

Training is on the Way

The CONNECT project will launch in January 2016. Now is the perfect time to focus on the education you will need to be able to successfully use CONNECT. Therefore, we would like you to meet CONNECTed.

CONNECTed, a combination of the CONNECT training team and the AOC Education Division, is an innovative approach that uses different training methods, including classroom-based, instructor-led courses, online Web-based training (e-learning), and on-location fairs designed to supplement formal training. There will also be prerequisite courses to provide employees with the knowledge and skills they may need prior to taking a CONNECTed course.

CONNECTed will ensure that the right training is delivered to the right employees in the right way. Simply put, this plan outlines who needs to be trained, what training they need, and who will lead and/or conduct the training. There are a variety of training methods offered so users can find the best approach and timing to meet their needs.

Judiciary personnel will teach classes to target audiences from early September through the end of October. Some e-learning prerequisites will be available before classroom training begins. In conjunction with the classroom training, the self-paced online learning modules will also be rolled out to the broader Judiciary community.

Stay tuned for more information about the CONNECTed training program through this newsletter, the CONNECT website, town hall meetings, your CONNECTors, or other communication channels.

HR CONNECTION, a monthly communication from the Judiciary's Department of Human Resources (HR), provides you with key HR information and the latest happenings in the department. While stories may include broad HR news and updates, most stories will focus on CONNECT as we lead up to the January 2016 launch.

Email: connect@mdcourts.gov

Web: <http://courtnet.courts.state.md.us/connect/index.html>

CONNECTed Online Training Offers Convenience, Accessibility

Every employee at the Judiciary will use CONNECT when it goes live in January 2016. So, every employee will need to take training of one form or another. The vast majority of the staff will take Web-based training courses online. CONNECTed is using a tool called User Productivity Kit (UPK) to develop the training materials and will record each step of each process that employees will use online to learn the materials in several different ways.

The first approach will be to watch a video in the "See It!" mode. You simply click "play" and watch: The mouse automatically

moves across the screen to perform the process while text boxes pop up to explain the details. You can view these simulation recordings as many times as you want.

The second approach will be to interact with the simulation in the "Try It!" mode. This will give you hands-on experience in a safe environment to reinforce your learning.

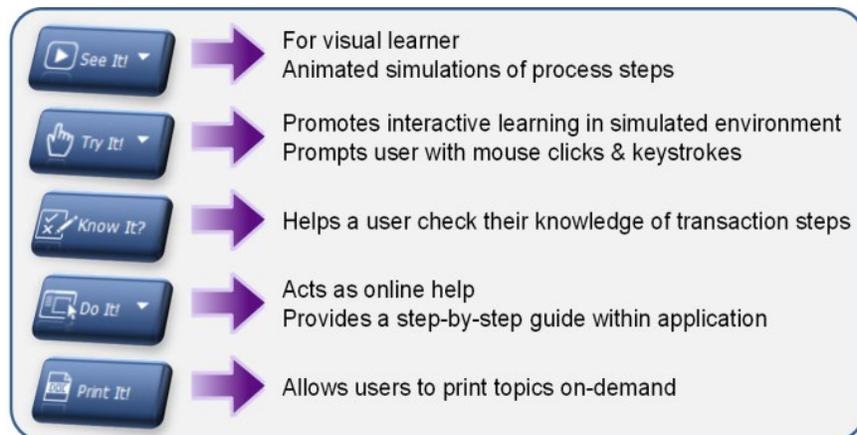
With "Know It?," the third approach, you

can challenge yourself to see what you have learned. After learning about the process, you can answer some multiple-choice questions to assess your understanding of the material. These assessments are purely for you to see which information you grasped well, and which areas might be beneficial for you to review. The results are not stored anywhere, nor are they forwarded along to anyone else.

End user training will launch in mid-October 2015. This will allow Judiciary employees enough time to complete the courses necessary for the processes they need to learn while not leaving a long period of time for that knowledge to go unused before the CONNECT "go live" date in January 2016. Employees will access training through the CONNECTed section of the CONNECT website on CourtNet (<http://courtnet.state.md.us/connect>).

What Is CONNECT?

The CONNECT project is a new system that will bring many Judiciary HR functions into one software package to make processes more efficient and user-friendly.



In the Spotlight

Meet Jeanette Hyre, Manager of Employee Services

Employee Services is the HR function that is central to processing employees who are joining the Judiciary as well as leaving. Employee Services Manager



Jeanette Hyre is excited about the efficiency and consistency that CONNECT will bring to the Judiciary. She and her husband live in Glen Burnie. Her two sons are still in the area as well, which gives Hyre time with her three granddaughters. Of her impressive 20-

year career within State of Maryland government, Hyer has spent the past five years here at the Judiciary. We are grateful for her service.

Q: What do you think will be some of the biggest changes to come about as a result of CONNECT?

A: I think CONNECT will streamline a lot of our processes by putting the steps where they belong. For instance, instead of having a transaction start by the field sending an email or paper form into HR for us to key in, they will be able to start the process themselves right in CONNECT and then it will flow through to us.

Q: What do you see as the benefits for that happening?

A: It will be a huge time saver. Processes will follow the order they were intended to follow. HR will receive the information more quickly, it will only be entered into the system once, and it will reduce the amount of errors from duplicate data entry or misreading handwriting on the forms. In turn, this will give us in HR more opportunity to better serve our customers — the Judiciary employees.

Q: What do you think the general Judiciary staff should find exciting?

A: Other than moving away from the antiquated paper processes that we use here, I think that employees will really like having real-time access to their own information. With CONNECT, employees do not have to put in a request to HR for updates to their personal information. They can update it themselves online and see in real-time that the change took place. Also, with the online timesheets and leave requests, employees will be able to see their available leave balances calculated in real-time.

Town Hall Meetings Underway

As part of the two-way communication efforts around the CONNECT initiative, the team is hosting a series of informational town hall meetings. These are an important way for Judiciary staff to receive information and let the project team know what is on their minds.

The first town hall meeting was held on Tuesday, May 12, in Queen Anne's County. There have been additional meetings at multiple locations throughout May and will continue into June.

These meetings are designed as awareness sessions about what CONNECT is, what it will affect, and when it will happen. Following the presentation, the audience will have an opportunity to participate in a question-and-answer session. Participants can submit their questions on note cards provided at the meeting that the team will collect, or they can ask them in the public forum. The objective is to provide the participants with updates and information on the CONNECT initiative, as well as a chance to ask questions.

The presenters may not be able to answer all questions during the town hall meetings, so the CONNECT team will publish a record of all the questions. Following the meeting, they will answer all of the questions in a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document. FAQs will be available in the "Latest Updates" section of on the CourtNet CONNECT website under (<http://courtnet.courts.state.md.us/connect/latestupdates.html>).

These meetings introduce the benefits and features of CONNECT as well as highlight the project's critical milestone periods. Topics of future meetings will become more detailed, communicating key changes that Judiciary staff should understand. The agenda will also identify any actions that staff may need to take to get ready for the January 2016 "go live."

Test Your Access to CourtNet

Everyone should be able to access CourtNet and navigate to the CONNECT section, where you can read about the details of CONNECT, understand what it includes and how it affects you, and stay up to date with key activities. More important, CourtNet is where you will access CONNECTed training materials and the CONNECT system itself.

Please test your access to CourtNet by going to the following web address: <http://courtnet.courts.state.md.us/connect/index.html>

NOTE: You must test your CourtNet access from work on your Judiciary or county network. You cannot access CourtNet from home.

If you have any issues with accessing CourtNet from work, contact us directly at the CONNECT email address, connect@mdcourts.gov.

Introducing the CONNECTors Network Meet the Judiciary agents of change

Implementing the CONNECT project requires participation from each affected group of Judiciary employees. The CONNECT initiative recruited the current HR Liaisons to establish a network of approximately 148 Judiciary employees to serve as CONNECTors, our change agents to the field.

These people represent employees from across the state. CONNECTors are key champions of change, supporting and promoting the deployment of the new processes and system within their areas.

CONNECTors will be the primary point of contact for the field to the CONNECT team. They will also assist the CONNECT team with tasks such as communicating status of the CONNECT implementation, helping with testing and training activities, and answering employees' questions.

CONNECTors will be scheduling meetings in the near future about very important topics to help you understand what is changing and when. CONNECTors: Keep an eye out for the meeting notices and be sure to attend.