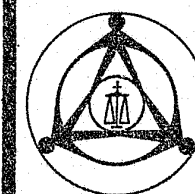


DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
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NATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFERENCE SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20531



THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Criminal Courts Technical Assistance Project
Institute for Studies in Justice and Social Behavior
The American University Law School
Washington, D.C.

39570

PROJECTS RECOMMENDED FOR
THE CHESTER COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

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NCJRS

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ACQUISITIONS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. DESCRIPTION OF CHESTER COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM	3
III. CURRENT FACTORS IMPEDING EFFECTIVE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS	5
A. Absence of Statistical Infor- mation	5
B. Method of Disposition	5
C. Absence of Prosecutorial Case Screening	6
D. Part-time Assistant District Attorneys and Defenders	7
IV. RECOMMENDED PROJECTS TO IMPROVE ADMINISTRATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE	8
A. Long-Range Recommendations	8
B. Short-Range Recommendations	15
C. Other Areas for Future Study	17
V. SUMMARY	19
APPENDICES	

I. INTRODUCTION

At the request of the Chester County, Pennsylvania Court of Common Pleas, consultant services were provided under the auspices of the Criminal Courts Technical Assistance Project at American University to assist the Court in criminal justice planning. The immediate need for such planning was prompted by an almost 400% increase in criminal case backlog over the past three years--from approximately 600 cases to approximately 2,300 cases--and the expectation that the backlog will continue to increase. Specifically, this assistance was designed to review criminal justice planning in Chester County as it related to the operation of the Court and to make recommendations for projects which should be undertaken to improve criminal case processing.

Maureen M. Solomon was assigned to provide the requested assistance and conferred with Chester County officials on May 9-12, 1973. During the on-site visit, Ms. Solomon was accompanied by Mr. Jack Clarke, Director of Criminal Justice Planning, who was also present during the interviews she conducted with the following officials:

- Chief Judge Kurtz
- Judge Maronne
- Judge Pitt
- Judge Kent
- Judge Wajert
- Mr. Lamb, District Attorney
- Mr. Humanick, Director of Juvenile Probation
- Mr. Teti, Court Administrator
- Mr. Cooper, Clerk of Court
- Mr. Hayden, Chief Assistant to the Clerk of Court

These interviews lasted a minimum of one hour during which extensive notes were made by both the consultant and the Director.

Judge Sugarman was unavailable during this interview period.

Following these interviews, Ms. Solomon conferred at length with the Director of Criminal Justice Planning regarding major problem areas which could be identified. The topics proposed by Ms. Solomon for both short-range and long-range study received support from both the Director of Criminal Justice Planning and the Chief Judge of the Court of Common Pleas. These topics are described in the report which follows.

As a result of this joint discussion and program development, the Director has already begun preliminary consideration of future programs prior to the submission of this formal consultant report. This prior planning has been guided not only by notes taken during the consultant's visit, but by the pre-study questionnaire sent to the Director by Ms. Solomon prior to her visit. (See Appendix B.)

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE CHESTER COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

The Court of Common Pleas is a six-judge court of general jurisdiction located in West Chester, the county seat of Chester County. The court serves all cities and townships in the County of Chester. The court processes all civil cases, felonies which have been bound over from the district justice system, and certain misdemeanors which have not reached disposition at the district justice level. No commissioners or special masters are used at this time to assist the judges in disposing of the caseload; however, from time to time, visiting judges from other areas of the state may sit by special assignment in Chester County. In addition to his administrative duties, the Chief Judge of the Court of Common Pleas sits as the judge of Orphan's Court.

The administrative staff of the court is essentially divided between civil and criminal jurisdiction. The Court Administrator (formerly the prothonotary) is primarily responsible for the scheduling of civil cases, which is done with the assistance of a four-attorney committee which certifies cases to the trial list. The paperwork associated with criminal cases is handled by the Clerk of Court. As shown in Appendix A, the annual calendar is divided into "terms" in which cases are heard according to the type of case. There are criminal terms, civil terms, etc. At all times, one of the six judges sits as a Miscellaneous Judge to dispose of special matters and one judge sits in Orphan's Court, essentially leaving four judges to handle the Common Pleas Calendar.

The agencies involved in the criminal justice system are:

1. The District Attorney
2. The Public Defender
3. Adult Probation Department
4. Juvenile Probation Department

Control of scheduling criminal cases is in the hands of the elected District Attorney who is the sole prosecutor for Chester County. The Adult

Probation Department and the Juvenile Probation Department are responsible to the Court. However, the Adult Probation Department does not perform the function of preparing pre-sentence reports and participates minimally in supervising probationers.

III. CURRENT FACTORS IMPEDING EFFECTIVE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS

The observations presented briefly in this section of the report represent not only the observation of the on-site consultant, but also an assimilation of material obtained in interviews with justice system officials in Chester County. While a number of "symptoms" were discussed, only those factors mentioned most frequently in interviews and appearing to have the most potential impact on the criminal justice process are discussed in this report.

A. Absence of Statistical Information

The principal source of statistics for Chester County is the annual report on judicial case volume compiled by the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts. This report presents statistics on the volume of case input and output, and the numbers of each type of disposition. It does not present any material about delays in disposition for each county or any other materials of a detailed caseload nature. Statistics prepared internally by the court are minimal, although they may have been adequate when the caseload was at a modest level. More detailed information is required regarding what kinds of cases are coming into the system, how long they are staying in the system, particularly how long they are waiting at each processing stage, and how many cases are awaiting each stage of processing. This lack of documentation of criminal case processing in the county is present in all phases of process beginning with the district justice level.

B. Method of Disposition

The statistics in the statewide annual report indicate that the number of jury trials in Chester County is disproportionately high compared to total dispositions and to the number of cases filed. There is also a low number of cases

nolle prosequi by the District Attorney. These two factors may influence the low disposition rate in Chester County compared with counties of similar population, such as Bucks, York and Erie, which have a disposition rate of 75 to 80 percent of the cases filed annually. In contrast, Chester County has a disposition rate of approximately 55 percent of the cases filed. No information is currently available to determine the degree to which this disparity may be due to differences in the types of cases filed. However, the substantial difference in disposition rates indicates that the causes of this disparity should be pursued in depth.

In terms of jury trial 10 percent of the dispositions in Chester County are by jury trial as compared with approximately 8 percent in other counties of similar size. Eleven percent of the dispositions in Chester County are via nolle prosequi by the District Attorney, whereas this percentage ranges from 15 to 18 percent in the other counties of similar size. In contrast, jury trials in Philadelphia represent approximately 3 percent of the total dispositions and the rate of nolle prosequi in Philadelphia is 17 percent, which, again, is higher than the nolle prosequi rate in Chester County. While these figures do not indicate conclusively that a problem exists regarding the method of case disposition in Chester County, they may suggest the need for better organization, better case screening, better monitoring of case progress, and closer control of case progress in Chester County.

C. Absence of Prosecutorial Case Screening

There is a significant absence of case screening at both the justice level (where, except in major cases, the District Attorney is minimally involved) and the Court of Common Pleas level. To remedy this problem, the District Attorney has recently assigned a part-time assistant district attorney solely

to the function of screening cases as they reach the Court of Common Pleas. At the present time, however, this screening is limited to an examination of the sufficiency of the documents in the casefile and detecting the absence of necessary documents. It does not analyze whether the District Attorney should proceed with the case. This aspect of screening might significantly decrease the backlog of criminal cases, particularly in view of the low nolle prosequi rate--11 percent as compared with 15 to 18 percent in similar counties.

D. Part-time Assistant District Attorneys and Defenders

At present, the majority of assistant district attorneys and public defenders are part-time employees who practice law during their non-court time. The district attorneys, of course, work full-time during the criminal trial term in the court, but they work about one day a week in case preparation during the non-criminal terms of court. The situation is similar for the public defender. The inadequacy of this part-time employment was indicated repeatedly during interviews with the judges, district attorney and public defender. Efforts are being made to alleviate, in part, this situation by obtaining full-time public defenders.

The factors enumerated above suggest several problem areas as well as avenues for further investigation by the Director of Criminal Justice Planning in conjunction with the agencies involved in criminal case processing in Chester County. Specific recommended activities for the Criminal Justice Planning Office, the Court of Common Pleas, district attorney, public defender and other justice related agencies are presented in the following section.

IV. RECOMMENDED PROJECTS TO IMPROVE ADMINISTRATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The suggested activities and projects enumerated below are based on the observations and interviews performed during the on-site portion of the study. They are by no means an exhaustive representation of the potential projects which could be undertaken in the court-related criminal justice area. They constitute, instead, the major areas toward which effort should be devoted (and could be most profitably devoted) during the next two years.

A. LONG-RANGE RECOMMENDATIONS

Long-range projects refer to undertakings which will require significant manpower, time and money. These are the projects which should be funded by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) and cannot be undertaken with funds now existing in the county. They are listed in order of priority and a brief discussion accompanies each recommended activity. Each item in the list has been discussed with the Director of Criminal Justice Planning for the county and the Chief Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, who have indicated their agreement with the topics presented.

RECOMMENDATION 1: THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PLANNING OFFICE SHOULD SPONSOR A
COMPLETE STUDY OF CRIMINAL CASE PROCESSING IN CHESTER COUNTY.

The heart of the criminal case processing problem is the question of control and monitoring of case progress. This control necessarily includes the topics of monitoring case status and time standards for case progress from one stage to the next in each criminal case, coupled with overall time standards for disposition of criminal cases. Other basic information must be studied such as problems caused by continuing cases as well as the practices and policies for continuing cases, other judicial activities which occur within the system, and the most effective method of assigning cases to judges.

Without exception, those interviewed during the on-site portion of this study expressed concern with the burgeoning criminal case backlog and a desire to keep pace with improved case management and case processing procedures.

In the past, various patchwork solutions have been instituted to expedite disposition of a large number of pending cases. However, these solutions have apparently not analyzed the criminal case processing system as a whole. A study of the total process from the district justice level through the Court of Common Pleas is necessary to determine the actual causes of the present backlog, at what stages cases are being delayed, and problems in screening, case monitoring, case assignment, and manpower needs at each stage of the process. This study will enable those in the system to make comprehensive recommendations for improvement based on a sound understanding of the total system.

The study should center on two major topical areas. First, the study should look closely at the case processing policies and practices in the district attorney's office. This would include such topics as case screening, methods of assigning

cases to assistants, trial preparation, timing and techniques of plea negotiation, disclosure policies, the management and organization of the office itself, and the problems associated with having part-time district attorneys. The type of investigation required is far broader than a study of paperwork, paperflow, case scheduling, or office management in the district attorney's office. It must be comprehensive in scope and analyze all factors which might influence the quality and speed of case processing.

The second aspect of this comprehensive study of criminal case processing should center on the phases through which each case must progress from filing to disposition. It should analyze the utility of each processing stage, e.g., first appearance, preliminary hearing, grand jury, and how effectively each is being handled. This analysis should begin at the front end with the District Justice System. The entire case scheduling system should be analyzed and evaluated and such questions as who should schedule cases, etc. (court or district attorney) should be explored.

This recommended study must not be limited to the operation of the District Attorney's office. While it must encompass all his policies and procedures which affect case progress, it must also extend to the judicial activities and methods of case assignment which further affect caseflow. Only through a comprehensive study of this nature and a willingness on the part of all involved in the criminal justice process to make, if necessary, sweeping and radical changes can major improvement be realized.

While generally the court as the neutral party to the litigation should be in control of case scheduling, such a recommendation at this point would be premature. Much more basic information must be obtained before any recommendations can be made.

RECOMMENDATION 2: A STUDY SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN TO EVALUATE ALTERNATIVES TO DETENTION, INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY OF FORMING A BAIL AGENCY AND AN EXTENDED RELEASE-ON-RECOGNIZANCE PROGRAM.

Presently, bail decisions are made at each level of the criminal justice process. Determinations are made by the district justices at first appearance and following preliminary hearing, and by the judges of the Court of Common Pleas at arraignment. It has been estimated by the staff involved that approximately 50 percent of defendants awaiting trial are now being detained. In cases where release-on-recognizance is granted, there are no administrative guidelines for evaluating the defendant's suitability for release on his own recognizance. Further, there is currently no organization (such as a bail agency) to interview defendants, check on such matters as residence, occupation, and ties to the community and make recommendations to the judge concerning conditions of release. A bail agency in Chester County could enable the court to release more individuals pending trial on the basis of better information. It could further provide supervision of released defendants.

Many jurisdictions have formed bail agencies, and these agencies are apparently very successful and functional. It might prove worthwhile for the Director of Criminal Justice Planning to review the experience and operations of two bail agencies in nearby jurisdictions--the District of Columbia and Philadelphia--to gain additional insight into their utility.

RECOMMENDATION 3: THE COURT SHOULD UNDERTAKE A STUDY OF COURTHOUSE SPACE PLANNING LEADING TO RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXPANDING THE AVAILABLE SQUARE FOOTAGE FOR OFFICES SUCH AS THE PROBATION OFFICE, JUVENILE PROBATION OFFICE, AND DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE.

Space planning has both short-range and long-range potential. Observations during the on-site visit revealed that many of the justice-related agencies in the courthouse are extremely limited in office space. Moreover, there are a number of government agencies occupying substantial space in the courthouse which are not directly related to the justice process, e.g., the Soil Conservation Agency, Parks and Recreation Agency, and others of a similar nature. A short-range objective should be to obtain non-courthouse space for these non-justice agencies currently located in the courthouse and to assure that the space requirements of justice-related agencies are given priority in the courthouse. Non-justice offices should be moved to other county buildings so that the District Attorney and others can have adequate space for their offices.

Long-range space planning can be performed by the commission which has recently been investigating the feasibility of obtaining additional space for the court, either through extension of the present courthouse, or use of space in auxiliary buildings. Such an activity is commendable, and it should include the services of an experienced courthouse space planner.

RECOMMENDATION 4: THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PLANNING OFFICE SHOULD UNDERTAKE
A STUDY OF JUROR MANAGEMENT IN THE CHESTER COUNTY COURT OF
COMMON PLEAS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE COURT AND JURY COM-
MISSIONERS.

The present manner of sending jurors to courtrooms and the absence of a central waiting room facility result in loss of judicial time. Jurors who are not involved in voir dire, trial, or deliberation either sit in a hallway or sit in a courtroom watching the proceedings until such time as they may be needed elsewhere. In criminal cases all available jurors are sent to each courtroom for voir dire. This procedure requires that judges must wait their turn until the jurors are available to come to their courtroom for voir dire. This procedure wastes considerable judicial time since two judges may not conduct voir dire simultaneously because all available jurors are moved into a courtroom for voir dire at one time. Efforts should be made to develop a centralized juror waiting facility, administered by the court administrator, from which jurors will be sent to courtrooms for voir dire in criminal cases. Voir dire for civil cases is now conducted by the attorneys in the presence of the court administrator without the judge present.

This juror study could be expanded to include study of the actual numbers of jurors needed at the courthouse each day and the amount of unused juror time, if any, that is occurring. There have recently been several successful studies, notably in Washington, D.C., and Cleveland, Ohio, which found that much juror time was being wasted, that the number of jurors called to court each day could be reduced, and that concomitantly the amount of money spent on jurors each year could be substantially and significantly reduced. This type of project should be undertaken in Chester County.

RECOMMENDATION 5: THE DESIRABILITY AND FEASIBILITY OF EMPLOYING FULL-TIME ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEYS SHOULD BE STUDIED IN CONNECTION WITH THE STUDY OF CRIMINAL CASE PROCESSING.

All interviewees expressed the feeling that the part-time nature of employment of assistant district attorneys materially contributes to lack of continuity and lack of quality in the litigation process. Further, it was felt that the part-time nature of their employment limited the scope of responsibilities which could be undertaken by the assistants. While no conclusions can be drawn from the brief on-site visit, it is a very important and fruitful area for further study. There are a number of aspects which should be considered in studying the question:

- a. How could full time personnel be recruited?
- b. What would be the appropriate salary level of full-time personnel?
- c. How many full-time personnel would be needed?
- d. Into what areas should their responsibilities be expanded; for example, how could assistant district attorneys' responsibilities be expanded down to the district justice level where their participation now is minimal?
- e. What kind of training programs could be developed to enhance quality of performance?

The possibility should be explored of initiating an LEAA funded demonstration project (as has been done elsewhere) which would employ full-time attorney personnel to demonstrate whether or not such full-time personnel could materially increase quality and efficiency in criminal caseflow. This project, of course, should be undertaken after the results of the overall criminal justice study are in. Merely imposing full-time personnel without prior analysis of the system would not allow a fair measure of the benefits of full-time prosecutorial personnel.

B. SHORT-RANGE RECOMMENDATIONS

The activities suggested below are labeled "short-range" because they should be undertaken as soon as possible to serve as necessary preliminary work to support the long-range studies which have been recommended. They are also short-range in nature because a minimal amount of manpower and money will be necessary to implement these activities.

These short-range recommendations are primarily in the nature of information-gathering activities. Although these programs would most likely have been initiated by the criminal justice planning unit sometime in the future, they should be undertaken immediately. They are listed in descending order of priority.

RECOMMENDATION 1: A SURVEY SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN OF THE TOTAL CRIMINAL CASE PROCESSING SYSTEM, BEGINNING AT THE DISTRICT JUSTICE LEVEL, AND SHOULD INCLUDE EACH STAGE OF PROCESS.

At the present time, no one knows the minimum, maximum or median time intervals that are occurring between each stage of criminal case processing. As a first step in understanding the problems associated with the present criminal processing system a survey should be undertaken to document precisely each step through which each case must progress and the time delays which are experienced by cases awaiting process at each stage. Such a study should also cover the volume of cases which are pending at each stage at any given time and the dispositions that occur at each stage in the process. In addition, the study should determine how decisions are made at each case process stage.

As noted earlier, the District Attorney will implement a case-screening process shortly. A component of the recommended case processing survey should also include monitoring the results of this case-screening program to determine its effectiveness. With the cooperation of the District Attorney this monitoring could be done with minimal effort. This recommended criminal case processing has been discussed at length with the Director of Criminal Justice Planning in Chester County who is in accord with the need for such a survey.

The results of the survey should provide insight into the comprehensive study of criminal case processing as well as potentially lead to a multi-agency task force effort for determining realistic time standards governing the progress of cases through each stage. In addition, it could potentially lead to a simple method of monitoring case progress throughout the system.

RECOMMENDATION 2: THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PLANNING OFFICE SHOULD RESEARCH THE STATUTES AND RULES OF BOTH CHESTER AND OTHER PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES ON SUCH TOPICS AS STATUTORY OR ADMINISTRATIVE TIME STANDARDS FOR THE PROCESSING OF CRIMINAL CASES, STATUTES OR RULES GOVERNING THE SCHEDULING OF CASES, THE CONTINUING OF CASES, AND STANDARDS FOR BAIL DETERMINATION.

Recommendations for change can only be built upon a sound understanding of the present system coupled with a complete knowledge of the statutes and rules presently governing these matters. While the recommended research will undoubtedly be undertaken by the Criminal Justice Planning Office in the normal course of events, it should be given priority and undertaken as soon as possible.

C. OTHER AREAS FOR FUTURE STUDY

The topics presented under long- and short-range activities in Sections A and B above are areas of most immediate need. During the course of interviews and observations, however, other subject areas were identified to which attention should be given as soon as practical. These areas are listed below.

1. In-Detention Hearings For Juveniles

A law has recently been passed requiring a hearing for all juveniles within 72 hours of their detention. Presently, juvenile cases are heard by the Miscellaneous Judge who also hears a multiplicity of other cases including emergency matters, etc. Since the county is having difficulty meeting the new statutory requirements, several alternatives should be explored as soon as possible to bring Chester County in line with the law. One of these alternatives is to appoint a Special Master to hear all detention hearings as well as handle other juvenile matters.

2. Adult Probation Department

In line with the growing trend in jurisdictions throughout the United States, Chester County officials should give early attention to reorganizing the adult probation department and include in it a comprehensive supervisory program for probationers. Although time limitations during the on-site visit precluded discussion of this recommendation with the Director of Adult Probation, it is an important area which deserves further study in the county.

3. Six-Man Juries

At the present time, the six-man jury is not used in Chester County. While it is not clear what savings might be realized by the use of six-man juries² in the county their potential should be investigated by the court. It is obvious

²
A recent study by the Institute of Judicial Administration and a study performed by Dr. William Pabst in Washington, D.C., deal with this subject in detail.

that some time would be saved in voir dire and deliberation and the number of jurors needed and associated costs would be less.

4. Standards For Determining Indigency

Although implicit guidelines govern the determination of indigency, the actual determination of indigency is somewhat informal. Those involved expressed a concern over this informality in the process. Inquiry should be made of other jurisdictions which employ specific methods for determining indigency³ and the need to appoint a Public Defender.

³
Under separate cover, we have submitted to the Director of Criminal Justice Planning in Chester County a list of names of people in other jurisdictions to contact on this subject.

V. SUMMARY

This report not only summarizes the technical assistance provided to Chester County but also documents the various planning activities recommended for Chester County in its criminal justice improvement program. The report should be disseminated to appropriate agencies throughout the state and should serve as a handbook for implementing reforms in the criminal justice process. In view of the frank discussion and extensive cooperation of Mr. Clarke, Presiding Judge Kurtz, the judges, court staff, District Attorney, Public Defender, Director of Juvenile Probation, and other staff members involved in the criminal justice process, the improvement program recommended in this report should proceed smoothly and effectively.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

1973 Legal Calendar of Chester County 1973												
	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Common Pleas Terms	2	5	5	2	7	4	2		3	1	5	3
Permanent List Posted		19		9				27		15		
Trial List Posted		26		16					3	22		
Call of List					4					26		
Civil Jury Sessions									24	1		
Sheriff's Advertisements	12	9	9	13	12	15		17	14	12	9	14
Sheriff's Sales	19	16	16	13	13	22	20		21	19	16	14
Miscellaneous Sessions	Each week, for nonjury trials, guilty pleas, criminal pre-trial and Post Conviction Hearing Act applications, habeas corpus, Juvenile Court, non-support, summary convictions, license appeals, tax appeals and annexations.											
Argument Court Sessions	22		2			4			10	23		10
Equity Trial Sessions		20		23		11			4		26	
Criminal Terms Grand Jury	22		12		21				17		26	
Criminal Jury Sessions		26	5									3
Naturalization			23									7
Supreme Court	2		16									
Superior Court			26			11			10			10
Criminal Trial Calendar	18	22	22	26	24			1	20	25	21	27
D. C. District - A. J. 1st	4	1	1	5	3	7	5		20	4	1	6
District Court District	Every Thursday except between the first Thursday of July and the third Thursday of September, 10:10 A.M. unless otherwise announced.											

WASHINGTON & BOSTON - MONDAY FEBRUARY 19
MEMORIAL DAY - MONDAY MAY 28
COLUMBUS DAY - MONDAY OCTOBER 8
VETERANS DAY - MONDAY OCTOBER 22

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT
CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

PRE-STUDY DATA COLLECTION

CASELOAD INFORMATION

1. Number of civil and criminal filings for each of past 5 years.
2. Number of civil and criminal trials for each of past 5 years.
3. Total civil and criminal dispositions for each of past 5 years.
 - a. criminal: guilty plea rate
dismissal rate
any significant changes in past 5 years.
4. Current backlog of civil and criminal cases (broken down by type of case, if possible).
5. Median age of civil and criminal cases at disposition.
6. Median age of current civil and criminal case backlogs.
7. What proportion of cases in the Court of Common Pleas are misdemeanors? How much court time do they consume? What kind of cases are the majority?
8. Obtain available information on:
 - a. numbers of continuances as a % of cases scheduled;
 - b. procedure for obtaining continuance.

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

1. Document the step-by-step criminal caseflow process:
 - a. what are the major stages through which cases pass; beginning at the District Justice level?
 - b. what are the median (or most frequent) intervals between each stage in the process (e.g. time between first appearance and probable cause hearing.)
2. Document the system for assigning cases to:
 - a. judges
 - b. assistant prosecutors
 - c. public defenders
3. What are the length and frequency of civil and criminal terms of court?
4. How does the "indigent defender" program work?
5. What plans are underway for an ROR-release program?

JUDICIAL MANPOWER INFORMATION

1. Check on extensive judicial illness, vacations, or other absences in past few years. For example, how much vacation is a judge entitled to? Does the full court sit all summer as opposed to taking the summer off? etc.
2. Any recent or projected changes in the number of Common Pleas judges?
3. Do lower court or visiting judges regularly (or occasionally) sit by assignment in the Court of Common Pleas?

END