Association.
- The Court conducted an awareness presentation to Lake County Board in January 2009.
- Court (Chief Judge), hosted 2nd Appellate District Meeting with five (5) other judicial circuits in May 2009. Program concept developed in Lake County 24-years ago.

- Court hosted South Korean delegation consisting of judges, clerks and court managers. The topic focused on our jury system and general court management.
- A two week volunteer effort was completed in Kosovo. Work focused on caseflow management, public outreach, records management, organizational structure and process improvement.
- Judicial Outreach projects were completed during this time, including:
 - Law Day activities (over 350 high school attended programs at courthouse) (May 2009)
 - Mock Trial Tournaments (College and High School) (March 2009)
 - Red Ribbon Rally program activities at College of Lake County (October 2009)
 - Your Courthouse at Work edition produced.

STRATEGY L: **Contain the cost of litigation and court services to ensure equal access.**

- Division of Adult Probation made changes in urinalysis testing procedures of their clients that reduced the operational costs by 50%.
- Division of Adult Probation provided internships for seven (7) college students from May to October. The interns conducted 213 probation intakes and contributed 3,209 total hours to adult probation operations, thereby relieving officers of some of their workload.
- Division of Psychological Services reduced the cost of psychological assessments by initiating group testing of individuals that have been referred either by probation or the Court to undergo psychological evaluation to determine diagnosis and treatment recommendations.
- The FACE-IT program received DCFS certification as a first step in utilizing 3rd party billing as a source of income for the program.
- Critical brainstorming sessions with Juvenile Division staff representing all departments helped identify several cost effective measures including: (1) revised food service practices which has resulted in reduced costs while remaining compliant with federal and state nutrition guidelines; (2) more electronic communication to effectively distribute information such as the monthly work schedule to staff; and (3) collaboration with Lake County Facilities staff resulting in low or no-cost solutions to reduce energy use after-hours and on weekends.
- Court received a federal/state grant that provides for pre-employment training for juveniles. The grant was initiated in October and will be fully functional during the 1st quarter of 2010.

STRATEGY M: **Continually improve court operations and service delivery of the judicial branch in Lake County.**

- Team of judges and staff worked with two vendors dealing with enhancing the security posture of the court complexes with technology and proper staffing.
- Completed research on Group Reporting outcomes which showed very positive results in terms of recidivism. The report was shared with all Chief Judges and Chief Probation Officers in Illinois.

- A probation client survey completed for all four divisions who service offenders in the community.
- Study completed on Women's Trauma Program which showed no significant difference between the treatment and non-treatment groups. The program was suspended until a different treatment model can be developed based on an evidence based model.
- The University of Cincinnati completed a review of Adult Probation's efforts on Cognitive Restructuring Group Treatment using the Correctional Programming Check List. The results of the study were very positive and favorable to continue with this program. Selected adult probation officers received training in this methodology, which will benefit service delivery in the future.
- Restructuring of the FACE-IT Residential Treatment Program under the Division of Psychological Services – The FACE-IT program has undergone a restructuring and re-development to facilitate marked improvement in treatment outcome. Specifically, the areas of clinical staffing, programming, treatment, operation, and reporting were affected. Evidence-based practices were implemented and measurements developed.
- The Juvenile division planned, researched and developed three new standard operating procedural (SOP) manuals: *INTAKE SOP* (the existing policy manual was also recently updated); *KITCHEN SOP* (a new resource in addition to a policy manual); and a *SUPERVISOR-ON-CALL SOP*, a supplement to existing policy and procedure manuals in Detention Services.
- Conducted Annual Employee Satisfaction Survey (4th year). This year's survey was conducted online. This new process will save reproduction cost, data entry time and report generation.
- Staff produced a series of performance snapshots that have been provided to the Circuit Judges and County Board members. Each snapshot has been posted on the court's website.
- Enhancements were made to the Judicial E-Bench Book by committee members.