

Background Information for the Long-Range Strategic Plan for the Florida Judicial Branch 2016 - 2021

Components of the Long-Range Strategic Plan and Process Overview

The long-range strategic plan was developed by the Judicial Management Council's Long-Range Strategic Planning Workgroup. The long-range strategic plan is composed of mission and vision statements, five long-range issues, and 29 goals. The mission and vision statements were first articulated in the long-range strategic plan issued in 1998; they remain relevant today and are unchanged in the current plan. However, the long-range issues and the accompanying goals in this 2016-2021 strategic plan address the current and anticipated concerns facing the judicial branch in 2016 and beyond. The long-range issues are high priority strategic areas presenting significant challenges and foreseeable situations that must be addressed over the long term in order to move toward fulfilling the judicial branch's vision and mission. The goals are aspirational statements of a desired future state that realistically can be achieved with respect to the issue area.

The Workgroup employed a deliberately constructed planning process designed to gather broad input through multiple methods, analyze and review those outreach findings, and refine issue and goal statements to capture future challenges and opportunities for Florida's judicial branch. The process began by considering relevant environmental factors and significant statistical data. A series of survey and outreach initiatives followed to solicit input from a wide range of audiences. The data from those multiple outreach mechanisms was then reviewed and analyzed. Issue and goal statements were developed by the Workgroup and provided to the Judicial Management Council and finally the Supreme Court for review and approval.

The following provides additional details of the Workgroup's efforts to develop the long-range strategic plan.

Planning

Formation

- In July 2014, the Chief Justice appointed the Long-Range Strategic Planning Workgroup to provide input and guidance on all aspects of developing the Long-Range Strategic Plan for the Judicial Branch of Florida 2016-2021. The Workgroup operated under the auspices of the Florida Supreme Court's Judicial Management Council and was appointed for an 18 month term from July 2014 through December 2015. The ten member Workgroup represented small and large circuits and urban and rural areas from various geographic regions throughout the state. The Workgroup represented each level of court, included members outside the judiciary, and was both racially and ethnically diverse to provide multiple perspectives on court challenges and opportunities.

Research

- In September 2014, an environmental scan was prepared that examined population, political, economic, social, technological, and legal issues that may impact the judicial branch in the years ahead. From an aging population, to criminal justice reform, to the growing demand for self-service, multiple environmental factors impacting the future of Florida's courts were explored. Additionally, Florida court filing trends and other relevant publications and sources were

consulted and reviewed to help determine possible future effects on the courts in Florida. [Click here](#) for more information.

Data Collection and Analysis

Surveys

- Under the direction of the Workgroup and funded by a grant from The Florida Bar Foundation, the Florida State University Survey Research Laboratory conducted a public opinion mail survey of Florida residents from January 2015 to March 2015. The purpose of the mail survey was to examine the public's experiences with and attitudes about Florida's courts. Based on the random selection process used and the number of responses received, the confidence interval for this survey is $\pm 4\%$ at the 95% confidence level. This means there is a high level of confidence that the mail survey results accurately reflect the views of Florida's residents due to the sampling methodology and sample size.
- Online and paper surveys were developed to provide a window of understanding into the thoughts and opinions of the various groups who access, partner with, or work in the courts. Surveys were developed for jurors, court users, attorneys, clerk of court staff, justice system partners, and judicial officers and court staff and were conducted from November 2014 through January 2015.
- Public input was also accepted through a link on the flcourts.org website from November 2014 through March 2015. The website was publicized through press releases, regional public outreach meetings, and other avenues.
- Nearly 6,000 responses were received through the various survey mechanisms described above.

Partner meetings

- From December 2014 through March 2015, the Workgroup chair met with eight business and advocacy groups to solicit input on judicial operations and opportunities for improvement. Those groups were: the Florida Bankers Association; the Florida Retail Federation; Florida Tax Watch; Associated Industries of Florida; the Florida Justice Association; the Florida Justice Reform Institute; the Florida Chamber of Commerce; and the Florida Council of 100.
- In March 2015, 20 individuals representing 16 different agencies and organizations participated in a day-long facilitated meeting to explore common issues related to the justice system. The focus of the meeting was discussion of the most significant trends and challenges facing the courts and participants' organizations in the next three to five years and identifying the highest priority issues facing the participants' organizations.

Public forums

- From January 2015 through March 2015, six public forums were held in communities across the state in Orlando, Bartow, Panama City, Jacksonville, Miami, and Lake City. The purpose of the forums was to hear the views and concerns of local citizens, community organizations, and others who have an interest or stake in Florida's courts. Workgroup members and Judicial Management Council members served on panels at the public forums to receive comments. Local public officials were invited to provide comment and members of the public were also encouraged to provide any suggestions for improving judicial operations. Although speakers were free to comment on any topic, they were asked to focus on the following questions: (1) What are your thoughts and perceptions about the state courts system? (2) In your opinion,

what do you believe are the most important issues currently facing Florida courts? Approximately 175 people attended the public forums, including citizens, community leaders, advocacy groups, treatment providers, universities/colleges, private and public attorneys, state legislators, city and county commissioners, and justice system partners. Of those attending, 105 spoke on various topics and many submitted written comments as well.

Findings

- In May 2015, the Workgroup reviewed all findings from the survey instruments and outreach efforts. Several themes emerged from that information which included: access to legal representation, technology, consistency across jurisdictions, customer focus, efficiency and accountability, training and education, stable funding, and outreach and collaboration. Findings were also presented to the Judicial Management Council in May 2015 for their consideration. [Click here](#) for more information.

Drafting and Approval of the Long-Range Strategic Plan

Drafting

- In August 2015, the Workgroup considered draft issue and goal statements and further refined those statements. The Workgroup formally adopted the issue and goal statements in September 2015.

Approval

- The Judicial Management Council reviewed and approved the issue and goal statements in October 2015. The full Supreme Court reviewed and approved the issue and goal statements in November 2015, thereby formally adopting the updated Long-Range Strategic Plan for the Florida Judicial Branch.