

OCA CIRCULAR NO. 12-2002, June 03, 2002

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TO:

ALL JUDGES OF THE REGIONAL TRIAL COURTS, SHARI' A DISTRICT COURTS, METROPOLITAN TRIAL COURTS, MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURTS IN CITIES, MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURTS, MUNICIPAL CIRCUIT TRIAL COURTS AND SHARI' A CIRCUIT COURTS

SUBJECT:

JUDICIAL SERVICE TEAMS OF THE TRIAL COURTS

The trial Court Performance Standards and Measurement System[1] focuses on the need for the court personnel, together with their respective presiding judges, to work as the court's Judicial Service Team. Each court branch shall constitute a Judicial Service Team (JST) in line with the Total Quality Management strategy. Through their effective management of time, resources and facilities, these teams can provide the appropriate working environment where justice can be efficiently and effectively administered.

The JST should be able to assess their performance in five (5) areas:

- 1. Access to justice;
- Expedition and timeliness;
- Equality, fairness and integrity;
- Independence and accountability; and
- Public trust and confidence.

As part of the Trial Court Performance Standards and Measurement System, the following activities should be undertaken by the JST:

- Presiding judges should conduct regular monthly meetings (at least once a month) with their court personnel on the last working day. Minutes of the monthly meeting shall be prepared by the assigned Recorder-Secretary, a copy of which shall be submitted to the Office of the Court Administrator.
- The first staff meeting pursuant to this issuance shall be called during any week of June 2002. At said meeting, the members of the JST shall as a group accomplish the "Court Performance Inventory" form [2] (Annex "A"). A copy of the accomplished "Court Performance Inventory" form shall be sent to the Court Management Office, Office of the Court Administrator, within ten (10) days after the staff meeting. Thereafter, the inventory forms shall be accomplished every quarter.
- After responding to the "Court Performance Inventory" form, the JST shall discuss the issues/problems in the areas which are rated lowest and the measures proposed measures which would require intervention or action by

the Court Administrator of the Supreme Court shall be sent to the Court Administrator through the Court Action Plan (CAP) (Annex "B"). The JST shall carry out those measures which can be implemented at the court level.

The agenda for the monthly staff meetings shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following:

- Jail visitation
- Review of the status of cases and case flow charts;
- Preparation of decisions and monitoring of deadlines;
- Submission of reports pursuant to Administrative Circular No. 1-2001 dated January 2, 2001 (List of case filed/raffled, disposed, archived, transferred/raffled, and with suspended proceedings) and Administrative Circular No. 61-2001 dated December 10, 2001 (Revised SC Form No. 1, Monthly Report of Cases);
- Submission of financial reports (Fiduciary Funds and JDF) and forfeited bonds;
- Determination of clearance rates;
- Submission of semestral inventory cases;
- Submission of inventory of equipment and office supplies; and
- Problems of the court branch.
- The JST shall monitor changes in their assessment of their court's performance; review measures implemented to address issues/problems; and formulate and carry out new measures to resolve new issues/problems.

Strict compliance herewith is enjoined.

June 3, 2002.

PRESBITERO J. VELASCO, JR.

Court Administrator

[1] A discussion of the "Trial Court Performance Standards and Measurement Systems" can be found in the Chapter on "Court and Case Management: Trial Court Performance Standards and Measurement" of the Benchbook for Trial Court Judges (pp. 8.1-8.4).

[2] The "Court Performance Inventory" form has been reproduced from the Program Brief of the "Trial Court Performance Standards and Measurement System" published by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, office of Justice Programs, U. S. Department of Justice.

COURT PERFORMANCE INVENTORY

DIRECTIONS: Read each of the following statements. Based on your experiences with your court or another of interest to you, determine whether you believe the statement is **BROADLY TRUE** or **BROADLY FALSE** about the way that court performs. If **BROADLY TRUE** place an X in the corresponding numbered box on the Court Performance Inventory Response Form that follows the last statement. Once you have completed the response

form, add the number of boxes marked as BROADLY TRUE for each of the five columns. Each column refers to one of the performance areas. Use the five sums to complete the Court Performance Profile.

- An observer sitting in the courtroom's public seating area will have no difficulty hearing judges, attorneys, litigants, witnesses, and other participants in the proceeding.
- The total elapsed time it takes the court to dispose of cases once they are filed complies with standards provided by the Supreme Court or by law.
- The court's records of cases (such as transcripts of stenographic notes, pleadings, evidence, etc.) are not susceptible to tampering.
- The allocation of personnel resources among case types is defensible and based upon logic and reason.
- The legal public (a) perceives the trial court and the justice it delivers as accessible; (b) has trust and confidence that basic trial functions are conducted expeditiously and fairly and that the court's decisions have integrity; and (c) knows that the trial court is independent, accountable, and not unduly influenced by the government components.
- An undercover law enforcement official, dressed in plain clothes, will not be able to breach either the court's security system that protect the public or confidential court files and records.
- An examination of court financial records will reveal that the various types of funds for which the court is responsible are disbursed in a timely manner.
- An examination of relevant case file documents and court records will reveal that the court closely adheres to key legal requirements.
- An analysis of the court's hiring practices would reveal that the court closely adheres to key legal requirements.
- Justice system representatives, i.e., prosecutors, PAO lawyers, police, officers, etc. (a) perceive the trial court and the justice it delivers as accessible, (b) has trust and confidence that basic trial functions are conducted expeditiously and fairly and that the court's decisions have integrity; and (c) knows that the trial court is independent, accountable, and not unduly influenced by other government components.
- Interpreter services provided by the court are performed by individuals with language proficiency, interpreting skill, and knowledge of professional conduct.
- The court promptly implements changes in administrative procedures required by the Supreme Court directly or through the Office of the Court Administrator.
- The court does a good job of communicating clearly the terms and conditions of criminal sentences.
- The court's responses to proper requests for information from the media are accurate and timely.
- The results of a survey of regular court users, court employees, and attorneys are likely to conclude that judges and other trial court personnel are courteous and responsive to the public and all others with whom they come into contact.
- A person who attempts to determine the specific time and location of a particular court event will have no difficulty getting this information from the court by telephone.
- Cases scheduled for trial are heard on this first scheduled trial date.
- The court is well-positioned and organized to enforce or facilitate the enforcement of its orders and judgments.

- A group of knowledgeable individuals is likely to conclude that court personnel practices and decisions are fair.
- Citizens are likely to report that access to court services is generally not hindered because of costs or complexity of procedures.
- Persons with physical disabilities are able to conduct transitions in the court with relative ease.
- The various services available from the court (such as indigent defense services, interpreter services, and mental health evaluations) are provided promptly.
- A test of the timely retrieval of individual case files will reveal that the court's file control system is reliable and efficient.
- The court has adequate statistical reporting capacity to make useful use assessment of the relationship between the court's workload and the distribution of court resources.
- Lawyers who have appeared regularly in the court in the past year would assess that the court's actions and decisions are fair and equitable.
- Court observes are likely to find that litigants are treated with a high degree of courtesy and individual respect by judges of the court.
- The number of pending cases exceeding national time standards for case processing is low.
- The court clearly states the terms and conditions of obligations imposed as a result of adjudication of a civil dispute.
- Court employees and the public are likely to be satisfied with policies and practices for responding to requests for information.

COURT PERFORMANCE INVENTORY RESPONSE FORM

1 2 3 4 5

6 7 8 9 10

11 12 13 14 15

16 17 18 19 20

21 22 23 24 25

26 27 28 29 30

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41 42 43 44 45

46 47 48 49 50

Assess to

Justice

Expectation and

Timeliness

Equality,
Fairness and
Integrity

Independence
and
Accountability

Public Trust
and Confidence

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

0

Assess to
Justice

Expectation and
Timeliness

Equality,
Fairness and
Integrity

Independence
and
Accountability

Public Trust
and Confidence

DIRECTIONS: For each performance area, place a dot next to the total number of X's recorded on response form. For example, if the total number of X's in the Access to Justice column on the response form is 3, place a dot next

to the line 3 in the first column of the graph. When the total score for each of the five areas has been recorded on the graph, connect the five dots, starting with the dot in the first column and ending with the dot in the fifth column. The lines will depict which areas are rated highest and which are rated lowest. The results can be used to compare perceptions of court performance across court officials and staff and to initiate discussion regarding priorities for targeting improved efforts.

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