



## *Purpose of Trial Court Administration*

To allow trial judges to efficiently fulfill their constitutional responsibilities to adjudicate disputes presented to them and to carry out their constitutional and statutory responsibilities for governance of the trial courts. This efficiency is achieved by the provision of support services in the following areas: 1) executive direction and policy development; 2) communication and public information; 3) administrative structure and system support; 4) judicial operations; and 5) technology services and support.

## *Why We Need Trial Court Administration*

Circuit chief judges are constitutionally responsible for the administrative supervision of the courts within their jurisdiction. The non-adjudicatory functions necessary to govern the judicial branch are often referred to as “judicial administration” functions. It is vital for judges to focus, as much as possible, on the adjudication of disputes. As a result, it is more cost effective to delegate administrative responsibilities to full-time, specially trained professionals. Professional administrative staff have become increasingly necessary as the modern court system becomes more complex, fundamental constitutional rights become more well-defined, case filings increase, and the number of judges continues to grow. State court administration and circuit court administration play critical and unique roles that complement one another in working to align court practice with court policy, provide accountability mechanisms at the state and circuit levels, and promote the administration of justice.

## *Supporting the Trial Courts*

Trial court administration provides circuit policy, technical assistance, and administrative and operational support to:

- The chief judge of the circuit court;
- Circuit and county court judges within the circuit;
- General masters, special masters, and hearing officers within the circuit;
- Court staff within the circuit; and
- Policy advisory commissions, committees, task forces, and workgroups established locally.

# *Examples of Activities Staffed by Trial Court Administration*

## *Administrative Structure and System Support*

- Human resource management (e.g., recruitment and selection, county position classification, county payroll processing and senior judge management)
- Fiscal management (e.g., circuit budget, purchasing, contracting, invoice processing, and reconciliation of financial records)
- Employee certification for due process services (e.g., court reporting and court interpreting)
- Employee education and training
- Volunteer management
- Facilities support (e.g., access card and key control, courtroom and resource scheduling, and parking management)
- Inventory control (e.g., property and records management)
- Trial court emergency preparedness planning

## *Executive Direction and Policy Development*

- Research emerging circuit-wide issues
- Strategic and operational planning for the circuit
- Policy development, coordination, and implementation for the circuit
- Performance and workload measurement and analysis
- Legal support and counsel on court policy
- Operational and administrative issues
- Circuit administrative orders
- Circuit and case flow policy planning and management

## *Judicial Operations*

- Case management
- Court reporting services
- Court interpreting services
- Alternative dispute resolution services (e.g., mediation)
- Jury management
- Circuit program management and support (e.g., teen court, victim restitution and supervised visitation)

## *Technology Services and Support*

- Computer support
- Network support
- Application development and support
- Courtroom technology support
- Website development, support, and maintenance
- Audio\visual support (e.g., video conferencing and digital courtroom audio)
- Technology planning and coordination with other judicial agencies

## *Communication and Public Information*

- Liaison between court-related agencies and government entities
- Liaison with the Office of the State Courts Administrator
- Media relations and public information
- Community outreach (e.g., town hall meetings, speakers bureau and educational tours)
- Circuit website content development and support
- Circuit publications (e.g., court forms, informational brochures, newsletters and annual performance reports)
- Report on work of policy advisory commissions, committees, task forces, and workgroups

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Currently, the larger urban circuits have sufficient workload to require full-time staff to perform the necessary services and duties listed above. Other circuits rely on the Office of the State Courts Administrator for direct support in some or all of these areas. Revision 7 implementation is expected to create sufficient additional administrative work within each circuit to necessitate staff to perform those functions.