ICM Courses—The Core Competencies

Purposes and Responsibilities of Courts

Purposes and Responsibilities of Courts are the epicenter of the NACM Core Competencies. Purposes and Responsibilities of Courts provide the reason, the root, and the foundation for the other nine Core Competencies. Purposes gives legitimacy to the exercise of Leadership, informs Visioning and Strategic Planning, and orients the practice of Caseflow Management and the other six more technical competencies.

Managing Court Financial Resources

The allocation, acquisition, and management of the court's budget impacts every court operation and, arguably, determines how well, and even whether, courts achieve their mission in the American political system. Resources are rarely sufficient to fund everything of value the courts or any other organization might undertake. When resource allocation and resource acquisition are skillful, courts preserve their independence, ensure their accountability, both internally and externally, improve their performance, and build and maintain public trust and confidence.

Fundamental Issues of Caseflow Management

Caseflow Management is the process by which courts carry out their primary function: moving cases from filing to closure. This includes all pre-trial events, trials, and increasingly, events that follow closure to ensure the integrity of court orders and timely completion of post-disposition case activity. Effective caseflow management makes justice possible not only in individual cases, but also across judicial systems and courts, both trial and appellate. Caseflow Management helps ensure that every litigant receives procedural due process and equal protection. Properly understood, Caseflow Management is the absolute heart of court management.

Managing Technology Projects & Technology Resources

While it is decidedly not an end unto itself, Information Technology can help all courts do what they do faster, cheaper, and better. Computerization allows courts to dispense justice in the face of increased expectations of efficient and instant service; significant changes in people's mobility and the social, political, and economic environment; and increased caseload volume and complexity. Court leaders who effectively manage Information Technology know its limitations and the challenges it presents. They also know if its promise is realized, Information Technology can improve court and justice system operations, public access to the courts, and the quality of justice.

Court Performance Standards: CourTools

Learn how to use the CourTools and the Court Performance Standards as a framework to guide your court into the future by setting target performances, then monitoring, evaluating and learning from results. Learn how to introduce CourTools into your court as a means of assessing court performance and guiding the decisions of management, planning and leadership.

Managing Human Resources

Courts need good people, people who are competent, up-to-date, professional, ethical, and committed. Effective Human Resources Management not only enables performance but also increases morale, employee perceptions of fairness, and self-worth. People who work in the courts are special. Their jobs and the work of the courts are not too small for the human spirit. With proper leadership, court Human Resources Management contributes to meaning and pride over and beyond the reward of a paycheck. Excellent Human Resources Management is unlikely in an otherwise mediocre court.
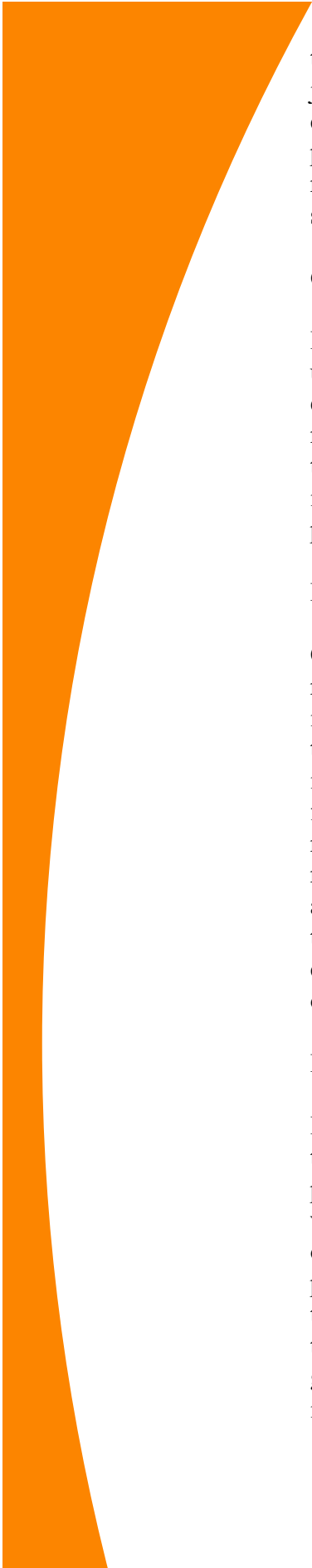
Visioning and Strategic Planning

Visions are holistic, inspirational future snapshots. They look forward and reach back to core values: the ends of justice and service and the means of judicial independence, substantive and procedural due process, equal protection, access, and the fair and efficient application of the law to the facts. Visioning invites court leaders, their justice partners, and the community, first to imagine and then to deliver the future they prefer. Strategic planning is a process -- involving principles, methods and tools--to help court leaders decide what to do and how and when to do it. Strategic planning translates vision into plans and action.

Leadership

Leadership is the energy behind every court system and court accomplishment. Fortunately, and contrary to some received wisdom, leadership is not a mysterious act of grace. Effective leadership is observable and, to a significant extent, learnable. Academic debate about the difference between leadership and management has resulted in consensus that a difference exists, which is not a matter of "better" or "worse." Both are necessary "systems of action." In the memorable words of Warren Bennis: "Managers do things right. Leaders do the right things."

Education, Training and Development

Education, Training, and Development help courts improve court and justice system performance and achieve their desired future. Education, Training, and Development programs are aimed at judges, court staff – especially those in and aspiring to leadership position – as well as others on whom the court depends, both inside and outside the courts. Thus, the

term judicial branch education, as opposed to judicial education. Because judicial branch education helps actuate all other competencies and helps courts maintain balance between the forces of change and enduring principles, effective court leaders take responsibility for it. It is not merely remedial and limited to training. Rather, judicial branch education is strategic and involves Education, Training, and Development.

Court Community Communication

If the courts are to be accessible, open, responsive, affordable, timely, and understandable, courts must learn from and educate the public. To interact effectively with their many publics, court leaders must understand the media and its impact on the public's understanding of and satisfaction with the courts. Understandable courts, skillful community outreach, and informed public information improve court performance and enhance public trust and confidence in the judiciary.

Essential Components

Courts and judges do not just consider evidence provided by the parties, rule on motions, and decide cases on the merits. Increasingly, information is provided to the court by programs annexed to the court or the case rather than by the parties to litigation. Courts must deliver and use this information as well as manage other Essential Components, which range from the relatively mundane such as court security, courtrooms, clerks, and reporters, to the sophisticated such as child custody evaluations, legal research staff, and indigent defense. These and other services, programs, and infrastructure not dealt with by the other Core Competencies constitute the court's Essential Components. Effective court leaders understand the court's Essential Components and, regardless of who has formal authority over them, work to ensure they are well managed.

High Performance Court Framework: Concluding Seminar

In the Concluding Seminar, faculty will guide participants in discussions on the nature of supervision, management, and leadership styles. Faculty and participants will explore how individual styles impact working with others within the court as an organization and externally with the other branches of government. Using this framework, participants will undertake various problem-solving scenarios aimed at synthesizing the learning objectives of the five core courses. The course will also highlight the independence of the judiciary and the separation of powers between the branches of government. The Concluding Seminar is intended as a capstone experience in the development of managerial competence.