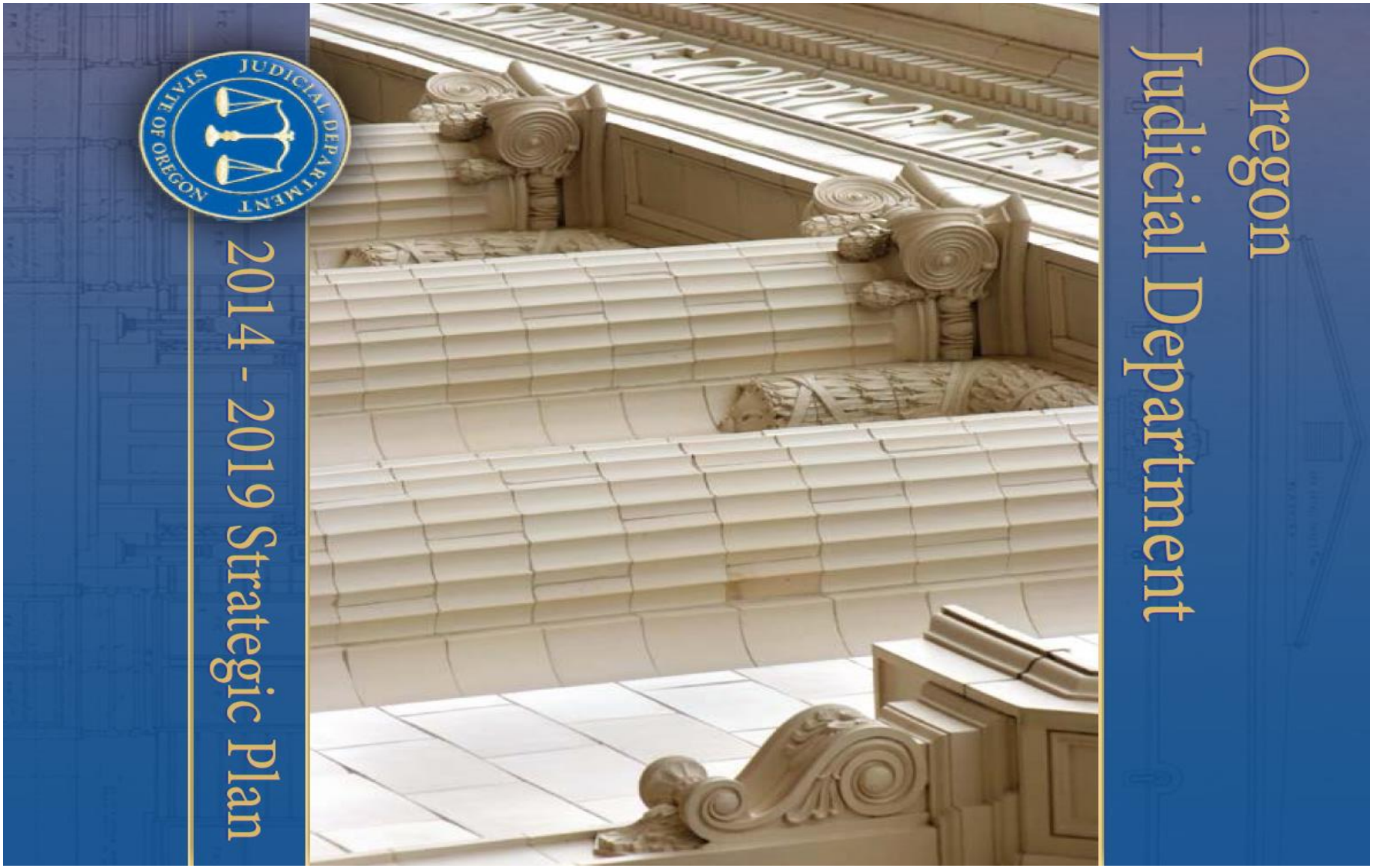
***Oregon Judicial Department 2014-2019 Strategic Plan***



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# A Message from the Chief Justice

**Dear Friends of the Courts:**

On behalf of the Oregon Judicial Department, I am pleased to present our Five-Year Strategic Plan for fiscal years (FY) 2014-2019. Publication of this document continues a planning process that first began in 1992 to guide the Oregon court system well into the 21st century. It is a plan that helps us fulfill our constitutional role and advance our mission to provide fair and accessible justice services that protect the rights of individuals, help us preserve community welfare, and inspire public confidence. It is a plan that favors thoughtful innovation in both the manner and effect of our delivery of justice to the people of Oregon.

The judicial branch leaders first outlined a guiding mission and vision for the state court system (called the Oregon Judicial Department) in a publication titled: *Justice 2020: The New Oregon Trail* (1995). That report was updated in 2001 and 2009. In the original 1995 document, we set the court system's five long-term goals as

**Access:** Ensure access to court services for all people;

**Trust and Confidence:** Earn the public's enduring trust and confidence;

**Dispute Resolution:** Help people choose the best way to resolve their disputes;

**Partnerships:** Build strong partnerships with local communities to promote public safety and quality of life;

**Administration:** Make courts work for people.

Today those goals remain relevant and they serve as the guideposts for this 2014-2019 strategic plan. Implementation of the plan will ensure that the state court system is a sustainable and accessible forum for the people of Oregon to peacefully resolve their disputes now—and, that it will even better meet their needs in the future.

During the lifetime of this plan, we will complete implementation of our business transformation technology effort, the Oregon eCourt program, which embraces improvement of our internal justice business processes and those public-facing services we deliver to the people of Oregon. In addition, our five-year strategic plan addresses other critical problem areas that continue to hinder the timely and safe delivery of justice. We address again the plight of Oregon's court facilities because many courthouses are unsafe and deficient, and they require our urgent attention to protect the public and offer effective court services. We also endorse court improvement paths that offer services in ways that help people better navigate legal procedures and processes as well as provide alternatives for case resolution. As an accountable branch of government and a responsible steward of public funds, we recognize that a comprehensive strategic plan is essential to meet our goals and the public's expectations. We invite your interest, involvement, and comments. Thank you.

Thomas A. Balmer
Chief Justice
Oregon Supreme Court

# 2014 - 2019 Strategic Plan Overview

The Oregon Judicial Department developed this five-year strategic plan to cover the period July 1, 2014, through June 30, 2019, following OJD fiscal year cycles.

As noted in the Chief Justice's message, values embodied in the individual goals and strategies set forth in this plan derive from, and align closely with, the values and goals that first appeared in the judicial branch's original strategic vision document published in 1995.

This particular strategic plan was built by

(1) using the framework of the five vision goals that lie at the heart of our judicial branch mission;

(2) identifying key strategic areas that effectively promote those goals; and

(3) describing within those strategic areas, the priority performance objectives we hope to attain as a court system over the next five years in support of the vision goals.

For institutional continuity with ongoing projects from the preceding five-year plan (2009-2013), this plan advances many of those strategies that remain relevant and necessary.

The plan is divided into six goal and strategy areas. The branch mission serves as the first goal area, thereby affecting all other goal areas and strategies. Achievement of the mission goal will yield more positive outcomes for the other strategies. These two overarching mission initiatives are

1. Implementation of the Oregon eCourt Program Plan: this means achieving the completed implementation of the court system's business transformation technology project and leveraging its many facets for more consistent and effective delivery of services;

2. Implementation of a Court Facilities Renewal Plan: this means establishing a regular ongoing legislative and budget process that provides facilities funding addressing our prioritized critical court facilities issues and public safety needs. Funding will build, repair, or renovate courthouse facilities.

These initiatives are further described in the "Strategies" section of the plan. The Chief Justice's Court Reengineering and Efficiencies Workgroup will work with this plan, and with the courts and administrative staff, to bring these strategies to fruition.

# Vision Statements for Plan Goals

## BRANCH MISSION GOAL: Sustain the Rule of Law Environment

As a separate and independent branch of government, our mission is to provide fair and accessible justice services that protect the rights of individuals, preserve community welfare, and inspire public confidence.

Oregon's courts are committed to providing equal access, ensuring fairness, and enforcing the rule of law. Our courts will use state of the art technology to ensure the services we provide meet the diverse needs of the people we serve. County courthouses will continue to stand as symbols of assurance that justice will remain available to everyone throughout the state.

## ACCESS GOAL: Increase Public Access to Justice

Everyone has a right to accessible justice. Our courts provide all people with the help and information they need to resolve their disputes quickly, fairly, and at a reasonable cost. We help to identify low cost resources for legal representation and provide appropriate procedural assistance to guide self-represented parties. Oregon courts strive to be safe, easy to use, free from barriers, and culturally responsive.

## TRUST GOAL: Promote Public Trust and Confidence

Jury duty stands as one of the cornerstones of our democracy and is a right that has been guaranteed in our country for over 300 years. The right to trial by jury is a critical component in maintaining public confidence in the courts' ability to prudently exercise the rule of law. Another key to public confidence is the ability to feel safe and secure in courthouses, whether there as a juror, witness, party, or member of the public. Outreach efforts and civics education promote public trust and understanding of the role of the courts and the rights and obligations of citizens in a democracy.

## RESOLUTION GOAL: Provide Quality and Timely Dispute Resolution

At a fundamental level, courts work to resolve conflicts fairly, timely, appropriately, and cost effectively. Courts must develop innovative procedures to meet those often disparate demands. Effective caseflow management makes justice possible not only in individual cases but also across the entire justice system. Effective court management helps to ensure that everyone receives due process and equal access to justice. Oregon courts will continue to work to provide access to the programs and dispute resolution methods most suited to the parties' needs, whether they be a timely jury trial, mediation, or some other process.

## PARTNERSHIP GOAL: Engage Actively with Justice System Participants and Community

Oregon courts work actively with public and private justice system participants and volunteers to provide avenues, within and outside the adjudication process, that improve outcomes in the matters before the courts that affect people and communities. Courts promote public safety and quality of life, improve the lives of children and families, and help provide a stable and predictable environment by consistent enforcement of economic and property rights, and protection of the most vulnerable members of our communities. Toward those ends, many judicial districts have adopted various specialty court models (*i.e.*, drug courts, mental health courts, family courts, domestic violence courts, restitution courts, and community courts) that allow courts to better meet and treat local community needs. In those and other areas as part of the court processes, judges are committed to applying best practices to enhance outcomes for all those we serve.

## ADMINISTRATION GOAL: Advance Best Practices In Judicial Administration

Oregon courts must use the resources of Oregonians wisely. Courts are accountable to the law, to the other branches of government, and to the public. The effective administration of justice requires deliberate attention to and improvement of the core processes of our court system. It also means institutionalizing best practices, using evidence-based programs, and educating and training new and emerging leaders among the judiciary and court staff about the important duties and responsibilities they must perform and giving them the tools and skills to do these well.

# Strategies for Plan Goals

## BRANCH MISSION GOAL: Sustain the Rule of Law Environment

### Key Strategic Area: Modernize Foundational Framework

#### Strategy 1: *Implement the Oregon eCourt Program Plan*

The stated mission of the Oregon eCourt Program is to provide the technology to deliver the mission of the Oregon Judicial Branch by giving "courts and judges the tools they need to provide just, prompt, and safe resolution of civil disputes; to improve public safety and the quality of life in Oregon communities; and to improve lives of children and families in crisis." (Oregon eCourt Mission Statement—adopted 2004). The program builds a statewide electronic court both to provide a common court-user experience for all residents of the state, no matter where they live, and to take advantage of newer technology that expands access to service and information. Successful implementation of the Oregon eCourt program remains in the forefront of the state court system's strategic plan. The scope of this major initiative addresses, supports, and enhances every one of the five individual goals that follow. In addition, post-implementation statewide, Oregon eCourt will continue to offer a platform from which the judicial department can leverage further improvements in services and tools that better the administration of justice.

The Oregon eCourt plan implements technology to shift the present paper-based system to a digital universe of information and services. That technology transforms how private businesses, public agencies, and individuals obtain information and services from our courts. It transforms how judges, court staff, and consumers of judicial services work. Services that were previously available only during an eight-hour workday and forty-hour work week, are now available all hours of the day, every day of the year. Filing and viewing court documents, court and docket information, and payment services are all provided by Oregon eCourt.

The realization of the Oregon eCourt program does not replace the availability and access to in-person services at a physical courthouse. Those personal public services must remain available. Hearings and trials will continue to convene in courthouses across the state and be open to the public. The reality of Oregon eCourt, however, will significantly enhance and improve the in-person courthouse experiences and services as well as those handled from the outside of the courthouse. The successful implementation of the Oregon eCourt plan, therefore, lies at the core of our vision for Oregon's courts.

*Action Items*

1.1 Implement core suite of integrated software solution products for electronic case management, document management, eFiling, jury management, forms management, and financial transactions statewide.

1.2 Implement public access policies, systems, and tools for online access to court calendars, public case register of actions, and public court documents.

1.3 Develop systems and procedures that advance cross-court staff and judicial resource assistance to other circuit courts in docket and caseflow management using Oregon eCourt tools.

## Strategy 2: *Implement a Court Facilities Renewal Plan*

The judicial branch is symbolized in every county by a courthouse facility that provides continuous assurance that justice is available to everyone in every community. In many communities, not only does the courthouse symbolize the availability of justice to all, but it serves as the seat of county government and the focal point of community life.

Oregon continues to have a significant court facilities problem. The inadequacy of many of the 50-plus court facilities across the state has been both well documented (Report on Oregon Court Facilities, 2006; Court Facility Assessments, 2008; and subsequent updates) and broadly acknowledged, but not yet adequately addressed. The difficulties impact not only the ability of judges and staff to perform their jobs effectively, but, in several counties, threaten lives in the event of a catastrophe. The problem has reached crisis proportions in some counties and threatens to reach that proportion in many other counties as well.

The United States Supreme Court has ruled that courts have a special responsibility under the United States Constitution to ensure physical access to their facilities; too many of Oregon's court facilities are unable to meet that responsibility. This crisis demands strategic attention.

When the legislature assumed responsibility for funding court operations more than thirty years ago, counties retained responsibility for maintaining, refurbishing, and replacing courthouses. The availability of adequate court facilities, however, should not turn on local political interests, the wealth or lack of wealth in a county, or the competing local needs of the moment.

Our branch of government must continue to work in association with the legislature, the governor, the counties, and the state bar to develop and implement a long-term, strategic, statewide facilities funding system to upgrade court facilities across the state. The strategy must respond to all interests, account for the unique circumstances of each county, and reflect the statewide interests in a fully-functioning judicial system. We have taken several positive and substantial steps toward addressing this goal within the past few years; now we need to further define, institutionalize, and stabilize that process to implement shared funding solutions.

*Action Items*

2.1 Develop formal request and review procedures for critical courthouse projects to be considered as part of the Chief Justice's biennial budget request.

2.2 Develop system and resources for centralized OJD coordination of budgeted projects, legal agreements, and the high-level management monitoring of funded courthouse projects.

2.3 Develop long-term priority and a systematic plan for courthouse upkeep and maintenance status statewide.

# ACCESS GOAL: Increase Public Access to Justice

## Key Strategic Area: Improve Access to Public User-Friendly Courts

### Strategy 3: *Improve Services for Self-Represented and Unrepresented Litigants*

Oregon courts must continue to explore and understand the ever-changing demographics of Oregon's population to ensure that everyone has meaningful access to dispute resolution. We must enhance our current educational materials to inform participants about court processes and must find "user-friendly" relevant tools for them to use. Across the nation, courts are experiencing an increase in the number of self-represented parties in cases. In Oregon, past studies indicate that as many as 86 percent of marriage dissolution and separation cases involve at least one self-represented party. Strategies need to address this reality and make the court system easier to navigate for these litigants.

*Action Items*

3.1 Rebuild and improve the range of services for self-represented litigants; reestablish the local- and central-staff support positions and infrastructure to provide informational assistance, forms, and tools to help self-represented parties through the court processes.

3.2 Develop and deliver online user-friendly assistance services, materials, and tools for self-represented litigant use, such as guided interview ("intelligent") forms, and translate forms and guides into commonly used languages.

3.3 Develop information and help facilitate access to appropriate legal services, including low-cost, modest means, and unbundled services.

3.4 Adopt court procedures and programs that facilitate the handling of self-represented case types, such as informal domestic relations trials (IDRT) and mediation programs.

3.5 Develop and provide judicial and staff education programs on case management and ethics issues associated with cases involving self-represented litigants and persons using unbundled legal services.

### Strategy 4: *Improve Limited-English-Proficient-Person Services*

Under both federal and state law, each court must provide high quality linguistic assistance and equipment to permit meaningful participation in court proceedings for limited-English-proficient persons (LEP) and persons with limited hearing capabilities. Interpreters for over 180 languages and dialects as well as sign interpreters have been provided through the years in Oregon's courts. Additionally, services must be accessible at counters and in guidance, such as translated signs or materials, provided by the court or court staff for the most frequently needed languages and for those persons with vision and hearing disabilities. The Court Interpreter Services Program in the Office of the State Court Administrator already provides automated and central statewide scheduling of interpreters for remote video and in-person services for court proceedings. These strategies seek to build and enhance services around that infrastructure.

*Action Items*

4.1 Improve and expand, through the use of technology and other means, the availability and access to other language services at public counters, kiosks, courtrooms, and online court websites and tools.

4.2 Expand the capacity to provide remote video interpreting and translation services to all courtrooms and courthouses.

4.3 Increase the number of languages, for which a court interpreter certification or registration process is available, to ensure the more widespread use of quality interpreter services.

4.4 Ensure appropriate training to judges, court staff, and regular governmental participants in the procedures for use of language interpreters, translators, and remote video services, including awareness of culturally diverse customs that may affect the behavior of persons appearing in courtrooms.

### Strategy 5: *Improve ADA Accommodations and Services*

The Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to, or operations of its programs or services. Under Title II of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), each OJD program or service, when viewed in its entirety, will be readily accessible to and usable for individuals with disabilities, and will make reasonable modifications to policies and procedures for individuals with disabilities—unless doing so would cause a fundamental alteration in the nature of its program or service. Each court provides, at state expense, appropriate auxiliary aids and services, including sign language interpreters and assistive devices, to participants in court proceedings who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have other communications disabilities. The courts also provide reasonable accommodations for provision of its services.

*Action Items*

5.1 Review and update courthouse facility plans for ADA accessibility status.

5.2 Create a plan to address deficiencies and secure funding to help counties and courts improve ADA accessibility through courthouse improvement plans.

5.3 Provide appropriate ADA tools and alternatives for all public use of court online services.

5.4 Develop and provide ongoing judicial and staff education programs on awareness and responses to issues related to ADA accommodation for court proceedings and services.

## TRUST GOAL: Promote Public Trust and Confidence

### Key Strategic Area: Provide Public with Improved Experience, Safety, and Awareness

#### Strategy 6: *Improve Juror Service Experience*

Juries are an essential and valued component of the American justice system and critical to the protection of liberty in our democracy. Courts work to encourage participation by all eligible citizens who are summoned to serve as jurors and to make their experiences as positive as possible. All Oregonians benefit from a citizenry that is active, interested, able, and willing to serve when summoned for jury duty.

*Action Items*

6.1 Evaluate and implement educational and user-friendly online programs and tools aimed at increasing the number of citizens responding to jury summonses and simplifying the jury service process for individuals summoned.

6.2 Evaluate and implement systems, services, and tools aimed at improving the quality of jurors' experiences. For example, adopt "one-trial or one-day" service and improve the tools and services available for the jury room and jury box.

6.3 Develop and use an automated juror experience survey instrument.

6.4 Work with county bar associations to establish and advance best practices and programs for use of jury trials in local jurisdictions.

#### Strategy 7: *Ensure Court Security and Business Continuity*

Our courts are committed to providing safe and secure facilities that will ensure the availability of justice in Oregon's communities. Emergencies, disasters, and accidents affecting court operations can occur at any time, usually without warning. In a major event, proper planning and a prompt response are essential for continued court services and access to court records.

*Action Items*

7.1 Ensure funding and resources to implement and maintain the Chief Justice Statewide Minimum Security Standards in each court location.

7.2 Provide security and emergency preparedness training and materials annually to judges and staff for personal and public protection.

7.3 Maintain, update, and test the local and statewide security, emergency preparedness, and business continuity plans and the statewide emergency response equipment and machinery.

#### Strategy 8: *Institutionalize Public Outreach*

Oregon's courts recognize the importance of public outreach and education, which includes providing information to the other two branches of our state government. Civics education is an important part of keeping the public well-informed about our constitutional democracy.

*Action Items*

8.1 Establish a formal media and court communications program on civics.

8.2 Expand local and statewide outreach efforts designed to enhance public understanding of the role of judiciary and the Oregon court system and how to use its processes.

8.3 Develop and implement a public survey for users of court services to provide valuable feedback.

# RESOLUTION GOAL: Provide Quality and Timely Dispute Resolution

## Key Strategic Area: Improve Docket and Caseflow Management Systems

At a fundamental level, courts work to resolve disputes fairly, timely, appropriately, and cost effectively. We must continually examine our procedures to realize those outcomes. Effective docket and caseflow management makes justice possible not only in individual cases but also across the entire justice system. Effective docket management helps to ensure that everyone receives due process and equal access to justice. Oregon courts work to provide access to the dispute resolution methods most suited to the parties' needs, whether those methods are a settlement conference, jury trial, mediation, or some other process.

### Strategy 9: *Adopt State Docket and Caseflow Management Principles*

Oregon courts recognize the importance of minimizing delay—from case filing to final disposition—and strive to manage cases according to the Oregon Standards of Timely Disposition. Litigants and witnesses must be able to count on court dates. Oregon courts must continue to offer a wide array of options for conflict resolution. Alternatives short of trial may produce the best results for particular litigants, use fewer resources, and provide more timely resolution of cases. Effective docket management techniques are the drivers of improvement in this area.

*Action Items*

9.1 Adopt OJD statewide docket/caseflow management principles for presiding judges to assign and manage cases.

9.2 Study and adopt statewide best docket management practices in compliance with the Oregon Standards of Timely Disposition by implementing local best practices for caseflow management.

9.3 Develop a plan to implement local and statewide support to offer the full range of dispute resolution options to resolve cases before trial, including the use of community mediation volunteers.

9.4 Create a statewide pool of active and retired judges trained to manage and to mediate complex civil and criminal litigation and expand the availability of their services to all courts, including their use for settlement conferences.

9.5 Expand remote (video) judging capacity and coverage statewide, and other methods for judicial resource sharing.

### Strategy 10: *Provide Statewide Case Management Reporting*

Oregon has a statewide system for reporting of case dispositions against established timelines at the individual judicial district level. This allows the Chief Justice, presiding judges, and court managers to gather and evaluate the data to define the gap between desired and actual performance. Established and regular reporting and public review help promote and improve the efficient and effective management and performance of both statewide and local judicial resources.

*Action Items*

10.1 Develop standard statewide reports for the Chief Justice to review regarding each district's timely disposition benchmarks that are available to courts and the public.

10.2 Have courts prepare annual docket and caseflow management reports to the Chief Justice, including their strategies for reducing unnecessary delay.

10.3 Have technical support available to assist courts with docket management issues.

10.4 Incorporate NCSC *CourTools* (national performance indicators) related to caseflow management rates into system reports and web dashboard displays for courts and the public.

# PARTNERSHIP GOAL:
## Engage Actively with Justice System Participants and Community

### Key Strategic Area: Focus on Specialized Dockets and Plans for Improved Outcomes

The judicial branch alone cannot solve difficult societal problems through adjudication. Oregon courts work actively with their public and private partners and volunteers to strengthen the work of the courts and to improve safety in our communities. Together, we promote public safety and quality of life, improve the lives of children and families, help provide a stable and predictable environment with consistent enforcement of economic and property rights, and protect the most vulnerable in our communities. Toward those ends, many judicial districts have adopted various specialty court models (*i.e.*, drug courts, mental health courts, family courts, domestic violence courts, restitution courts, and community courts) that allow us to meet local community needs. In those and other areas, judges and staff are committed to applying best practices and evidence-based practices to enhance outcomes for all those we serve.

**Strategy 11:** ***Develop Specialty Court Docket Programs for Vulnerable Persons***

Our courts were founded on the proposition that everyone is equal before the law. Judges make critically important decisions that affect the lives of our children, their families, and our most vulnerable adults. Our court system must also have systems and procedures that can recognize and respond to case types involving vulnerable persons who may not be able to advocate on their own behalf and who may have matters before the court.

*Action Items*

11.1 Develop and provide resources for court visitor program support and reporting in public guardianship and juvenile guardianship cases and adult and juvenile conservatorships.

11.2 Develop and provide online resources, information, and guided interview ("intelligent") forms for use in elder abuse, domestic violence, and related family law case types dealing with vulnerable persons.

11.3 Provide legal and awareness training and develop bench guides for judges and staff on handling cases and case types involving vulnerable or incapacitated adults, including how to identify abuse of persons in fact situations before a court.

11.4 Pilot specialty elder and family law court dockets for coordination of various cases or matters involving the same elder or vulnerable person.

**Strategy 12:** ***Provide Continuity of Treatment Courts***

Treatment courts represent the combined efforts of justice and treatment professionals to intervene and break the cycle of substance abuse, addiction, crime, delinquency, and child maltreatment. Treatment courts are evidence-based programs, such as drug courts, that make a difference in the lives of court participants by improving social skills and education as well as addressing underlying addiction and mental health issues.

*Action Items*

12.1 Create an adequate and stable system of staffing and funding for current and future treatment courts, in areas of drug and mental health courts primarily, and support pilot treatment courts in other docket areas.

12.2 Work with nationally recognized research institutions and Oregon stakeholders to evaluate treatment courts and analyze recidivism rates for those who successfully complete treatment courts compared to those whose cases are processed through the traditional court system to establish evidence-based performance data.

## Strategy 13: *Promote Juvenile Court Improvements*

Outcomes in juvenile court cases have long lasting repercussions for families and communities. Research demonstrates that children who experience multiple adverse events are at higher risk for social, emotional, and cognitive impairment, high risk behaviors, disease, disability, social problems, and early death. It is imperative that juvenile courts have the educational resources, tools, and supports to effectively intervene when children experience abuse, neglect, or engage in high risk behavior, so that ongoing exposure to harmful situations can be minimized.

*Action Items*

13.1 Advance the goals of the Juvenile Court Improvement Program and the Citizen Review Board in their state plans aimed at systemwide improvements in the safety, permanency, and wellbeing of children in dependency cases.

13.2 Evaluate and ensure juvenile courts have adequate judicial and staff resources to effectively process juvenile court cases in accordance with state and federal permanency timelines.

13.3 Support local model court teams in efforts to improve juvenile court practices that reduce delays to permanency and improve child wellbeing.

13.4 Develop strategies with partner agencies through formation of the Oregon State Court Juvenile Justice Mental Health Task Force to address the unmet mental health needs of youth involved in the juvenile delinquency system.

# ADMINISTRATION GOAL:
## Advance Best Practices in Judicial Administration

### Key Strategic Area: Improve Accountability and Performance

Oregon courts must use the resources of Oregonians wisely. We are accountable to the law, to the other branches of government, and to the public. The effective administration of justice requires deliberate attention to, and improvement of, the core processes of our court system.

### Strategy 14: *Automate Performance Measures*

The Oregon court system developed a comprehensive statewide performance measurement system focused on continually improving court operations in line with our mission and values. Court leaders need ready access to information that allows them to evaluate and manage court operations. We promote a performance measurement system that is clear, meaningful, and transparent.

*Action Items*

14.1 Develop and implement methods to automate the collection of any OJD performance measure data for compilation, analysis, and publication.

14.2 Use performance data to evaluate and improve statewide programs and local workflow and outcomes.

14.3 Publish performance measure dashboards on court websites.

### Strategy 15: *Enhance Financial Accountability and Transparency*

The Oregon Legislative Assembly sets the budget for the state court system. Resources, however, are rarely sufficient to meet all the demands for court services. Consequently, the judiciary must allocate expenditures to maximize value to the courts, the public, and the public safety system. The Office of the State Court Administrator has implemented central collections and online e-payment services as improvements toward enhancing timely and greater collection returns. The Oregon eCourt technology program includes an integrated case financial component that also will enhance the ability to improve information and simplify financial processes.

*Action Items*

15.1 Study and implement programs to improve the effective collection of monetary orders—restitution, fines, and fees—and compliance with related court orders to increase individual accountability to the justice system, victims, and society.

15.2 Develop a robust automated management system that allows for projection, analysis, and reporting of budgets and expenditures at a variety of organizational levels.

## Strategy 16: *Advance Human Resource Best Practices and Principles*

Oregon's courts are committed to its leadership and ability to apply effective management principles. Our goal remains to maintain and to enhance the judicial branch by combining talent, technology, and organizational design. We are committed to finding new ways of mobilizing talent, allocating resources, and addressing the health and wellbeing of court personnel and volunteers.

*Action Items*

16.1 Enhance knowledge, skills, and abilities in the area of court administration for judges and managers throughout the court system by regular training and evaluation.

16.2 Develop and implement career-ladder planning and development programs and opportunities for all court and administrative staff.

16.3 Recruit and hire staff that reflects the ethnic and cultural diversity of those who interact with the court system.

16.4 Update judicial and staff workload studies to reflect the changing work of courts so as to address appropriate judicial resources and staffing needs.

# 2014 - 2019 Action Items

## Branch Key Strategic Area: Modernize Foundational Framework

1.1 Implement core suite of integrated software solution products for electronic case management, document management, eFiling, jury management, forms management, and financial transactions statewide.

1.2 Implement public access policies, systems, and tools for online access to court calendars, public case register of actions, and public court documents.

1.3 Develop systems and procedures that advance cross-court staff and judicial resource assistance to other circuit courts in docket and caseflow management using Oregon eCourt tools.

2.1 Develop formal request and review procedures for critical courthouse projects to be considered as part of the Chief Justice's biennial budget request.

2.2 Develop system and resources for centralized OJD coordination of budgeted projects, legal agreements, and the high-level management monitoring of funded courthouse projects.

2.3 Develop long-term priority and a systematic plan for courthouse upkeep and maintenance status statewide.

## Access Key Strategic Area: Improve Access to Public User-Friendly Courts

3.1 Rebuild and improve the range of services for self-represented litigants; reestablish the local- and central-staff support positions and infrastructure to provide informational assistance, forms, and tools to help self-represented parties through the court processes.

3.2 Develop and deliver online user-friendly assistance services, materials, and tools for self-represented litigant use, such as guided interview ("intelligent") forms, and translate forms and guides into commonly used languages.

3.3 Develop information and help facilitate access to appropriate legal services, including low-cost, modest means, and unbundled services.

3.4 Adopt court procedures and programs that facilitate handling self-represented case types, such as informal domestic relations trials (IDRT) and mediation programs.

3.5 Develop and provide judicial and staff education programs on case management and ethics issues associated with cases involving self-represented litigants and persons using unbundled legal services.

4.1 Improve and expand, through the use of technology and other means, the availability and access to other language services at public counters, kiosks, courtrooms, and online court websites and tools.

4.2 Expand the capacity to provide remote video interpreting and translation services to all courtrooms and courthouses.

4.3 Increase the number of languages, for which a court interpreter certification or registration process is available, to ensure the more widespread use of quality interpreter services.

4.4 Ensure appropriate training to judges, court staff, and regular governmental participants in the procedures for use of language interpreters, translators, and remote video services, including awareness of culturally diverse customs that may affect the behavior of persons appearing in courtrooms.

5.1 Review and update courthouse facility plans for ADA accessibility status.

5.2 Create a plan to address deficiencies and secure funding to help counties and courts improve ADA accessibility through courthouse improvement plans.

5.3 Provide appropriate ADA tools and alternatives for all public use of court online services.

5.4 Develop and provide ongoing judicial and staff education programs on awareness and responses to issues related to ADA accommodation for court proceedings and services.

## *Trust Key Strategic Area: Provide Public with Improved Experience, Safety, and Awareness*

6.1 Evaluate and implement educational and user-friendly online programs and tools aimed at increasing the number of citizens responding to jury summonses and simplifying the jury service process for individuals summoned.

6.2 Evaluate and implement systems, services, and tools aimed at improving the quality of jurors' experiences. For example, adopt "one-trial or one-day" service and improve the tools and services available for the jury room and jury box.

6.3 Develop and use an automated juror experience survey instrument.

6.4 Work with county bar associations to establish and advance best practices and programs for use of jury trials in local jurisdictions.

7.1 Ensure funding and resources to implement and maintain the Chief Justice Statewide Minimum Security Standards in each court location.

7.2 Provide security and emergency preparedness training and materials annually to judges and staff for personal and public protection.

7.3 Maintain, update, and test the local and statewide security, emergency preparedness, and business continuity plans and the statewide emergency response equipment and machinery.

8.1 Establish a formal media and court communications program on civics.

8.2 Expand local and statewide outreach efforts designed to enhance public understanding of the role of the judiciary and the Oregon court system and how to use its processes.

8.3 Develop and implement a public survey for users of court services to provide valuable feedback.

## *Resolution Key Strategic Area: Improve Docket and Caseflow Management Systems*

9.1 Adopt OJD statewide docket/caseflow management principles for presiding judges to assign and manage cases.

9.2 Study and adopt statewide best docket management practices in compliance with the Oregon Standards of Timely Disposition by implementing local best practices for caseflow management.

9.3 Develop a plan to implement local and statewide support to offer the full range of dispute resolution options to resolve cases before trial, including the use of community mediation volunteers.

9.4 Create a statewide pool of active and retired judges trained to manage and to mediate complex civil and criminal litigation and expand the availability of their services to all courts, including their use for settlement conferences.

9.5 Expand remote (video) judging capacity and coverage statewide, and other methods for judicial resource sharing.

10.1 Develop standard statewide reports for the Chief Justice to review regarding each district's timely disposition benchmarks that are available to courts and the public.

10.2 Have courts prepare annual docket and caseflow management reports to the Chief Justice, including their strategies for reducing unnecessary delay.

10.3 Have technical support available to assist courts with docket management issues.

10.4 Incorporate NCSC *CourTools* (national performance indicators) related to caseflow management rates into system reports and web dashboard displays for courts and the public.

## Partnership Key Strategic Area: Focus on Specialized Dockets and Plans for Improved Outcomes

11.1 Develop and provide resources for court visitor program support and reporting in public guardianship and juvenile guardianship cases and adult and juvenile conservatorships.

11.2 Develop and provide online resources, information, and guided interview ("intelligent") forms for use in elder abuse, domestic violence, and related family law case types dealing with vulnerable persons.

11.3 Provide legal and awareness training and develop bench guides for judges and staff on handling cases and case types involving vulnerable or incapacitated adults, including how to identify abuse of persons in fact situations before a court.

11.4 Pilot specialty elder and family law court dockets for coordination of various cases or matters involving the same elder or vulnerable person.

12.1 Create an adequate and stable system of staffing and funding for current and future treatment courts, in areas of drug and mental health courts primarily, and support pilot treatment courts in other docket areas.

12.2 Work with nationally recognized research institutions and Oregon stakeholders to evaluate treatment courts and analyze recidivism rates for those who successfully complete treatment courts compared to those whose cases are processed through the traditional court system to establish evidence-based performance data.

13.1 Advance the goals of the Juvenile Court Improvement Program and the Citizen Review Board in their state plans aimed at systemwide improvements in the safety, permanency, and wellbeing of children in dependency cases.

13.2 Evaluate and ensure juvenile courts have adequate judicial and staff resources to effectively process juvenile court cases in accordance with state and federal permanency timelines.

13.3 Support local model court teams in efforts to improve juvenile court practices that reduce delays to permanency and improve child wellbeing.

13.4 Develop strategies with partner agencies through formation of the Oregon State Court Juvenile Justice Mental Health Task Force to address the unmet mental health needs of youth involved in the juvenile delinquency system.

## Administration Key Strategic Area: Improve Accountability and Performance

14.1 Develop and implement methods to automate the collection of any OJD performance measure data for compilation, analysis, and publication.

14.2 Use performance data to evaluate and improve statewide programs and local workflow and outcomes.

14.3 Publish performance measure dashboards on court websites.

15.1 Study and implement programs to improve the effective collection of monetary orders—restitution, fines, and fees—and compliance with related court orders to increase individual accountability to the justice system, victims, and society.

15.2 Develop a robust automated management system that allows for projection, analysis, and reporting of budgets and expenditures at a variety of organizational levels.

16.1 Enhance knowledge, skills, and abilities in the area of court administration for judges and managers throughout the court system by regular training and evaluation.

16.2 Develop and implement career-ladder planning and development programs and opportunities for all court and administrative staff.

16.3 Recruit and hire staff that reflects the ethnic and cultural diversity of those who interact with the court system.

16.4 Update judicial and staff workload studies to reflect the changing work of courts so as to address appropriate judicial resources and staffing needs.

# Oregon Judicial Branch

## MISSION STATEMENT

As a separate and independent branch of government, our mission is to provide fair and accessible justice services that protect the rights of individuals, preserve community welfare, and inspire public confidence.

## STATEMENT OF VALUES

Fairness, equality, and integrity

Openness and timeliness

Independence, impartiality, and consistency

Excellence, innovation, and accountability

Respect, dignity, public service, and community wellbeing

## VISION GOALS

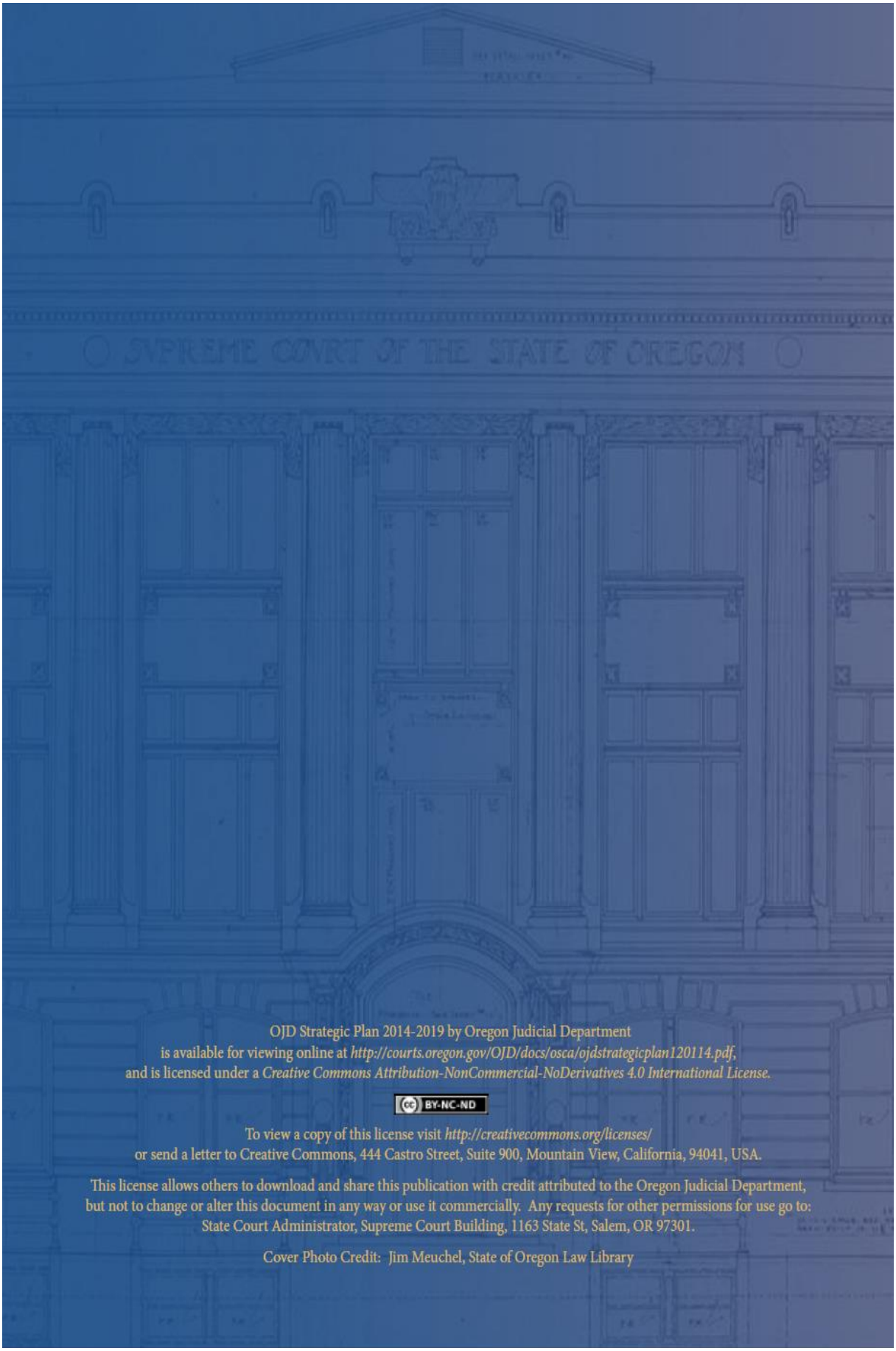
ACCESS - *Ensure access to court services for all people*

TRUST AND CONFIDENCE - *Earn the public's enduring trust and confidence*

DISPUTE RESOLUTION - *Help people choose the best way to resolve their disputes*

PARTNERSHIPS - *Build strong partnerships with local communities to promote public safety and quality of life*

ADMINISTRATION - *Make courts work for people*




OJD Strategic Plan 2014-2019 by Oregon Judicial Department
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