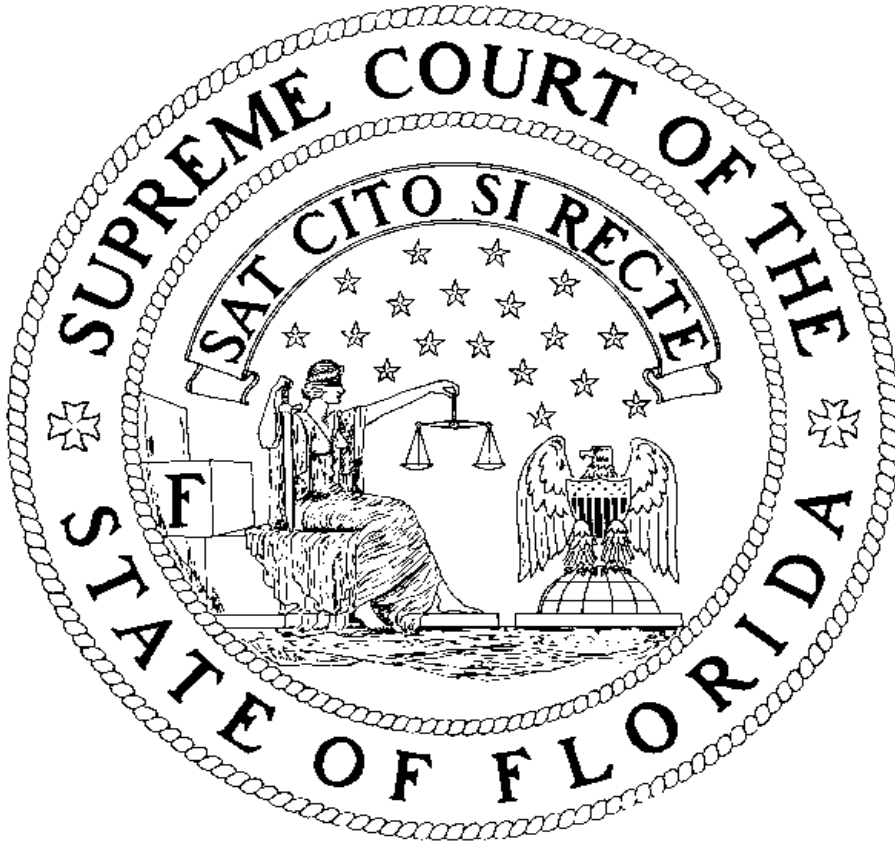


Judicial Branch State Courts System



Long-Range Program Plan Fiscal Years 2009-10 Through 2013-14

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VISION AND MISSION.....	1
STATE COURTS SYSTEM GOALS	2
OVERVIEW	2
ISSUES AND STRATEGIES	3
OBJECTIVES AND SERVICE OUTCOME MEASURES	6
TRENDS AND CONDITIONS.....	8
External Conditions and Forces Impacting Florida Courts	9
Internal Conditions Affecting Florida Courts Capabilities.....	12

Judicial Branch State Courts System

VISION

**Justice in Florida will be accessible, fair, effective,
responsive, and accountable**

To be accessible, the Florida justice system will be convenient, understandable, timely, and affordable to everyone.

To be fair, it will respect the dignity of every person, regardless of race, class, gender or other characteristic, apply the law appropriately to the circumstances of individual cases, and include judges and court staff that reflect the community diversity.

To be effective, it will uphold the law and apply rules and procedures consistently and in a timely manner, resolve cases with finality, and provide enforceable decisions.

To be responsive, it will anticipate and respond to the needs of all members of society, and provide a variety of dispute resolution methods.

To be accountable, the Florida justice system will use public resources efficiently, and in a way that the public can understand.

MISSION

**Protect rights and liberties, uphold and interpret the law,
and provide for the peaceful resolution of disputes.**

STATE COURTS SYTSTEM GOALS

JUSTICE IN FLORIDA WILL BE ACCESSIBLE, FAIR, EFFECTIVE, RESPONSIVE, AND ACCOUNTABLE

OVERVIEW

The judicial branch faces many challenges in the future; there is no single, certain forecast for the courts. Events and trends include, but are not limited to: changing demographics of court users; growing size and complexity of our society; increasing polarization of people based on age, financial status, political views, culture, and values; likelihood of hurricane activity and pandemic influenza; outstanding transition issues resulting from the shift in local and state responsibilities; increasing need for advanced technology applications; and obtaining stable adequate funding for the branch. If the judicial branch is to effectively carry out its mission, it must respond to these challenges by working effectively and creatively. The appropriate response may be doing what has always been done, only better; or it may involve important shifts in organizational focus and action.

The strategic direction delineated in this plan establishes the long-term focus of the judicial branch and outlines strategies to address issues evolving from past events and trends. Some strategies improve upon what has been done in the past and others point the branch in new and different directions. The strategic direction provides context for how the branch will organize, provide services, and fund activities.

The State Courts System strategic direction is organized around five long-range issues. Long-range issues are high priority strategic areas that must be addressed over the next

two to five years in order to continue moving forward the vision and fulfill the mission. The goals and strategies developed to address the issues are extracted from the branch's long-range strategic plan that was presented by the Judicial Management Council and adopted by the Supreme Court of Florida in 1998. The plan was developed to encompass a twenty-year period with intermittent updating. A series of biennial operational plans that identify specific, short-term objectives and tasks to advance the goals of the long-range plan are also utilized.

In May 2006, the Task Force on Judicial Branch Planning began reviewing and updating the branch's long-range strategic issues. The Task Force is continuing its work on this effort and is conducting extensive outreach to the general public, court users, attorneys, judicial officers, court staff, and other partners in the criminal justice system as input for an updated long-range strategic plan. Series of focus groups with court leadership and stakeholders are planned to recommend new long-term goals and strategies for the branch. The updated strategic plan is scheduled to be completed by June, 2009.

ISSUES AND STRATEGIES

Long-Range Issue #1: Clarifying the Role of the Judicial Branch

Issue Description. Florida's courts are being called on to provide an increasingly broad range of services in response to the needs of citizens and the inability of other societal institutions to meet these needs. Many of these expanded services go beyond the historic roles and responsibilities of courts. A consensus over the roles and responsibilities the courts fulfill would give the judicial branch a clear mandate around which to organize its energies and resources and would reinforce the principle of an independent judiciary. The priority focus in addressing this issue is to:

- Define the role and responsibilities of Florida's judicial branch.
- Ensure the roles and responsibilities of the courts are widely understood.
- Ensure that essential court-related services and activities that are not within the roles or responsibilities of the courts are provided by organizations outside of the judicial branch.

Strategies

1. Advance judicial branch positions on constitutional, executive, and legislative proposals affecting the operation of the courts to ensure that the vision and mission of the judicial branch are served.
2. Clarify the respective roles of court-related constitutional officers regarding the essential functions of the courts and the effective administration of justice.
3. Collaborate with other branches of state and local government to promote models of service coordination, consistent with their

roles and responsibilities, which will respond effectively to the needs of individuals and communities.

4. Provide judicial leadership in establishing collaborative efforts with community service providers to enhance judicial effectiveness while preserving the rule of law.

Long-Range Issue #2: Improving the Administration of Justice

Issue Description. The effective administration of justice requires deliberate attention to the core processes of the judicial branch. Increasing workloads which arise from greater demand for adjudication, alternative dispute resolution, other core processes, and core court functions that support court processes will continue to put pressure on the Florida courts system's ability to fulfill its responsibilities effectively and efficiently. The priority focus in addressing this issue is to:

- Provide a full range of core court processes and dispute resolution options statewide.
- Resolve in a fair and timely manner issues brought before the State Courts System.
- Make adequate provision for the needs of the court system and prudently expend funds.

Strategies

1. Promote the maintenance of the Revision 7 funding structure for the State Courts System consistent with the intent of the Florida constitution.
2. Promote court performance and accountability by ensuring that court managers have relevant and timely information necessary to

monitor and enhance court operations and properly identify resource needs.

3. Maximize the availability and use of critical court support resources and activities, including a full range of dispute resolution mechanisms, required for the efficient and effective disposition of cases.

4. Evaluate and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of due process (court reporting, court interpreting, and court expert witnesses) service delivery mechanisms in the trial courts.

5. Ensure that the service of jurors and potential jurors is meaningful and responsive to the needs of the justice system and individual jurors.

6. Identify and utilize information technologies that enhance court services and functions, and promote effective judicial decision-making.

7. Identify and implement court operational practices and procedures that protect children, strengthen families, and assist other vulnerable Floridians.

Long-Range Issue #3: Supporting Competence and Quality

Issue Description. Justice depends on the quality and competence of those who work within the court system. Floridians deserve a court system staffed with highly competent, skilled judges and administrators. Those who work in Florida's court system require a high level of support to prepare them in their work. The priority focus in addressing this issue is to:

- Prepare judges and court personnel to administer justice fairly, effectively, and in a professional and competent manner.
- Ensure judges and court personnel serve the diverse population of Florida with respect and without bias.
- Ensure judges, court personnel and members of the bar adhere to high standards of professionalism, ethics and personal behavior.

Strategies

1. Provide comprehensive and ongoing education and training opportunities and current information updates, to support effective and sound judicial decision-making, increase proficiency in case management, and ensure the highest level of professionalism.

2. Provide comprehensive and ongoing education and training opportunities for court support personnel in order to increase substantive knowledge and proficiency in case management and operational skills.

3. Ensure the implementation of appropriate processes and mechanisms for ensuring the competence and quality of due process court professionals.

4. Recruit and retain a highly qualified, diverse, and skilled workforce by securing competitive compensation and benefits for court system personnel.

Long-Range Issue #4: Enhancing Public Access and Service

Issue Description. Justice requires the ability to petition for the redress of injuries, and the right to equal access to the legal system. Barriers to meaningful access to the legal system can result in unequal treatment which

can give rise to injustice. The priority focus in addressing this issue is to:

- Ensure all Floridians have equal access to courts.
- Ensure people are able to understand and utilize the judicial system.

Strategies

1. Identify and remedy barriers to meaningful access and disparities in court-related services for people who use the courts without the assistance of an attorney.
2. Examine and develop policies regarding electronic access to court records that maintain a proper balance between public access, personal privacy, and public safety, while maintaining the integrity of the judicial process.

Long-Range Issue #5: Building Public Trust and Confidence

Issue Description. The independence and legal authority of the courts is a grant by the people. The erosion of public trust and confidence in the courts undermines judicial independence, diminishes the effectiveness of court actions, and reduces the ability of the

courts to fulfill their function. The priority focus in addressing this issue is to:

- Ensure the judicial system is accountable to the public.
- Inform the public about the functioning of the courts.
- Respond efficiently and effectively to the expectations of the public regarding the courts

Strategies

1. Continue implementing strategies that include: a) sustained outreach efforts designed to enhance public understanding and support for the unique role and responsibilities of the judicial branch in solving problems and administering justice; b) preparation and dissemination of useful information about court operations and processes; and c) collaborative strategies that will increase public respect for and confidence in the court system.
2. Encourage sustained public involvement in the administration of the court system to ensure the maximum contribution to the quality of justice and an appropriate and durable balance between the demands of judicial independence and accountability.

OBJECTIVES AND SERVICE OUTCOMES

Objective 1: *The supreme court will clarify Florida law, ensure that district court decisions throughout the state are consistent, and ensure that court decisions at all levels of the state courts are consistent with rights and liberties. This process will contribute to the development, clarity, and consistency of the law through opinions that provide the public, other courts, and the legal community with a body of law. This jurisprudence will provide a level of stability and predictability that allows Floridians to conduct business and personal affairs in accordance with the law of this state. In the execution of its supervisory responsibilities over the state courts and the practice of law, the supreme court will ensure the integrity of a legal system capable of meeting the needs of a vibrant, rapidly growing state. In its attention to the rules of practice and procedure, the supreme court will ensure that Florida courts are responsive to the complex needs of Floridians.*

Outcome: Clearance rate.

Baseline FY 2002-03	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13	FY 2013-14
97.5%	Indeterminate	Indeterminate	Indeterminate	Indeterminate	Indeterminate

Note: Due to unknown impact of FY 2008-09 budget cuts, clearance rates for fiscal year 2009-10 to 2013-14 cannot be predicted at this time.

Objective 2: *The district courts of appeal of Florida will provide the opportunity for thoughtful review of decisions of lower tribunals by multi-judge panels. District courts of appeal will correct harmful errors and ensure that decisions are consistent with our rights and liberties. The process contributes to the development, clarity, and consistency of the law.*

Outcome: Clearance rate.

Baseline FY 2002-03	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13	FY 2013-14
99.3%	Indeterminate	Indeterminate	Indeterminate	Indeterminate	Indeterminate

Note: Due to the unknown impact of FY 2008-09 budget cuts, clearance rates for fiscal year 2009-10 to 2013-14 cannot be predicted at this time.

Objective 3: *Florida trial courts will protect and declare the rights and responsibilities of the*

people, uphold and interpret the law, and provide a forum for the just and peaceful resolution of legal and factual disputes.

Outcome: Clearance rate.

Baseline FY 2002-03	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13	FY 2013-14
92.2%	Indeterminate	Indeterminate	Indeterminate	Indeterminate	Indeterminate

Notes:

Due to the unknown impact of FY 2008-09 budget cuts, clearance rates for fiscal year 2009-10 to 2013-14 cannot be predicted at this time.

Beginning in FY 2004-2005, all county court cases were included with circuit court cases in the calculation of clearance rate for all trial courts. The judicial branch has combined the services titled Circuit Courts and County Courts under Court Operations - Trial Courts, as a result of Revision 7 implementation.

TRENDS AND CONDITIONS STATEMENT

The State Courts System's long-range program plan provides the strategic direction, organizational framework, and context for the judicial branch budget. The planning process used to develop the plan relies on careful consideration of the actions needed to address the external as well as internal forces and conditions that may impact the court's capabilities in fulfilling the mission. The planning process assesses court issues and priorities, and reviews and justifies programs, services, and activities that will be used to implement priority-based resource allocation decisions.

As the State Courts System performance accountability system is developed, implemented, and refined, trend data is used to support analyses and decisions. Further, forces and conditions are monitored to determine if additional assessments are needed to identify issues or challenges that may have an impact on the courts in the mid- or long-term.

Florida's state courts serve all of Florida's residents, visitors, businesses, and governmental institutions, either directly or indirectly. As the population and the number of visitors to Florida increase and become more diverse, and as the business and governmental sectors become larger and more sophisticated, the corresponding task environment of the courts becomes more complex. A number of external and internal trends contribute to the scope and complexity of the challenges facing the courts.

External Conditions and Forces Impacting Florida Courts

State Budget Decline. Florida's state government budget has been severely impacted by the decline of the economy linked to the housing market, job losses, and gas prices that are reflective of the nation's economic downturn. The state government deficits and decline in revenue collections have resulted in cutbacks to both the executive agencies and the judicial branch. Economists say it marks the first time that a three-year drop has occurred since the state began its formal revenue estimates in 1971. State revenue is not expected to reach its 2005-06 budget year levels again until the budget year that begins July 1, 2011.

This budget crisis has resulted in layoffs and service cutbacks throughout the State Courts System and seriously impacted the branch's ability to fulfill its mission. However, the Constitutional duty of the judicial branch remains to provide access to court services despite the deep cuts to its budget. Stable funding for the branch is critical for the long-term viability and mission of the system.

Court User Demographics. Florida's population continues to grow; the Office of Economic and Demographic Research projects that Florida's population will grow from 18,349,132 to 26,513,331 by 2030. Although the population growth has slowed down because of the housing and economic turndowns, the state will still add an average of 209,000 residents a year between 2007-2010. So, obviously court growth, in proportion to population, must be anticipated. But the future population of Florida will continue to be increasingly diverse by culture and language; the state will also continue the trend of becoming one of the nation's oldest states by age demographics.

Language diversity has implications for the courts because it is critical that participants fully understand what is taking place so that they can make informed decisions and participate in the judicial process on an equal footing. So proceedings must be conducted with an appropriately trained language interpreter. And where fundamental rights are at stake – in criminal, dependency, etc. – it becomes a due process matter and the interpreter must be provided at public expense if the individual involved cannot afford one.

As of 2005, the estimated number of people who speak a language other than English at home has grown to over 25% statewide. Of the 15 million people over the age of five in Florida, 3.4 million (23.1%) speak a language other than English at home. Of the 3.4 million, 1.5 million (44.8%) report that they do not speak English "very well."

Additionally, many residents who immigrated from other countries are not familiar with our legal system.

In the past, these groups were heavily concentrated in South Florida but recent trends in Florida show an increase in more northern counties and in the panhandle. Therefore, this migration of non-English speaking people throughout Florida is unpredictable and creates a challenge to the judicial branch to provide adequate services.

Concerning the age of Florida's population, it is projected that by the year 2030, one in every four Floridians will be over the age of 65. While crime rates tend to diminish with older populations, age does bring its own issues. An older population may give rise to more guardianship and probate cases, more cases involving elder abuse and neglect, medical treatment, malpractice, insurance issues, and so on. Also an older population

may yield a smaller workforce in proportion to the total population.

Access. Another important major trend in courts across the country has been the increase in the number of individuals who are unrepresented by counsel and handling their legal matters themselves. The increased numbers of pro se parties in all judicial divisions, even in the appellate courts, will continue to have implications for the courts. And in many cases, especially in the family divisions, both parties are unrepresented. In some instances people handle their legal matters pro se because they simply lack the resources to hire an attorney and affordable legal services have become increasingly difficult to find.

The State of Florida is also still grappling with the most efficient and effective method for providing legal representation in criminal cases where the public defender has a conflict of interest and is unable to represent one or more defendants in a case. From the court perspective, it is important to ensure that there are an adequate number of qualified conflict counsels, thereby avoiding unnecessary delays or appeals.

Electronic access is also an important goal for the branch as it works toward providing electronic access to non-confidential court records when appropriate conditions are met. However, the court is also obligated to protect the privacy interests of both individuals and corporations.

Interdependence of Justice System Agencies. In addition, there is an increasing interdependence of justice system agencies, along with increasingly complex and interdependent laws and statutory schemes. This interdependence is especially evident in cases involving families, children, self-represented litigants, and court-appointed counsel opera-

tions, where courts continue to experience an increasing number of diverse expectations for the courts' role.

The demands and expectations on the part of court users and the public contribute to heightened tensions and workload demands as courts must continue to carry out traditional functions while assuming new responsibilities. As a result, the roles and expectations of judges and courts continue to be examined.

Economic Activity. Economic activity increasingly involves business relationships that cross several states or countries. The expansion of international trade, immigration and tourism represents a positive impact on Florida's economy and new challenges and questions for the justice system, including more potential interstate and international cases, and jurisdiction over individuals and corporations. When litigation occurs, this leads to increased complexity of legal issues such as personal jurisdiction and conflict of law.

Business, travel, communications, science, crime, and criminal justice are becoming internationalized as political, communication, and economic barriers are reduced. Florida's statewide economic development efforts to continually improve the business climate and ensure global competitiveness will present new challenges for the justice system in many types of cases, including commercial disputes.

Shortage of Court Administrators and Staff. There is an increasingly limited pool of workers with the unique skills required in the court environment – such as court managers and administrators, court reporters, court interpreters. The National Center for State Courts cites the growing shortage of court administrators and staff as a critical trend

facing state courts. The limited pool of uniquely qualified applicants, along with competitive state and national salaries has resulted in: difficulty recruiting well qualified applicants; salary and benefit structures that are not competitive with local and state governments; and the continued loss of experienced employees to other government entities for higher pay. These issues are also exacerbated by the recent budget downturns.

Security. Threats against judges, court officers, and court facilities will continue to require enhanced capacity to provide for the physical security of court facilities, their immediate area, and judicial personnel.

Caseload Factors. The Supreme Court is uniquely impacted by frequent constitutional and statutory changes regarding the imposition of the death penalty. Changes in the law present new issues that must be resolved through appellate litigation.

The district courts of appeal are uniquely impacted by statutory changes in criminal sentencing laws. Changes in the law produce increases in appeals and present new issues that must be resolved through appellate litigation of many cases. Appellate courts in Florida continue to receive more appeals proportional to the population than do the appeals courts of comparable state court systems. Four of the five most populous states, (California, Texas, Illinois, and New York) are all near the median of appeals per 100,000 residents for states with an intermediate appellate court. The fifth, Florida, has nearly double the median. Appeals per 100,000 of population, in 2005 are as follows (National Center for State Courts, 2006):

- California 85
- **Florida 153**
- Illinois 90

- New York 86
- Texas 88

In circuit court, cases involving children and families during Fiscal Year 2006-07 constitute approximately 46 percent of civil filings. From Fiscal Year 2005-06 to Fiscal Year 2006-07, the following increases are noted: repeat violence (2%), and termination of parental rights (12%) cases. For repeat violence, this trend began in the early 1990s and is projected to continue. Termination of parental rights has experienced increases and decreases over the past several years; it is projected that these cases will remain stable in the coming years.

From Fiscal Year 2005-06 to Fiscal Year 2006-07, two case types in the probate division experienced increases. Trust cases experienced a fifteen percent increase, while substance abuse cases increased by thirteen percent. The number of probate cases is projected to remain stable in future years.

In the circuit civil division, condominium, real property/mortgage foreclosure and contract cases have experienced increases from Fiscal Year 2005-06 to Fiscal Year 2006-07. Condominium cases increased by one hundred forty-seven percent, real property/mortgage foreclosure cases increased by ninety-seven percent and contract cases increased by seventeen percent. It is projected that these cases will become stable in future years.

Drug crimes and crimes against property constitute the largest portion of circuit criminal filings. The greatest increases have occurred in these areas over the past several years. It is projected that drug crimes and crimes against property will continue to rise in the coming years.

In county court, two case types in the criminal division experienced an increase from Fiscal Year 2005-06 to Fiscal Year 2006-07, specifically: ordinances (4%) and misdemeanors (5%). These increases are projected to remain stable in future years.

From Fiscal Year 2005-06 to Fiscal Year 2006-07, several case types in the county civil division experienced increases. The following are noted: small claims (22%), civil -\$5,000 to \$15,000 (17%), and other civil (37%). These cases are projected to remain stable in the coming years.

Internal Conditions Affecting Florida Courts Capabilities

On July 1, 2004 the state became the primary source of funding for the judicial branch's trial court system, as required by the amendment to Article V of Florida's constitution known as "Revision 7." Under the amendment, the State is responsible for funding most elements of the State Courts System, offices of the state attorneys and public defenders, and court-appointed counsel. Funding for the offices of the clerks of the circuit and county courts, when performing court-related functions, come from user fees: filing fees, service charges and court costs. The counties must continue to provide funding for facilities, security, existing criminal justice information systems, communications (inclusive of all computer systems, local networks, and equipment) and local requirements as specified by the legislature. Revision 7 was not merely a switch from county funding to state funding of many trial court operations. In the final stage, the judicial branch must carefully and deliberately implement Revision 7, to achieve the *operational* unification that will ensure that the people of Florida enjoy a high-quality court system in every courthouse.

As Florida's courts move forward in implementing this historic transformation, a change that will influence the quality of our justice system for many years to come, the branch has identified funding goals, which are summarized below:

- **EQUITY AND ACCESS.** The structure, operation, and funding of judicial branch activities and services should provide equal access to justice in all courts of the state.

The Revision 7 ballot language made it clear that its intent was to "make justice less dependent on a county's size or wealth" expressly "promot[ing] uniformity" of justice irrespective of geography. Where legislative appropriations are not sufficient to provide all Floridians with comparable access to court programs and services, the judicial branch must continue to assert its funding needs to ensure long-term stability and compliance with constitutional responsibility.

Justice requires that the court system be open and accessible to all, respect the dignity of every person, including judges and court staff that reflect the community's diversity. The court system must continue to conduct self-evaluations and advance efforts to eliminate from court operations bias that is based on: race; gender; ethnicity; age; disability, pursuant to Title II of the Americans with Disability Acts of 1990 (ADA); socioeconomic status; or any characteristic that is without legal relevance.

As courts continue to seek new efficiencies through the introduction of technologies, such as electronic filing and increased reliance on the Internet for the promulgation of court-related information, the needs of Floridians who are unable to access or use such technologies must be carefully considered and accommodated.

The ability to provide access requires that the courts network capabilities are fully funded and allow for statewide implementation. This network communication facility is critical to support the move toward web-based applications and availability of court data both internally and external to the courts.

- **INDEPENDENCE AND INTERDEPENDENCE.** The independence of the courts – in the adjudication of cases and the administration of the court system is a cornerstone of American jurisprudence and government and must be maintained. Yet, it is equally important to recognize that the three branches of our government are jointly responsible for a well-functioning justice system.

In our system of government, each branch has its own important role. The judicial branch must demonstrate leadership by being organizationally responsive and administratively accountable, while ensuring that justice in Florida is accessible, fair, and effective; the legislative branch provides sufficient resources, to the extent it is able, in order to protect and respect the independence and functioning of the judicial branch; and executive branch agencies collaborate with the courts to create effective partnerships in areas where both have unique but complementary roles, as in cases involving victims of crime, dependent or delinquent children, families in crisis, and persons with substance-abuse problems.

The transition to state funding has not lessened the importance of the courts' relationships at the local level. County funding and resources remain critical to the proper functioning of the trial courts; chief judges and trial court administrators will continue to work with their counties to ensure that the necessary

county resources are available. Local inter-branch relations are complicated by the fact that the independently elected clerk of court has dual roles – providing services integral to judicial branch operations and performing executive branch functions for the county. The courts will need to work closely with the clerks to ensure that the proper flow of case maintenance functions and meaningful access to the courts for pro se litigants are maintained.

- **ACCOUNTABILITY.** The judicial branch will be accountable to the people of Florida for the expenditure of public funds and the efficiency of judicial operations.

The viability of Florida's justice system depends on those who use the courts and what they think about how the courts do their work. Article II, section 19 of the Florida constitution requires that the judicial branch develop a quality management and accountability program. As the trial courts continue to change the way they do business as a result of the transition to state funding, the Commission on Trial Court Performance and Accountability will be key to guiding the branch's efforts to ensure proper management of and accountability for trial court services. Likewise, the Commission on District Courts of Appeal Performance and Accountability must continue to develop and implement a high quality performance measurement system for the district courts.

In addition, while structural unification of Florida's court system began in 1972 and budgetary unification in 2004, technological unification remains a primary challenge. The need to explore and implement technological improvements to core court processes is especially important in times of budget scarcity.

The capacity for implementing and sustaining performance and accountability mechanisms is critical to understanding and improving court performance. Trial courts, in particular, will need to continue to find ways to meet the increasing demand for improvement and accountability. Development of an electronic management system that encompasses functions such as case and resource management is extremely important.

RESPONSIVENESS. The governance and management infrastructure of the courts must be responsive to the needs of the people.

Courts have always been involved in resolving disputes and solving problems. Nationally, courts have acknowledged an increasing number of diverse expectations for the courts' role in society and have responded by creating problem-solving courts exemplified by the drug courts and mental health courts.

The judicial branch in Florida recognizes that the administration of justice is its priority. Florida's unified court system must continue to identify and eliminate real or perceived bias in court access or operations and administer justice in all cases – whether it is assigning proper criminal sanctions in criminal cases, establishing that one person or entity owes another in civil cases, protecting vulnerable persons, rendering equity in domestic relations cases, assuring the integrity and credibility of judicial authority by enforcing court orders, or correcting harmful errors through the appellate system.