

Strategic Planning & the Courts

Courts at all levels and of all sizes across the United States, including Florida, are experiencing widespread changes and burgeoning service demands. For example, the judicial system environment both nationally and in Florida is characterized by:

- ~ profound social, economic, political, policy, and technological changes;
- ~ increasingly complex and interdependent laws and statutory schemes;
- ~ unsurpassed demands and expectations on the part of court users and the public;
- ~ heightened tensions attributable to user expectations that the courts carry out traditional functions while assuming new, non-traditional roles and responsibilities;
- ~ unprecedented scrutiny of judicial system performance by legislative bodies, the media, and the public, particularly in high profile cases; and
- ~ diminished public trust and confidence in government including the entire judicial system.

The pace of change and the increasing service demands placed on courts nationally are unlikely to diminish any time soon - if ever. Rather, the forces of change are expected to exert even more pressure on already overburdened judicial systems - pressure to: (1) resolve an increasingly diverse and complex set of legal issues; (2) improve overall court performance; and (3) deliver a wide range of services in the most cost effective and efficient manner possible.

An ad hoc and reactive approach to the current milieu is no longer feasible or effective. Instead, it has become increasingly important to develop systematic, comprehensive, and pro-active long term responses to the sweeping challenges and opportunities facing entire judicial systems. To that end, the Florida Judicial Branch, like many other court systems across the United States, has been and is presently using long-range strategic, operational, and implementation planning to respond systematically to the increasing demands and pressures it faces now and is likely to face in the future.