

2023-2028 SOLANO COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT STRATEGIC PLAN

INTRODUCTION

In 2023, the judicial officers and administrators of the Solano County Superior Court convened during a series of meetings to create a new five-year strategic plan. The majority of judicial officers currently sitting on the bench were appointed or elected since creation of the last strategic plan and had not participated in the process of creating a unified vision for the court. Emerging from the challenges of the COVID pandemic, judicial leadership identified a need to be proactive rather than reactive. Utilizing the Judicial Council's Strategic Plan for California's Judicial Branch and past strategic plans developed locally by the Solano County Superior Court as a foundation, court leadership identified and affirmed core values and existing strengths, opportunities for growth and improvement as well as external demands on the local justice system and barriers to progress.

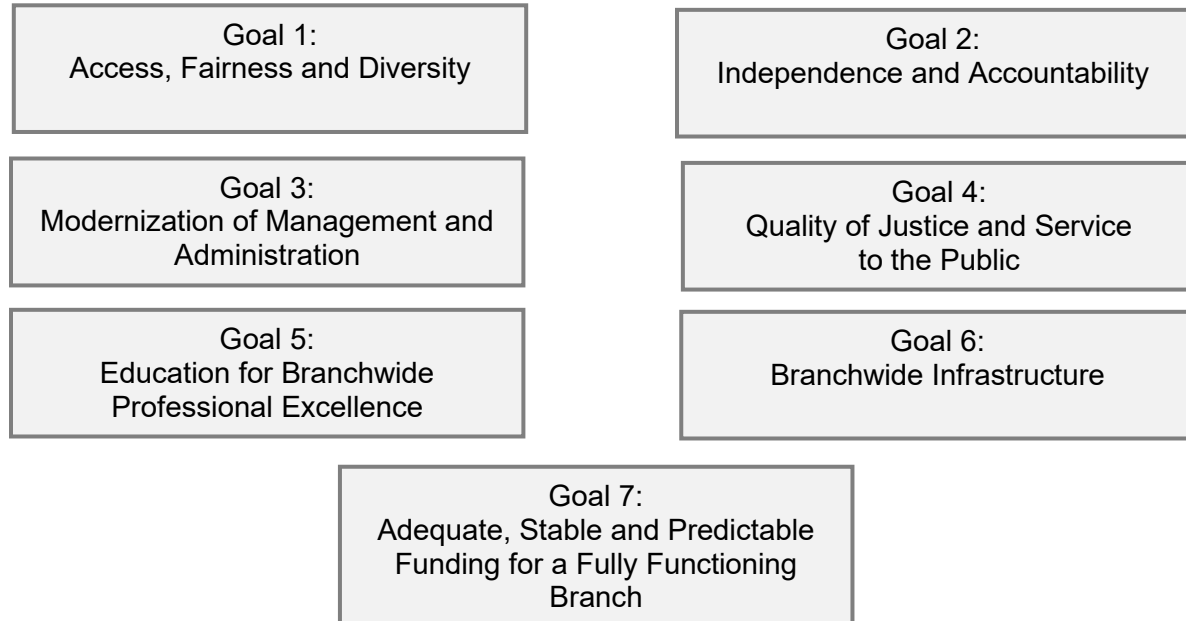
With this analysis, court leadership identified a forward-looking vision for the court with steps for focused implementation during the next five years.

BACKGROUND

California Rules of Court, rule 10.603 requires a presiding judge to prepare a long-range strategic plan consistent with the policies of the Judicial Council. A strategic planning committee was established to plan the process, facilitate the planning sessions and finalize the proposed strategic plan for adoption by the bench. As part of this process, the committee studied past strategic plans and historic documentation of court programmatic changes during the past twenty years. The committee established scoping questions to prompt and direct discussions and worked with the facilitator to plan for the sessions. Utilizing a process known as Technology of Participation, a professional facilitator met with court leadership over two days to facilitate the strategic planning process.

JUDICIAL COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN

The Judicial Council of California provides leadership for the judicial branch. The guiding principles of the strategic plan for the judicial branch adopted by the Judicial Council are summarized as:



PURPOSE

The highest purpose of strategic planning is for judicial leadership to jointly set priorities and determine where to focus time, resources and efforts over the next five years. While our court excelled in pivoting to respond to the different challenges presented by the COVID pandemic, the experience of constantly reacting to address emergent needs in order to maintain court operations underscored the importance of planning to become a forward-looking organization that is proactive rather than reactive to the press of daily operational needs and demands.

MISSION AND VISION

To effectively plan for growth and improvement, an organization must understand its core purpose and affirm its values.

The Solano County Superior Court's adopted mission statement provides:

- The mission of the Solano County Superior Court is to:**
- (1) protect rights;**
 - (2) uphold the Constitution and laws of the State of California and the United States;** and
 - (3) provide an impartial and accessible forum for the fair and expeditious resolution of legal matters.**

Judicial leadership affirmed the core values of the Solano County Superior Court which include:



STRATEGIC PLANNING OBJECTIVES

Given the Court’s mission and core values, court leadership sought to identify a shared practical vision for growth and improvement which the court could achieve during the next five years. General categories identified include:

Equitable Access to the Court	Recruitment and Retention	Integration with Justice Partners and Outside Providers	Effective, Reliable Technology
-------------------------------	---------------------------	---	--------------------------------

Court Resources and Outreach	Infrastructure Improvement	Operational Efficiency and Enhancements	Wellness and Education
------------------------------	----------------------------	---	------------------------

These priorities were summarized into four strategic directions:

Fulfilling Our Mission	Enhancing Efficiency	Building Resiliency	Improving Outcomes for Litigants and the Courts
------------------------	----------------------	---------------------	---

TRANSLATING OBJECTIVES INTO ACTION

Having identified strategic directions, court leadership sought to create a map to guide efforts to achieve the desired outcomes in five years. As a strategic plan is a living document impacted by variables both planned and unplanned, it must be able to articulate incremental and achievable milestones but be sufficiently agile to respond to change.

Although five years seems a short time, considering the radical changes to the judicial system in the last five years in both the manner and means of judicial work, the capacity for change in this short time frame is great. For example, in the last five years our court changed the way the court operates by implementing electronic screening of jurors, remote and hybrid proceedings, a paperless case management system, automated appointment and triage systems, and e-warrants. Likewise, we experienced fundamental changes in the nature of our work. We implemented bail reform and pretrial services, created a specialized court for mental health diversion, implemented legislative changes to address racial injustice and sentencing reform. All of these changes were implemented while the court addressed core infrastructure needs such as facilities and IT as well as staffing resources.

Accordingly, judicial leadership identified both concrete long-term objectives as well as initiatives to achieve or implement over the next twelve (12) months. Long-term objectives to be achieved in five years are set forth at Exhibit A. Initiatives to make incremental progress towards long term objectives during the next twelve (12) months are identified in Exhibit B. It is the expectation that upon annual review court leadership may update Exhibit B to reflect immediate initiatives it intends to fulfill with the goal of achieving its long-term plans.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REFINEMENT

A strategic plan helps an organization to grow and improve with intent. But a strategic plan must also be realistic and achievable.

The greatest barrier to implementation of a strategic plan is maintaining focus. Given the constant challenges of operating a court on a daily basis and the critical nature of the work performed by judicial officers, implementing the structure of a strategic plan can become a secondary priority. While growth and improvements will continue to be routinely made, the formality of linking those improvements to the strategic plan objectives and communicating those achievements in the context of that plan can become secondary to daily operational needs and demands.

To assist in measuring progress towards the strategic plan, a quarterly review will occur at a regularly scheduled bench meeting. The Court Executive Officer, Presiding Judge, Executive Committee and Strategic Planning Committee provide input into the quarterly review. Adjustments to the strategic plan may become necessary depending upon achievements or identification of new priorities.

CONCLUSION

The exercise of strategic planning in itself provides a unique opportunity for an organization to consider its mission, its core values, and its strengths and weaknesses. The strategic plan is a unified expression of the values and priorities of the leaders of an organization. A strategic plan ensures that an agency's leadership continues to row its oars in the same direction with a united purpose. As a living document, the 2023-2028 strategic plan is a tool which will enable the Solano County Superior Court to implement its values and fulfill its mission in a planned and thoughtful manner.