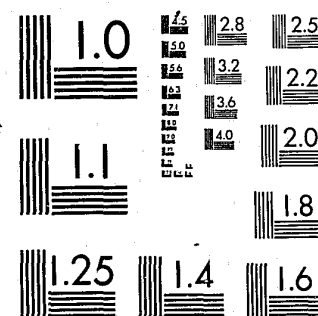


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12/01/81

City of New Orleans

The Mayor's Criminal  
Justice Coordinating Council

CLERK OF COURT  
MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE  
PROGRAM:  
THE HISTORY OF A  
REORGANIZATION

MAYOR ERNEST N. MORIAL, Chairman  
Michael Bagnert, Vice Chairman  
Frank R. Sargent, Jr., Executive Director

CLERK OF COURT MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM:  
THE HISTORY OF A REORGANIZATION

Prepared by  
The Mayor's Criminal Justice  
Coordinating Council

NCJRS

MAY 12 1981

ACQUISITIONS

March 1981

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The Clerk of Court's Management Assistance Program  
was funded by the  
LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION through  
the LOUISIANA COMMISSION ON LAW ENFORCEMENT AND  
ADMINISTRATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

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Mayor Ernest N. Morial  
Chairman  
Michael Bagneris  
Vice-Chairman

MAYOR'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE COORDINATING COUNCIL  
EVALUATION

PROJECT: Clerk of Court Management Assistance Program

PROJECT NUMBER: 80-C9-7.1-0001

FUNDING SOURCE: Law Enforcement Assistance Administration,  
Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement  
and Administration of Criminal Justice,  
Mayor's Criminal Justice Coordinating  
Council

SUBGRANTEE: City of New Orleans

OPERATING AGENCY: Clerk of Court, Criminal District Court

PERIOD OF GRANT REPORT: January 1, 1980 - December 31, 1980

DATE OF REPORT: March, 1981

PREPARED BY: Linda Marye

EVALUATION ASSISTANCE: Gladys Anderson, Typist

CUMULATIVE AWARD:	SLEPA	\$38,638
	Subgrantee	4,293
	Total	\$42,931

PROJECT PERSONNEL: Edwin A. Lombard, Project Director

AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: Ernest N. Morial, Mayor

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 1980, the Clerk of Court's Office of the New Orleans Criminal District Court received a one-year LEAA grant to reorganize its Trial Court Division. This evaluation report covers the entire twelve months of grant operation.

Before the reorganization, each of the ten sections of Criminal District Court was assigned its own Docket Clerk and one or two Deputy Docket Clerks. Although these clerks worked technically for the Clerk of Court, they had no direct supervisory link with that office; thus, each developed its own procedures in response to the demands of the individual courts. Docket Clerks might prioritize work, but Docket Clerks and Deputy Docket Clerks generally shared in operating the section.

The reorganization changed this system by functionally dividing the labor under the supervision of two Court Division Heads. All Docket and Deputy Docket Clerks were placed in a single room. Deputy Docket Clerks were put into two clerical pools and the Docket Clerks were left with sole responsibility for each court section. Further, the Trial Court Division was divided with each Court Division Head supervising five Docket Clerks and one of the clerical pools. In April 1980, an Administrative Assistant was added as overall coordinator. At the same time, the Information Counter and switchboard system were established to deflect many of the requests for case information from the Docket Clerks.

A runner system was also established to carry records to and from court, thereby further reducing the amount of time the Docket Clerk was required to be away. Using a manual developed by the Chief Deputy Clerk, the training unit had instructed its first class of new employees in the new procedures by the fall of 1980.

The evaluation relies primarily on interviews with Trial Court Division personnel to describe the specific changes initiated by the reorganization. Discussed in full are organizational innovations, such as the Information Counter, cross-training employees, and the Training Unit; and management controls, such as the Case Process Stamp and staff evaluations. The new procedures described include: setting arraignment dates; the Bond and Witness List Master; the Calendar Book; case folder organization; the Case Process Stamp; closed case processing; color-coded dots for folders; the Docket Master; and, subpoena processing.

The greatest difficulty in the reorganization involved convincing previously autonomous workers to learn prescribed methods of functioning and to accept the supervision of the Court Division Heads. As an example of dissatisfaction, over the reorganizational year seven of ten Docket Clerks resigned or were dismissed and were replaced by the most experienced of the Deputy Docket Clerks. The Clerk of Court's administrative staff believed this dissatisfaction was due to the small difference in the salaries of Docket Clerks and Deputy Docket Clerks. Although the Docket Clerks were now in a much

more responsible position, they were paid only 5% more than an entry level employee. By putting a freeze on hiring, the Clerk of Court was able to increase the salary of Docket Clerks from \$584 to \$710 a month and seemingly alleviate a serious morale problem. When interviewed, all Docket Clerks seemed proud of their responsibility and welcomed their supervision. In fact, the most experienced Docket Clerk explained the staff turnovers by saying that those who left were not "qualified for the job." Therefore, after this period of confusion and high turnover, the staff seemed convinced of the efficiency of the new system.

In order to assess the system's impact on its users, questionnaires, interviews and records of output were analyzed. Undoubtedly, the major users of the services are the ten Criminal District Court judges. They were given a questionnaire which requested a personal interview and which measured satisfaction with Trial Court Division Services. Four judges responded and invited interviews with themselves and their Minute Clerks. The results of the questionnaires and interviews were mixed. Questionnaire responses ranged from satisfied to very dissatisfied with the service, but three of four judges found the new system an improvement over the old. In order of satisfaction, they were most pleased with the responsiveness of the division to their requests, the organization of the file, and the accuracy of file information, but least satisfied with

the Daily Docket Sheet and subpoena issuance.

Information Counter users were also administered a brief questionnaire over a ten-day period. They were more uniformly pleased with the new service than the judges had been. The questionnaire and an analysis of the Information Counter Log showed that most users are criminal justice agents who come to the counter several times a week and request more than one record at a time. These users described the counter as quick, efficient, and convenient.

Two other offices were contacted who process closed cases. The State Department of Corrections staff person described the division as the most cooperative office dealt with and the Clerk of Court's Record Room found the records better maintained and record delivery under the runner system much faster than under the old system.

Finally, the workload statistics for 1980 reported that almost 5% more subpoenas were issued than in 1979, with 8% more cases filed and allotted. Thus, although the division had approximately the same number of employees, it was able to produce more work than in the previous year.

Although the Trial Court Division has successfully accomplished its goal during the twelve months of grant operation, recommendations were identified to further improve its service. In order of importance they are:

1. Stabilizing the Trial Court Division staff. In times of government budget reductions, increasing salaries may be difficult. Nevertheless, the complexity of the job, especially that of the Docket Clerk and Court Division Heads, demands a stable staff. Increasing the salaries, and, thus, the experience level and the efficiency of the staff, may make speedier trials possible and perhaps help to reduce some of the present prison overcrowding among unsentenced inmates;
2. Extending training to those hired before the fall of 1980, with special attention given to improving the accuracy of the Daily Docket Sheet and subpoena issuance procedures;
3. Instituting an additional control procedure so that corrections given by the court to the Docket Clerk are passed on to whoever is actually typing the document;
4. Improving the proofreading of subpoenas to include a search for typographical errors, as well as incomplete listings of witnesses and unnecessary notification of witnesses; and,
5. Noting all changes in charges on the outside of the folder where they can be readily noticed.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In January 1980, the Clerk of Court's Office of the Criminal District Court received a one-year LEAA grant funding two supervisory positions and equipment and supply purchases to reorganize its Trial Court Division This final evaluation report covers the entire twelve months of grant operation. Two factors favored the reorganization at this time: First, it was a logical step in the current Clerk of Court's efforts to modernize his office and; second, the pressure of increasing criminal caseloads without a larger personnel budget made it imperative that the efficiency of available employees be increased.

Before the reorganization, each of the ten sections of Criminal District Court was assigned a Docket Clerk and one or two Deputy Docket Clerks by the Clerk of Court's Office. (Each judge appoints his own Minute Clerk and Court Reporter.) These Docket and Deputy Docket Clerks, while technically working for the Clerk of Court, had no direct supervisory link with that office and each section developed its own procedures in response to its courtroom. Therefore, procedures within the ten sections were not standardized and, in the absence of direct supervision, regular management controls were at a minimum. Finally, Docket Clerks and Deputy Docket Clerks worked side by side performing much the same functions.

Basically, the reorganization changed this well-established system by introducing a functional division of labor under two Court Division Heads (CDH). All Docket and Deputy Docket Clerks were moved to one room. The Deputy Docket Clerks were separated from their sections and put into a clerical pool which handled most routine typing. As sole liaison with the courts, Docket Clerks were left in their sections, and assigned the responsibility of setting court dates, checking and maintaining records, and answering all needs of the court. Later an Information Counter was established to answer the large volume of requests for court records from attorneys, probation officers, and members of the public. A switchboard was added to screen incoming calls and a runner system formed to transport records to and from the court. Each CDH supervised five Docket Clerks and half of the Deputy Docket Clerks. An Administrative Assistant for the Trial Court Division provided the link with the Clerk of Courts Office and was in charge of overall supervision. Finally, in September 1980, the first group of new employees entered a training unit to learn the new standardized procedures.

## II. GRANT GOALS

As stated in the grant application, the goals of the project were:

1. To implement organizational redesign of ten (10) trial court support sections to produce two (2) five-section Court Divisions (I and II), each organized by functional areas and operated under the control of one Court Division Head (two such positions to be funded under this grant.)
2. To establish direct management controls, through each Court Division Head, to effectively supervise, manage, and allocate Division employees and workload and to monitor work procedure for efficiency and quality control.
3. To provide within the revised organizational structure, under the management of the Court Division Heads, a comprehensive training component to consistently orient and indoctrinate new employees and to effectively re-train existing staff in the process of implementing changes under this project.
4. Through the revised organizational structure and the institution of management staff under this project, to provide an effective centralized decision-making and evaluative capability to regularly assess Divisional staff performance, acceptability of work products and processes, and to identify areas where new services or functions are needed in support of trial court operations.

### III. METHODOLOGY

Because the goals of the Clerk of Court Management Assistance Program call for the reorganization of an existing structure rather than the creation of a program to change the behavior of participants, this evaluation was designed as a case study. As such, data was obtained primarily through interviews with program participants and users of Trial Court Division records. Ten Docket Clerks, four Deputy Docket Clerks, two trainees, two Information Specialists, both Court Division Heads, the Trainer, and the Administrative Assistant were interviewed. The Chief Deputy Clerk maintained an administrative log of events that proved useful in reconstructing the history of the grant period and provided quarterly workload statistics for the Division. (Interview schedules, where appropriate, appear in the Appendix.)

To sample users of Trial Court Division services, a short questionnaire was administered during a two week period to everyone coming to the Public Information Counter. Judges were also sent a questionnaire to evaluate services received. Included in the questionnaire was a request to interview the judges in more depth and a request for permission to interview their Minute Clerks. Four questionnaires and seven interviews (4 Judges, 3 Minute Clerks) were so obtained. (Questionnaires appear in the Appendix.) Additional interviews were undertaken with the Sheriff's Subpoena and Capias Division,

the head of the Clerk of Courts Record Room, and the chief contact person for closed records sent to the state Department of Corrections.

To focus this information, the following questions were addressed as points of reference for the evaluation report:

1. What specific changes were made through the reorganization?
2. How was the reorganization accepted by employees or other agencies served?
3. What was the impact of the reorganization, on other agencies served especially its :
  - a. Positive consequences,
  - b. Negative consequences, and
  - c. Statistical measures of impact?



#### IV. HISTORY OF REORGANIZATION

It is important to remember that the reorganization continued a series of changes begun by the current Clerk of Court. The first change that affected the Trial Court Division was the establishment of a closeout division. Second, an LEAA grant provided for the purchase of microfilming equipment to make an easily stored, permanent record of all documents.

In September 1979, before the grant was actually funded, four sections of Docket Clerks and Deputy Docket Clerks were moved to the single room that would eventually house the Trial Court Division. Two more sections followed in November of 1979, and the remaining four sections, in April, 1980.

Besides this relocation, the grant brought together needed equipment, and promotion and transfer of personnel to carry through the organizational changes. When the grant began in January, 1980, typewriters, Calendar Books, and other supplies were requisitioned and by mid-January most were secured. The phone system, also funded by the grant, was completed by the end of April, 1980.

Also in January 1980, the two grant-funded supervisors were promoted to Court Division Heads, each supervising three of the six sections in place at the time. In March 1980, one of CDH's trained the remaining four sections and by April 1980, those joined the other six. The original plan called for assistants for each CDH but neither have been hired.

By April 1980, the current personnel were transferred to the Information Counter and, after some experimentation, procedures were formalized for the counter. At the same time, the Administrative Assistant became "overseer and coordinator primarily concerned with formalizing the operation of the Public Information Section."\* By the end of the month, the operation of the Trial Court Division was turned over to the management team consisting of the Administrative Assistant and the two CDH's.

---

\*Quoted from the administrative log.

## V. OFFICE ORGANIZATION

The following three charts diagram office organization at three points. Figure 1 represents how the office was structured before the reorganization. Figure 2 shows how the grant application viewed the future structure. Figure 3 describes the actual office reorganization.

Obvious differences in the diagrams deserve comment. Figure 1 differs from the others in that it describes a horizontal, non-differentiated organization rather than a vertical one, separated by functional areas.

The planned organization (Figure 2) differs from the actual organization (Figure 3) in two ways. First, fewer personnel were hired than was first intended: Only one Trainer was employed for the entire Division and, because of a hiring freeze, the two assistants to the CDH were not hired.

Second, since Public Information and Training have been more centrally located, the supervisory links have become more complex. For example, the Public Information Unit does not clearly fall under any direct supervisor. However, the runner, though delivering records for both Divisions, is actually supervised by the CDH-I. In the same way, the switchboard operator is actually supervised by the CDH-I while answering phones for the entire office. On the other hand, Information Specialists currently are rather independent and responsible exclusively to neither CDH. Because the Trainer supervises trainees until their classes are over,

Figure 1

Trial Court Division - Original

Horizontal Organization

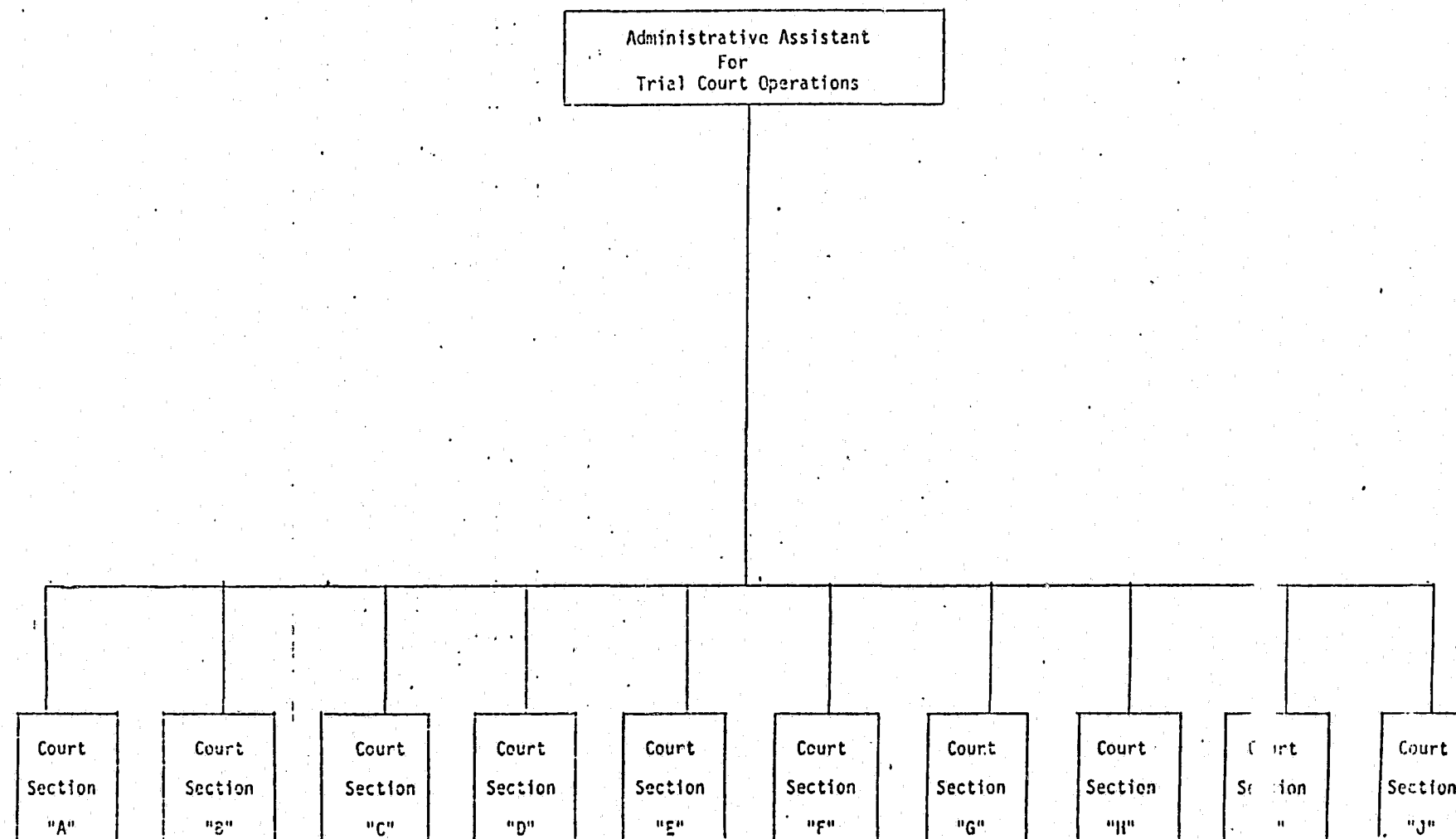
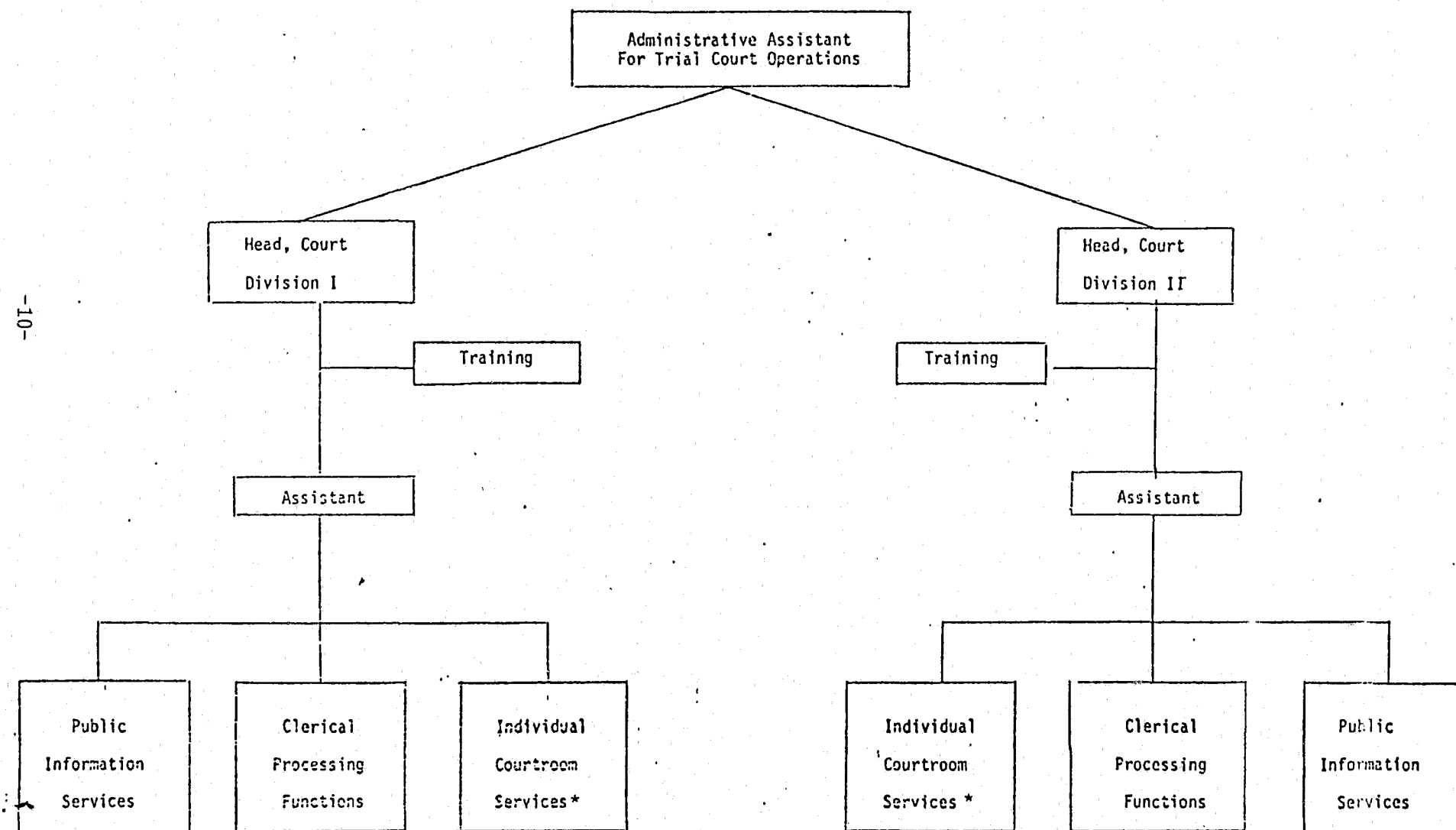


Figure 2

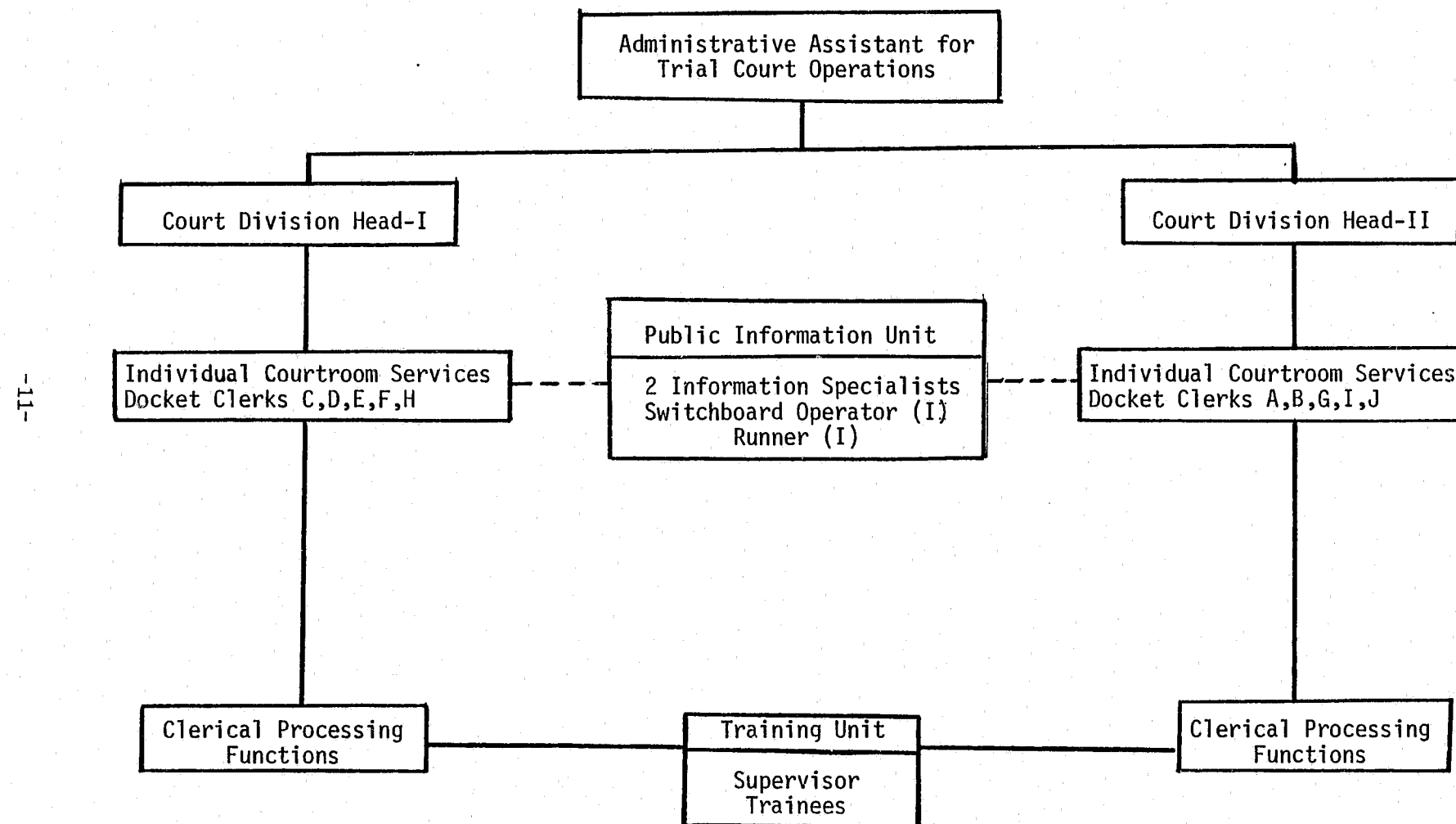
Trial Court Division - Planned  
Organization as Shown  
in Grant Application



\* Judge's Docket Clerks

Figure 3

- Trial Court Division -  
Actual Organization  
as of January 1981



and shares their supervision during the six month probationary period with their CDH, and because the only personnel so far formally trained are the Deputy Docket Clerks, the training unit is associated in the drawing with the clerical unit.

A brief explanation of the duties of each position will prepare the reader for the more detailed descriptions to follow later in the study.

Administrative Assistant-- The Administrative Assistant oversees the entire office. As overseer, she makes suggestions to the CDH about problems and in her words "makes decisions in cases when the supervisors need a higher authority." She routinely handles bond forfeitures, expungements, Supreme Court requests, Federal Court requests, District Attorney subpoenas, Department of Correction closeouts, and updating the Rules of Court.

Court Division Heads--The Court Division Heads handle fewer routine matters. As one said, "There really is no routine because all the interruptions cut into the routine." Despite the interruptions, the CDH's insure that all sections have someone in place, that the Public Information Counter is functional, that equipment is working, and that work is divided equally among the clerical section. The CDH microfilm and distribute the daily allotment and synchronize the Docket Clerk's Daily Docket Sheets, prison lists, and property lists. Any correspondence not originating in the Criminal District Court Sections is also handled by the CDH's. Finally CDH's may actually substitute in a section if a Docket Clerk is absent.

Docket Clerks--Docket Clerks operate individual sections. In the interviews, the Docket Clerks (ranging from 22 years to 3 weeks in the job) described their role in these ways:

Our basic duties are to maintain the records of the section. . .

Our primary job is to be the backbone in getting work prepared for the court. . .

They (Docket Clerks) handle daily work back and forth to court. . .

The most important thing we do is handling the records.

I work directly with the courtroom. . . .

I am the keeper of all the records for section \_\_\_\_

You are controlling the section--you have to know what goes in and what comes out.

Briefly, the Docket Clerk sets up the case record for clerical processing, notes and sets court dates, files and writes Docket Masters (a summary of court action), files records, and sends records to court when they are needed. In addition to these standard duties, each judge makes his own unique demands.

Deputy Docket Clerks--The Deputy Docket Clerks type most documents. All are trained to type subpoenas or notices and case closeouts (notification of corrections, probation, surety, and voter registration, when appropriate, that a criminal case is completed). The more experienced ones type Docket Masters. Many of the Deputy Docket Clerks have also been trained to substitute in a section when the Docket Clerk is absent. The



experience level of the four Deputy Docket Clerks interviewed ranged from five years to 4 months. The two most experienced commented on the reorganization of their jobs as follows:

I don't have to do the running or answer the phone. I don't have to deal with the public unless there is a problem locating something and they need assistance. . . . Now I only deal with five sections.

Before you worked in one section and with one person only. If you had to go to another section, it was different. Now the Docket Masters and closeouts are all done the same way. The Calendar Book that sets the courtroom is easier. The subpoenas are all the same way. It is very easy.

Information Specialists--Information Specialists answer questions about a particular case from people who come to the counter. Most of the requests are from other criminal justice agents--probation officers, assistant district attorneys, indigent defenders, etc.--but they must also deal with family members and friends who know less about legal processes. Because of this role, one Information Specialist described his job as one of "educating the public."

Trainer--The Trainer teaches formal classes to new employees. When interviewed, she had had eight Deputy Docket Clerks in training. Four were currently in class, two had moved completely into the Division, and two were still having all work checked by the Trainer. Once every two months she evaluates each trainee individually using the form developed for the office as a whole.

Others--Although neither the switchboard operator nor the runner were interviewed personally, their functions became clear from other's

comments. For example, the switchboard operator answers the main phone. The system is set up so that four lines are attached to her phone and each desk has a separate intercom number that she can signal. The operator tries to divert as many calls as possible away from the Docket Clerks, thus reducing interruptions.

A CDH described the skills of a typical runner by saying, "All a runner needs to know is what he is delivering and where." However, the current runner is much more diversified. Being a trained Docket Clerk, the runner substitutes at the switchboard, Information Counter, as a section Docket Clerk when needed, and checks subpoenas and completes the Charge Book (where all subpoenas sent out are recorded). The same CDH summarized the office roles, "You never know when someone will be called on to run or do the counter but, in general everyone has a niche."

## VI. ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATIONS

The following management changes were direct outgrowths of the grant project. However, each involved a certain amount of experimentation before being incorporated into the routine described below.

Information Counter--The person making the request at the counter completes a slip of paper (see Appendix) describing exactly what kind of information is needed. The Information Specialist finds the information and "signs it out" of the section. He may make a certified copy, a xerox copy, or simply verbally answer the question before returning the record. When no one is waiting at the counter, the Specialist may help with microfilming or with running.

Cross-training--Cross-training, or the training of people to perform the duties of another position, was easily accomplished under the old system because of the similarity in what Docket Clerks and Deputy Docket Clerks actually did. However, with the new functional division of labor, this has become more problematical. Deputy Docket Clerks now train as Docket Clerks by observing and substituting in one particular section. In fact, Deputy Docket Clerks will eventually be trained to assume any position. The Division's basic problem now was described by a CDH as a lack of "spare tires." To some extent, this need is being met since all four Deputy Docket Clerks interviewed either were or being trained as Docket Clerks.

Training--An experienced Deputy Docket Clerk compared the old way of training with the new: "They don't have the distractions like I had. If the Docket Clerk was training you, and she would be interrupted, it would delay your training for sometimes 20 or 30 minutes. Now it is better for them. . . I work with two who just came out of training. They function real nice."

The five topics taught in this new formalized Deputy Docket Clerk curriculum are: general information about Criminal District Court, typing the information service, closing cases, and, typing Docket Masters. All are detailed in a training manual the Chief Deputy Clerk prepared. After the trainees have been "passed" on a particular topic by making a minimum grade on a written test or successfully completing a "real" case, the trainees begin to type official documents. (No one has yet been formally trained on Docket Masters or the Information Service.)

The trainees do not leave the training unit after any specified period of time. According to the Trainer, the class time is entirely dependant on how quickly they learn. In fact, two of the Deputy Docket Clerks from the previous class said they had requested to be retrained on parts of the work they wanted clarified.

Besides holding classes for the trainees, the Trainer maintains the Charge Book for Division II (since so many subpoenas are typed there) and is "on call" to answer questions from the more experienced Deputy Docket Clerks. Apparently, many such questions are asked

because one trainee reported, "It looks like some of the Deputy Clerks really need a training class. It seems like the Deputy Clerks ask a lot of questions. I guess they forget things."

The problem identified in this statement is one noted by many interviewees, that the training, while highly successful, has been given only to the most recently hired employees. As one Deputy Docket Clerk who had been trained said, "I notice that the trainees type notices (subpoenas) different from some of the others. Ours is better. We get more information on them . . . Besides that, it looks nicer." Plans for the future include individualized training for all experienced Docket and Deputy Docket Clerks that will concentrate on their specific weaknesses.

Management Controls--The reorganization established management controls over the Division for the first time. One of these controls, the Case Process Stamp, (see Appendix) has made it easier for the Trainer and the CDH's to determine who has performed a certain task. The stamp is first used on the Bond and Witness List Master (part of the original material in a case folder which lists witnesses and surety in a case), and on every minute entry thereafter. Docket Clerks use the stamp to record the next hearing or trial and to inform the clerical section of who needs to be subpoenaed. The stamp also requires that each clerk check and initial a block when they have docketed a case, issued a subpoena or notice, or completed the

Charge or Calendar Books. Quoting from the manual (p. 19)

"Each person is thus accountable for their part in the process."

The Trainer who must check trainees' work, and the CDH who must review records to answer a question or substitute in a section, study the Case Process Stamps to determine employees' weaknesses. To "control" these errors, the Trainer often finds herself leaving class to counsel experienced employees. On the other hand, the CDH's notify workers formally that they are "running a check" on them and give them the results in an evaluation. Because the worker must sign the evaluation, an explanation of the errors is allowed. CDH's, then, offer a worker several opportunities to improve before dismissal. So far, the CDH's have not evaluated employees at regular intervals but, only in response to a known weakness.

CDH's feel this system to be superior to the previous lack of control. Without the use of checking procedures like the Case Process Stamp, no evidence of incompetence could be substantiated.

To establish their authority, the CDH's evaluated all Trial Court Division personnel in September, 1980. Reactions were varied, one CDH explained, "The evaluations were hard for people to accept. Those people who it was hard for, aren't here anymore. The evaluations become a part of their file. It gives them an opportunity to keep their job if they want to improve. Those who didn't want to accept change

and discipline left. It worked fine. The evaluations made them aware they had to answer to someone."

Reactions of Division Personnel--However, there was considerable turnover. Of the ten Docket Clerks interviewed, only three had been in that position for over a year. Of the Deputy Docket Clerks interviewed, two had been employed over a year. During the reorganization period, seven Docket Clerks resigned and had to be replaced with the most experienced of the Deputy Docket Clerks.

As seen by the Clerk's Office, these employees resigned because the new system put all the responsibility for running a section on the shoulders of the Docket Clerk; yet, a Docket Clerk's starting salary was only five percent above that of an entry level employee. Through the efforts of the Clerk of Court (see memo 12-16-80 in Appendix) the starting salaries of Docket Clerks were raised from \$584 to \$710 a month. This action seems to have alleviated a serious morale problem among Docket Clerks. In fact, most are now proud of their enhanced status. Of the ten interviewed, four specifically mentioned the "responsibility" of the job. As the earlier comments showed, one called herself the "backbone" of the section and another described herself as "controlling" the section. The two most experienced Docket Clerks said flatly - and separately - that no Docket Clerk could disapprove of the new system.

When asked about her future with the Clerk's Office, one Docket Clerk admitted her past discouragement: "At first I didn't see any future. Now it seems different . . . . Before we were frustrated with the amount of work and then when we got our paychecks we were disgusted." But perhaps the best explanation of the turnover problem was given by a more experienced Docket Clerk: "There were changes in employment, but it has been for the best. The people who left weren't qualified for the job." According to that employee, they saw the "handwriting on the wall."

As an additional benefit of the increased salary, the Clerk's Office hoped to create a "career ladder" in the reorganized Division. Apparently they have succeeded. Half of the Deputy Clerks interviewed said that in the future they would like to be "section head Docket Clerks." As the Chief Deputy Clerk explained, this willingness to be promoted contrasts with an earlier reluctance among Deputy Docket Clerks to accept that position.

Finally, the remaining workers seem to welcome the new supervisory level. They like having someone around who can answer their questions. One even described the comfort of having a "go-between" with the judge who can explain mistakes and perhaps buffer his disapproval. In fact, the only possible criticism of this additional level made was that there were too few supervisors.

## VII. NEW PROCEDURES

As a part of the reorganization certain specific procedures were initiated. While some of these have already been mentioned in the earlier sections, in this section, the new procedures will be described and contrasted with the ones that previously existed.

Arraignment dates--The arraignment is "the first setting of a case after it has been accepted by the District Attorney and allotted to one of the judges." (Manual, p. 10) The defendant is informed of the charges and asked to enter a plea. The reorganization standardized the period between allotment and arraignment. Docket Clerks are advised to set the arraignment for the next working day if the defendant is in jail, and for the following week if the defendant is on bond. The arraignment is set through the Case Process Stamp which notifies the clerical section of the correct date to enter on the subpoenas or notices.

Bond and Witness List Master--The Bond and Witness List Master is a form on which a list of all witnesses or participants notified of trials is kept. It is first completed for the arraignment and added to with additional hearings. Its conspicuous yellow color makes it useful as a folder divider between Docket Master and minute entries, and bonds and witness lists. No such form was used before for reorganization nor was there any set folder arrangement.

Calendar Book-- The Calendar Book is a "bound book maintained by each section Docket Clerk listing the cases set for future dates and specifying the type of setting, attorney, charge, and bond status. It is also used to note all case files released to and returned to the courtroom." (manual p. 11) Ten of the large books were ordered through the grant. Each book has a page for every working day on which the Docket Clerk enters cases as they are set. Requests for records other than for hearings are also noted. When the record is returned, the Docket Clerk marks through the listing with yellow ink.

An experienced Docket Clerk described this book as the most important of the new procedures. Before, Docket Clerks kept their own personal, temporary listing of up-coming cases on a ledger or tablet, so that someone substituting in a section would have no way of knowing what cases were to be heard on a particular day or what records were in section. From the Calendar Book some Docket Clerks make up the Judge's Book which notifies the judge of the hearings scheduled each day. At least two additional Docket Clerks specifically cited the maintenance of the Judge's Book as their major function.

Case Folder Organization--Case folders now have a standard format. On the label side are the Bill of Information, the True Copy of the Capias, the DA's Screening Form, Bond(s) copy, and Magistrate

Court paperwork. The documents on the unlabelled side are described under Bond and Witness List Master. Two of the three experienced Docket Clerks related the benefits to the judge in having the folder so organized. One said, "This really helps the judge. If he has to go through 25 or 30 pages to find one day's record it will take him two days to do a one day docket."

Case Process Stamp-- The Case Process Stamp was described earlier as a management control because it insures that people are accountable for their work performance. However, it also serves to quickly inform the clerical section of who to notify of a court date. An experienced Docket Clerk described the old system: "Before you would staple a paper to the outside of the folder and give it to a clerk just saying, 'notify all' . . . The clerk had to turn all through the folder and look for bonds. If there weren't any, no surety was notified . . . You might not find the bond and assume the person was in jail. Then the case would have to be continued and you would send new notices to everyone. There is that much difference. . . The clerk looks at the stamp and knows exactly who to notify. There is no question."

Closed Case Processing-- A final disposition is usually made when a criminal case is closed and the defendant found guilty. The defendant may be incarcerated or put on active probation. Therefore, a number

of agencies must be informed of the disposition. Before the reorganization, closed cases were ignored until all other work was completed. After the reorganization closed cases are processed as soon as the records return from the final hearing. The manual establishes the following four steps in an average case closure:

1. The file is checked and all documents organized;
2. The record is audited for completeness and accuracy;
3. The appropriate agencies are notified:
  - a. On all persons sentenced to any parish or state prison, the Subject Form with attachments is sent to the Sheriff.
  - b. On all persons sentenced to state institutions, the Department of Corrections Notification Letter and attachments are forwarded.
  - c. On all persons sentenced to active probation or whose probation is revoked, the Probation and Parole Notification letter and attachment are forwarded.
  - d. On all persons convicted of a felony, the Registrar of Voters Notification Form is forwarded; and,
4. The final Quality Control check and microfilming is completed by the Quality Control Clerk.

Color Dots-- Each section's record folders are distinguished by a specific stick-on color dot to facilitate the proper flow of records to court and between the clerical pool and Docket Clerk sections.

Docket Master-- The manual (p. 11) describes the Docket Master as "the case chronology listing of all actions, filings, and pleadings



in each criminal case, maintained in the Clerk's Office in each Section inside the docket bin." Under the old system, the Docket Master was copied from the Minute Clerk's longhand notes and was kept in chronological order by handwriting on the inside cover of each record. The Docket Master was also hand-copied into a large bound book. Under the new system, the Chief Deputy Clerk has persuaded most Minute Clerks (9 out of 10) to typewrite their minute entries, (each day's notes) on a separate page. The Docket Master entry is also typewritten by either a Deputy Docket Clerk or a Docket Clerk. One copy of the Docket Master is filed in the folder and another copy is filed numerically in the Docket Master bin kept beside each Docket Clerk's desk.

The two most experienced Docket Clerks found this to be a much more efficient procedure. One Docket Clerk said that locating cases was 90 percent faster. The other Docket Clerk compared the steps taken to answer a telephone question about a case under the old and new system. Under the old system, the Docket Clerk:

- 1) Searched the Index Book for the defendant's docket number;
- 2) Searched through 400 or 500 pages of the large Docket Book to determine the defendant's status for filing purposes;

- 3) Pulled the record from the filing cabinet; and,
- 4) Read the record and answered the question.

Under the new system the Docket Clerk:

- 1) Looks in the Index Book for the defendant's number;
- 2) Looks in the bin for the Docket Master; and,
- 3) Reads the Docket Master and gives the information.

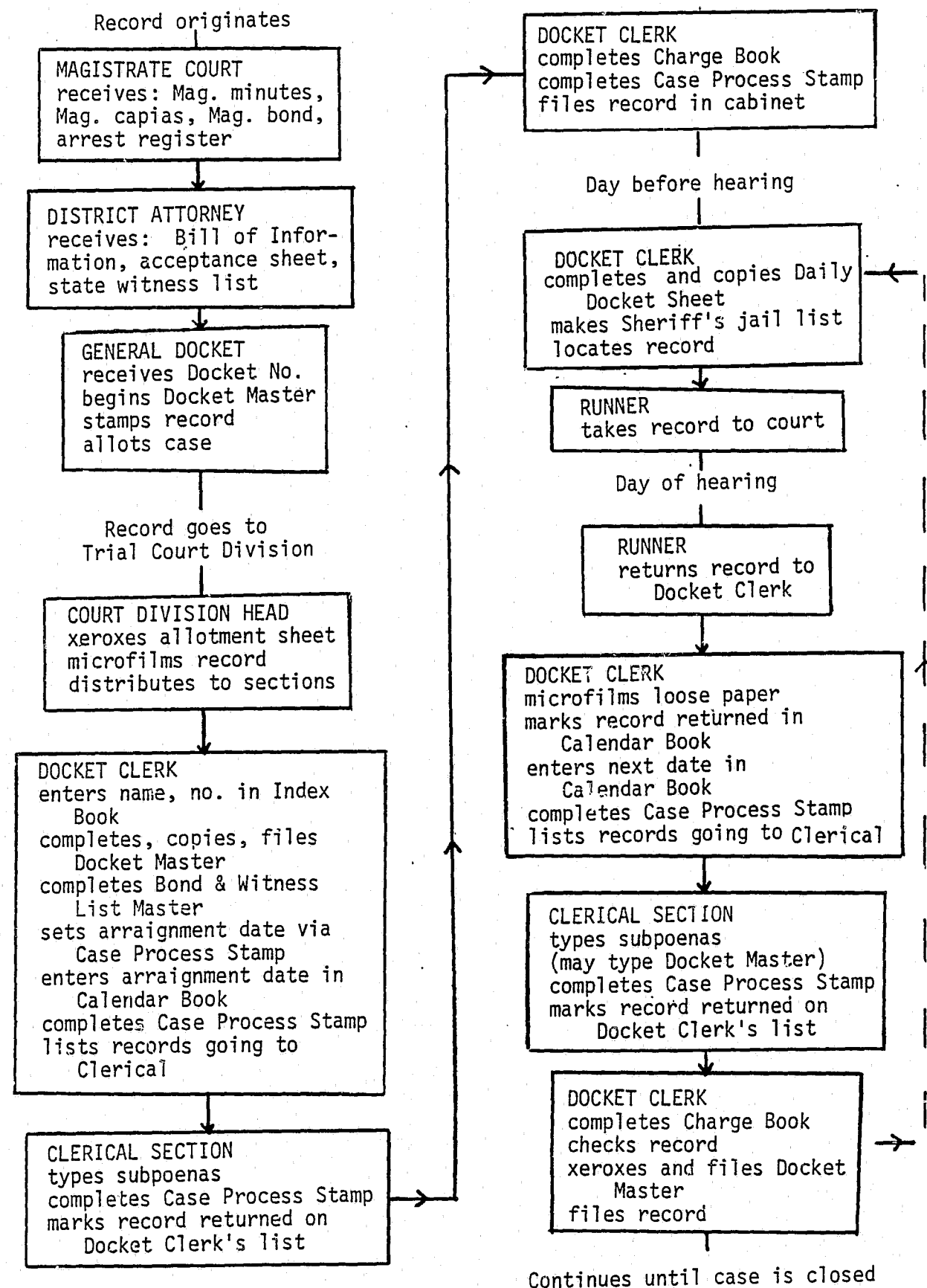
This Docket Clerk estimated that it reduced the time needed to answer a question from 8 or 10 minutes to less than a minute.

Subpoena processing--Like the processing of closed cases, subpoenas are now typed as soon as the records return from court. Under the old system subpoenas were not typed until ten days before they were needed, which resulted in some being overlooked and others arriving too late for the hearing.

A flow chart of a record through the Trial Court Division under the new system appears in Figure 4.

Figure 4

WORK FLOW OF CASE RECORD



VIII. IMPACT

The major users of Trial Court Division services are the judges, those requesting information from the Information Counter, and offices within the criminal justice system that depend on regular cooperation with the Trial Court Division. These offices include Criminal Sheriff's Subpoena and Capias Division, the state Department of Corrections, and the Criminal District Court's Record Room for closed cases.

Judges

The ten judges of the Criminal District Court were sent a questionnaire requesting an assessment of the reorganization's impact. The questionnaire also requested an in-depth interview with both the judges and the Minute Clerks. Four of the judges returned the questionnaire and agreed to an interview. Of course, such a small number of responses could bias the findings in an indeterminate way.

Table 1 details the general and specific responses to six Likert-Scaled questions. In all cases, the most satisfied response equals 1 and the least satisfied response equals 5. The table shows that, although only four judges answered the questionnaire, the responses covered a wide range. In general, however, the judges seem most satisfied with the organization of the file and the responsiveness of the Trial Court Division to requests, but least satisfied with the Daily Docket Sheet and subpoena issuance.

Table 1

Judges' Satisfaction With Trial Court Division Services  
(Questions 1 and 3)

<u>Item</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Mean</u>
General Satisfaction	2-5	3.25
Specific Satisfaction with:		
Timeliness and accuracy of case file	2-5	3.25
Organization of case file	1-5	2.75
Quality of Daily Docket Sheet	1-5	3.50
Timeliness of subpoena issuance	3-5	3.75
Responsiveness to requests*	1-2	1.67

\*Only three judges responded quantitatively

Furthermore, three of the four judges interviewed indicated feeling more satisfied now than they had a year ago. (Question 2) When asked to specify conditions other than the reorganization that might have affected their level of satisfaction, one judge wrote that he could discern no difference in service and another that the many changes in personnel in the Clerk's Office over the last year had negatively affected his section. (Question 4)

The judges responded differently to the specific procedural changes. This is probably due to the fact that each courtroom is managed differently.

a. Case file information--For example, one judge makes notes on the Docket Master when case information needs to be expanded. Thus, he does not depend on the Docket Clerk's summation alone and is

generally pleased with the quality of information. A second judge felt that the manner in which the files are kept showed improvement after the reorganization. A third judge, who compared the Docket Masters and minute entries, found the Docket Master to be generally accurate, although possibly not as sophisticated as the minute entry.

On the other hand, most Minute Clerks have little reason to examine the Docket Master. If it is necessary to refer to an earlier proceeding, the clerks read their own minute entries. Only in cases where a discrepancy has been noted would they compare the two. However, one Minute Clerk admitted that he could be the source of errors made in the Clerk's office. Both because of an incorrect entry or because, of a failure to return the records to the Docket Clerk, a procedure might be delayed on which a hearing depends.

b. Organization of case file--Because the judges refer most to the case file, they are sensitive to a standardized format. One judge acknowledged having had more problems finding things under the old system. However, another judge found that he still had to search through the entire record to find a document. Thus, whether the information is filed incorrectly or the format is misunderstood, that judge is unable to benefit from this added convenience.

c. Daily Docket Sheet--The Daily Docket Sheet is second only to subpoena issuance as the procedure with which the responding

judges are least satisfied. In fact, one judge and two Minute Clerks spent considerable time during the interview pointing out that particular day's errors. Sections of court differ in whether or not the Docket Clerk maintains a version of the Calendar Book, called the Judge's Book, in the judge's office. Those sections who do not have a Judge's Book must either rely on the Daily Docket Sheet or on their own records.

In fact, three of the four judges interviewed record their own docket to insure that their caseloads are spread evenly. Two of these judges note hearing dates they set in court. Another judge even records his own allotment and rigidly schedules hearings on a single case at weekly intervals. (In New Orleans, the assistant district attorneys supposedly set the docket. However, these interviews suggest that the docket is at least a cooperative effort between the judge and the ADA.)

One judge said that the Daily Docket sheet, "would be no help if I didn't keep up with it myself." Another has hired an assistant just to "doctor" the sheet.

Example of the shortcomings in the Daily Docket Sheet as specified by those interviewed include;

- 1) Entering the same defendant (same name, same docket number) under two different setting categories;

- 2) Failing to cancel the original hearing date when the judge resets a trial;
- 3) Listing the wrong people as co-defendants;
- 4) Incorrectly typing the names of defendants or transposing first and last names;
- 5) Incorrectly typing numbers in either the docket number or the offense code;
- 6) Making categories so vague as to be meaningless, such as "Special Pleading;" and,
- 7) Omitting the names of attorneys.

As one Minute Clerk said, "in some places typographical mistakes might not matter, but in this business it creates havoc."

d. Timeliness of subpoena issuance--Two of the judges listed subpoena issuance as the major problem in the system, with one specifying that all phases of subpoena issuance are problematical--"their preparation, issuance, and the appearance of witnesses."

While all judges discussed the problem, none seemed willing to assign blame because issuing subpoenas is basically the shared responsibility of the clerks who type them, the deputies who deliver them, and even the defendant or attorney who specifies the witnesses.

Incorrectly typed subpoenas result in the continuances of cases. If a defendant has given a correct address but a clerk incorrectly

types it, the defendant has not been granted due process and the case is continued. Because the deputies will not go "beyond the four corners of the subpoena to make service," as one Minute Clerk explained, an omission of an apartment number or faulty street address halts the entire process.

One of the major flaws in the subpoena issuance procedure seems to be a lack of coordination. A Minute Clerk told of sending a record back four times with notes and minute entries correcting a bad address, while each time the incorrect address was retyped. Another Minute Clerk cited the failure of the Sheriff's office to notify either the court or the Docket Clerk if service on a subpoena was not made. A judge referred to a repeated failure to include the defense's witnesses in the subpoenas and, at times, an insistence on sending subpoenas even after a case has been closed.

Some courtroom personnel described these problems as longstanding --"the same identical problems for thirty years"--; while others saw a reduction in the need for continuances because of the new system.

e. Responsiveness to court requests--Undoubtedly the interviewed judges were most pleased with the responsiveness of the Trial Court Division to their requests after the reorganization. Each appreciated the regularity in receiving the allotment, the Daily Docket Sheet, and the

case records. A decrease in missing records and faster delivery of specially requested records were also noted.

The four judges each summarized his reaction to the reorganization. These qualitative statements varied as widely in tone as had the quantitative questionnaire responses. The most favorable response was that the mistakes were merely "human error" and not due to any "flaws in the system." Another judge said that it was hard to place blame because "you couldn't differentiate the system versus the individuals." A third said there was not a "tremendous problem in errors" and that about 75 percent of the time things were "all right." The most dissatisfied judge, who has written many letters complaining of clerical mistakes which he calls "letters of desperation," said he did not feel that the reorganization had done "one iota of good" and that he had simply "given up."

The three least satisfied judges had theories about problems with the Clerk of Court staff that focus on salary. One judge said that the Clerk's office did not have enough money to pay "decent employees." Another judge related the turnover problem in Docket Clerks to a dissatisfaction with salary and described the previous salary as "ridiculous." A third judge felt that the low salary level was an attempt to spread political patronage very thinly. Finally, a Minute Clerk summarized the dissatisfaction by quoting a former

Sheriff, "If you pay peanuts, you get monkeys."

The suggestions for improvement of the judges and Minute Clerks interviewed encompassed two ideas. The first is to improve feedback on errors. This category includes the suggestion that:

- 1) The deputies should inform the court or the Docket Clerk if a subpoena is not served;
- 2) Supervisors should crosscheck or proofread important documents like subpoenas;
- 3) The person who actually types the document should be notified of any corrections so that the error is not repeated; and,
- 4) If a charge is reduced or changed, the new charge should be noted on the folder in order to attract the attention of the typist.

The second category of suggestions was summed up by a judge who stated that the clerk's office needs to hire "career people." He felt there was a need to keep employees long enough for them to learn their job, and to cease being "amateurs."

#### Information Counter Users

Individuals come to the Information Counter every day for immediate case information. The Information Specialists maintain a log of those requesting information by court section and collect slips of paper on which users specify the information requested.

Under the old system, those individuals were forced to go to the Docket Clerks of each court section which were located in different parts of the Criminal Courts building.

Two measurements were developed to determine who uses the Information Counter, what records are requested and to ascertain levels of satisfaction with this new service. A five day sample from the log was examined. In addition, the results of a short questionnaire devised for the evaluation to measure user satisfaction was developed. The questionnaire was administered by the Information Specialists to each person coming to the Information Counter over a 10 day period.

Table 2 describes the log of users by court sections and ranks the users in terms of number of records requested. As indicated, the most frequent visitors to the Information Counter by far are probation officers. This group represents 35 % of the total number of visitors and requested 42% of the records, an average of 1.85 records per officer. However, of all regular criminal justice system users the District Attorney requested most records per person. In this case, 9% of the users requested 15% of the records, an average of 2.50 records per assistant district attorneys. Overall 72% of the regular users were either probation officers, assistant district attorneys, attorneys or indigent defenders. Members of the public made up another 15% of the users, but requested only



Table 2

Number of Records Requested Per Type of User-  
5 Day Period Taken From Counter's Log

User	Number of Records	%	Number of Users	%	Ratio of Records to Users
Probation	111	42%	60	35%	1.85
District Attorney	40	15%	16	9%	2.50
Attorney	39	15%	33	19%	1.18
Public	25	10%	25	15%	1.00
OIDP (indigent defenders)	22	8%	16	9%	1.37
Sheriff's deputies	11	4%	11	6%	1.00
Law Clinics	8	3%	6	4%	1.33
Prison Counselor	3	1%	1	0.5%	3.00
Minute Clerks	2	1%	1	0.5%	2.00
NOPD (Police Dept.)	1	--	1	0.5%	1.00
U.S. Army	1	--	1	0.5%	1.00
Total	263	100%	171	100%	1.54

10% of the records.

Tables 3 through 6 report information taken from the evaluation questionnaire. In Table 3, the large number of regular users is evident. Over one-fourth(10) of those who completed the questionnaire said they came to the counter at least four times a week. An additional 50% (19) said they came from one to three times a week. Four described themselves as frequent users without specifying the interval between visits, while only five are called "irregular" users because they indicated that this was the first visit, that they made infrequent visits, or that they came less than once a week. As noted by the Chief Deputy Clerk, part of this weighting of the regular users may be explained by a possible reluctance of the Information Specialists to require a new user or someone obviously uninterested to complete the questionnaire. The results may thus be biased towards those most favorable to the new service.

Table 3

Regularity of Users by Length of Involvement  
(Questions 2 & 3)

Regularity	N	Median Involvement	Mean Involvement
4-5 times a week	10	3.00 yrs.	3.85 yrs.
3 times a week	7	1.00 yrs.	1.51 yrs.
2 times a week	9	1.50 yrs.	2.50 yrs.
1 time a week	3	2.00 yrs.	2.08 yrs.
frequent	4	0.42 yrs.	0.58 yrs.
irregular	5	0.66 yrs.*	0.66 yrs.*
Total	38	1.25 yrs.	2.20 yrs.

\*Only 2 of the irregular users responded to this question;  
2 of the 5 said that this was their first visit and one didn't  
answer.

Table 4 shows the regularity of users by the average time they waited for information and the type of information requested. Almost all who completed the questionnaire either said they wanted the case record or listed specific documents found in the case record. Only 2 of the 38 called for the Docket Master alone. This preference for the case record meant that the Information Specialist may have had to look through file cabinets, Calendar Books, and sign-out sheets to locate the needed record. In spite of the more difficult preference, the longest wait anyone recorded was 10 minutes, while the overall average wait was a mere 2.22 minutes. Those who waited the longest were the irregular users who perhaps had more trouble explaining what they wanted.

Table 5 reports the general satisfaction of the users and their current satisfaction compared to that before the reorganization. Both were Likert-scaled with one being the most favorable response. In no case was any response less than the midpoint, 3, to either of these questions. Thus, most users expressed satisfaction and considered the Information Counter an improvement over the old system. The people most satisfied were the three-times-a-week users and those who saw the most improvement were the once-a-week and frequent users. An analysis of the 38 responses indicates that most users are satisfied to very satisfied with the new system and think it better to much better than the one previously used.

Table 4

Regularity of User by Information Wanted and Time Waited\*  
(Questions 1, 2, 7)

Regularity	Case Record	Specific Information in Case Record	Docket Master	Other	Mean Wait
4-5 times a week	5	5	0	0	2.21 min.
3 times a week	4	3	0	0	1.17 min.
2 times a week	3	3	2	1	3.02 min.
1 time a week	3	0	0	0	2.67 min.
frequent	2	2	0	0	2.33 min.
irregular	2	2	0	0	3.50 min.
Total	19	15	2	1	2.22 min.

\*Range 0 to 10 minutes

Table 5

Regularity of Users by Current Satisfaction and <sup>1</sup> & <sup>2</sup>  
Satisfaction With New System Compared to Old  
(Questions 2, 4 & 5)

Regularity	Current Satisfaction	N	Comparative Satisfaction	N
4-5 times a week (10)	1.30	10	1.37	8
3 times a week (7)	1.14	7	1.67	6
2 times a week (9)	1.22	9	1.80	5
1 time a week (3)	1.33	3	1.00	3
frequent (4)	1.25	4	1.00	2
irregular (5)	1.20	5	2.00	2
Total (38)	1.24	38	1.42	26

<sup>1</sup> Responses were Likert Scaled, 1 to 5, with 1 being  
"very satisfied" and 5 being "much better."

<sup>2</sup> Range 1 to 3

Table 6 tabulates categorized responses to a request for the main advantages or disadvantages of the new system. Twenty four people listed advantages that predominantly described the new system as quick, efficient, and convenient. However, one user listed a disadvantage of being unable pull records himself when the counter was crowded, something he must have been allowed to do before the reorganization.

In summary, the Information Counter is serving a large number of users who are primarily criminal justice agents. While users normally want more than one record, each one waits only an average of less than three minutes for the information. Finally, the users express satisfaction with the service received and found current service better than

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Table 6  
Content Analyzed Advantages & Disadvantages of New System  
(Question 6)

<u>Advantages</u>	<u>24</u>
Quicker	7
More efficient	6
Easier, more convenient	6
Trained personnel	2
Specialized personnel*	2
Generally excellent	1
<u>Disadvantages</u>	<u>1</u>
Unable to pull record yourself	1
<u>No Response</u>	<u>13</u>

\*These people commented on the fact that they didn't have to disturb the Docket Clerk, and that Information Specialists weren't involved in a section.

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that before the reorganization.

Cooperating Office

A. Criminal Sheriff's Subpoena and Capias Division

The Subpoena and Capias Division of the Orleans Parish Criminal Sheriff's Office serves the subpoenas prepared by the Trial Court Division. They have not responded to a request for an interview.

B. Department of Corrections

In June 1980, the state Department of Corrections began to pressure the Orleans Parish Clerk of Courts office to process closed cases because of overcrowding at Parish Prison. At that time, the existing law requiring the receipt of six documents from various criminal justice agencies before an inmate could be moved from the parish to the state prison began to be enforced. The person handling these documents for the state was interviewed and reported that paperwork from the Clerk's Office arrived before that of certain other agencies. He added that he comes to the Trial Court Division almost daily, and that the employees have been very helpful and cooperative. As examples, he cited a willingness to hand-pull old case records and the establishment of a new procedure for faster handling of appealed cases. He summarized, "Out of all the parishes I deal with, that office is the most cooperative."

C. Criminal District Court's Record Room

All closed cases are stored in the Record Room. The person in charge of the Record Room was questioned about the efficiency of the new Trial Court Division procedures and the quality of the records themselves. He replied that the records were received much faster and were better prepared than before. He also explained that a runner now picks up records when the court requests them, thereby, making for a faster delivery. He said the new system was a "smoother operation all around," and had caused him "no problems."



# IX. WORKLOAD STATISTICS

Table 7 reports workload statistics for 1979 and 1980. Because of the relative autonomy of most sections in 1979, no statistics on Public Information requests or Closed Cases were kept for the entire division. However, the number of subpoenas/notices issued and the number of criminal cases filed and allotted can be compared for the two years. Overall, although not valid for every quarter, in 1980 the division issued almost 5% more subpoenas/notices and filed and allotted almost 8% more cases. Because more work was done with roughly the same number of people, an increased efficiency of operation can be inferred.

Table 7

Workload Statistics											
	1st Quarter*		2nd Quarter		3rd Quarter		4th Quarter		Total		
	1979	1978	1979	1980	1979	1980	1979	1980	1979	1980	% Change
Subpoenas/Notices Issued	12,558	14,178	23,850	26,165	25,425	25,310	26,215	26,431	88,040	92,085	+4.6%
Cases Filed and Allowed	1,170	1,814	1,647	1,532	1,523	1,572	1,425	1,301	5,765	6,219	+7.0%
Total Public Information Requests		1,024	--	3,777	--	3,148	--	4,887	--	12,846	--
District Attorney	--	232	--	625	--	491	--	564	--	1,912	--
Indigent Defender	--	53	--	258	--	225	--	240	--	777	--
Private Attorney	--	253	--	730	--	432	--	1,151	--	2,566	--
Exclusion	--	289	--	946	--	1,100	--	1,723	--	4,058	--
Other Criminal Justice	--	133	--	788	--	684	--	889	--	2,494	--
Member of Public	--	64	--	428	--	216	--	430	--	1,139	--
Closed Cases Processed	--	--	--	1,828	--	2,106	--	1,736	--	5,670	

\*Only 5 sections operational - does not include closed cases

## X. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

What the Clerk of Court's Management Assistance grant attempted to do was difficult. The grant tried to change a heterogeneous group of ten autonomous sections into a homogeneous organization with a functional division of labor. To accomplish this goal, the program initiated a number of standardized procedures to be enforced by a new supervisory position called Court Division Head. The new supervisory level asserted itself in several ways: through the Case Process Stamp which held clerks accountable for their work, and through staff evaluations which showed workers how their performance was viewed.

This additional supervision was difficult to accept; however, the reorganization posed problems on another level for the staff. The Docket Clerks, who had worked in rather informal association with the Deputy Docket Clerks in operating the sections, now found themselves solely responsible to the court for setting the docket, issuing subpoenas, and all actions affecting it. Added to these unsettling organizational changes was the effort of relearning procedures that altered every aspect of a once familiar job.

Many employees found adjusting to these changes too difficult, and because of resignations or dismissals, the turnover was high. Yet, in spite of the staff shortages, a lack of experience among the staff, and the needed adjustments, the morale of those who remained in the division

seemed high. No doubt, part of this satisfaction stemmed from the salary increase and improved chances for promotion now available. However, the existing staff also seemed proud of the opportunity the reorganization has given them to improve their work. The two most experienced Docket Clerks summed up the reorganization as follows:

It has put ten years more on my life.

It's like getting out of a wagon into a brand new Pinto Ford.

The reorganization has also been welcomed by the agencies the Trial Court Division served. Three of four judges interviewed described the service as improved after the reorganization. Yet, in spite of the improvement, these judges were less than satisfied with two aspects of that service--the Daily Docket Sheet and subpoena issuance. On the other hand, those people coming to the Trial Court Division's Information Counter were almost uniformly satisfied with the reorganization service and found it better than the old system. Also, both the Louisiana Department of Corrections staff and the Clerk of Court's Record Room staff commended the reorganization. Thus, even though the changes initiated by the grant were difficult to achieve, the program seems to have met its goals and operated to the satisfaction of its personnel and most of its clients. Finally, the workload statistics indicate that, since more subpoenas were issued and cases filed in 1980 than in 1979 with no change in the number

of people employed, the division also operated efficiently.

Although the Trial Court Division has successfully accomplished its goal during the twelve months of grant operation, recommendations were identified to further improve its service. In order of importance, those recommendations include:

1. Stabilizing the Trial Court Division staff. In times of government budget reductions, increasing salaries may be difficult. Nevertheless, the complexity of the job, especially that of the Docket Clerk and Court Division Heads, demands a stable staff. Increasing the salaries, and thus the experience level, and the efficiency of the staff may make speedier trials possible and perhaps help to reduce some of the present prison overcrowding.
2. Extending training to those hired before the fall of 1980, with special attention to improving the accuracy of the Daily Docket Sheet and subpoena issuance procedures.
3. Instituting an additional control procedure so that corrections given by the court to the Docket Clerk are passed on to whoever is actually typing the document.
4. Improving the proofreading of subpoenas to include a search for typographical errors, as well as incomplete listings of witnesses and unnecessary notification of witnesses.
5. Noting all changes in charges on the outside of the folder where they can be readily noticed.

## A P P E N D I X

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

Questions for Docket Clerks

- I. How long have you worked for the Court? How long have you worked as a Docket Clerk?
- II. How would you describe your job to someone unfamiliar with it? What are your major duties?
- III. How has your job changed as a result of the reorganization? What specific things have changed?

or

Are you familiar with the way things operated before the reorganization? How has the office changed?

or

Did you go through a training program? Did you feel it prepared you for your job?

- IV. How do you feel about the reorganization (the office system)?
- V. What are some problems caused by the reorganization (new system)? What are its accomplishments?
- VI. What future do you see for yourself in the office?

Questions for Deputy Docket Clerks, Trainees, and Information Specialists

- I. How long have you worked for the Court? How long have you worked in your present position?
- II. How would you describe your job to someone unfamiliar with it? What are your major duties?
- III. A. Are you familiar with the way the office operated before the reorganization (new system)?  
If so, how has your job changed as a result of the reorganization/new system?  
B. How do you feel about the reorganization?  
C. Do you think the reorganization has caused any problems for the office as a whole?  
D. Do you think the reorganization has caused any problems for you in your present position?  
E. What are its major accomplishments?

- IV. A. Did you go through any kind of training program?  
If so, please describe it.
- B. Do you think the training you received prepared you for your job?
- C. How do you think the current training system compares with the training that occurred before the reorganization?
- D. Do you see any problems with the current training program?
- E. What are its major strongpoints?
- V. What future do you see for yourself in the office?

Questions for the Trainer

- I. Length of service with court and in present position
- II. How would you describe your job--its main duties--a typical day?
- III. What are your goals for the training program?
- IV. How was the training manual set up?
- V. What is the training sequence for trainees?
- VI. How do the trainees compare with other deputy clerks who have not been trained?
- VII. Do you see any problems with the current training program?
- VIII. What are its major accomplishments?
- IX. What are future training plans, especially for the untrained?

Questions for Supervisory Personnel/Management Team

- I. Length of service with court, in current position
- II. How would you describe your job, a typical day, your major duties?
- III. How did the idea of the reorganization evolve?
- IV. How has the project grown up? What is the history of its changes?
- V. Document Track

- VI. What have been some problems created by the reorganization? (staff attitudes, staff turnover, staff evaluations)

- VII. What are the major accomplishments of the reorganization?

- VIII. What are your plans for the future for the office?



# CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

February 2, 1981

ERNEST N. MORIAL  
MAYOR

Honorable  
Judge, Section  
Criminal District Court  
2700 Tulane Avenue  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70119

Dear Judge

In January 1980 the Clerk of Court's office received a one-year grant administered through the Mayor's Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) to reorganize its Trial Court Division. The reorganization entailed dividing the ten court sections into two divisions, each supervised by a division head. All deputy docket clerks were placed in a clerical pool to do the typing and other clerical functions, and the docket clerks were freed to maintain case files, check records for accuracy, and answer the needs of the court. Also included was the establishment of an information counter, a runner system, and a switchboard for the office. As a result of this reorganization certain standardized procedures were inaugurated to deal with subpoenas, case closeouts, docket masters, and tracking and organizing case records.

As the CJCC evaluator of the project, I am gathering information to assess the impact of the reorganization on various components of the criminal justice system. Because you, the judge, are the principal user of the Trial Court Division services, it is very important for me to be able to determine your satisfaction with the revised procedures. To help me do so, would you please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to me in the envelope provided by February 9th. You will notice that at the end of the questionnaire I have set aside space for you to indicate your interest in giving me, either by phone or in person, a more detailed response to these questions. I have also asked your permission to interview your minute clerk.

Thank you very much for your time. If you have any questions about the reorganization or the evaluation, please feel free to call me at 586-3816, or Emmett Fremaux, Chief Deputy Clerk.

Sincerely,

*Linda Marye*

Linda Marye  
Evaluator

Criminal Justice Coordinating Council / Frank R. Serpas, Jr., Director  
1215 Prytania Street, Suite 418 / New Orleans, Louisiana 70130  
Phone: (504) 586-3816

"An Equal Opportunity Employer"

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE CRIMINAL DISTRICT COURT JUDGES

1. Please indicate your general satisfaction with the service you receive from the Trial Court Division by circling one of the following.

Very Satisfied      Satisfied      So-so      Dissatisfied      Very Dissatisfied

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Compared with the way you felt about the service of the Trial Court Division a year ago, does this represent (please check one)?

More satisfaction \_\_\_\_\_ Less satisfaction \_\_\_\_\_

3. Please rate each of the following aspects of Trial Court Division service by placing in the blank to the side the number that corresponds to your level of satisfaction:

Very Satisfied	=1
Satisfied	=2
So-so	=3
Dissatisfied	=4
Very Dissatisfied	=5

- a. The timeliness and accuracy of case file information \_\_\_\_\_
- b. The organization of the case file \_\_\_\_\_
- c. The quality of the daily docket sheet \_\_\_\_\_
- d. The timeliness of subpoena issuance \_\_\_\_\_
- e. The Trial Court Division's responsiveness to your requests \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Are there any special situations this year other than the reorganization, that may have contributed to your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

5. May I have your permission to interview your minute clerk about his or her reaction to the reorganization of the court division? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Would you be willing to comment more fully on your satisfaction with court division services, either in person or on the phone? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, please suggest a time when I can call to arrange an interview with you. \_\_\_\_\_



Appendix C. Information Counter Questionnaire.

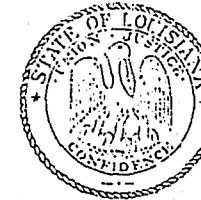
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INFORMATION COUNTER USERS, WEEK OF JAN. As a part of a reorganization of the Criminal District Court's Clerk of Court offices, an information counter was established which allowed members of the public to go to one central place to obtain records on a court case. In order to help us assess the effectiveness of the information counter procedures and make possible improvements, we would like you to complete this short questionnaire and leave it with the staff when you go. Thank you for your time.

1. What kind of information are you requesting? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How often do you make use of the services of the information counter? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How long have you been coming to the Clerk of Court's office for case information? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How satisfied are you with the services you receive at the information counter? (circle one)
 

Very satisfied	Satisfied	So-So	Disappointed	Very disappointed
----------------	-----------	-------	--------------	-------------------
5. If you requested court record information before the information counter was established, how do you think the service you now receive compares with that before the counter was established? (circle one)
 

Much Better	Better	No Change	Worse	Much Worse
-------------	--------	-----------	-------	------------
6. What do you think is the main advantage, or disadvantage, or the central information counter system? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How long did you wait today to receive the information you wanted? \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix D. Memo from Clerk of Court to staff  
Explaining Salary Increases



CRIMINAL DISTRICT COURT  
PARISH OF ORLEANS  
OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF COURT  
EDWIN A. LOMBARD, CLERK  
EX-OFFICIO CUSTODIAN OF VOTING MACHINES

2700 TULANE AVENUE  
NEW ORLEANS, LA. 70119  
504/586-3061

TO: All Clerk's Office Staff

FROM: Edwin A. Lombard, Clerk of Court *EAL*

DATE: 12/16/80

SUBJ: Message on Job Upgrading

As everyone is aware, we have been involved in an extensive re-organization project during 1980 in the Court Division (Room 210) of the Clerk's Office. This project has involved fundamental changes in work procedures, training methods, and job functions. It has altered the duties of the Section Docket Clerks, and has centralized clerical functions, public information services, supervision, and training.

We have argued to the City that adjustments are needed in salary levels to reflect these organizational changes and have finally received approval of the first phase of a plan submitted previously to increase the ten Section Head Docket Clerks starting salaries from \$584 to \$710 per month. This corrects a long standing problem we have had with the Section Docket Clerk positions, whose starting salaries were only 5% (one step) above an entry level employee.

This is a very positive step for the office as a whole--not just for the individuals involved. It is the first step in a longer range effort to improve the overall salary structure of the office, both by upgrading key jobs and by developing a "career ladder" in positions so that there is built-in incentive to strive to move up. Shortly after Christmas we will begin a similar re-organization of the "Pre-Court Division"--Magistrate, Capias, Bond Department, & General Docket--and will continue seeking job upgrading by the City to enable us to improve the salary structure in all departments.

It takes time and continuing effort to make progress in this area with the City. Of necessity, we must "chip away" at our budget limitations, making advances one step at a time, while we implement the changes in office operations that form the basis for requesting job upgrading. Now that some initial progress has been made, I wanted the entire staff to take note, and to bear with us patiently as the push for additional progress in the near future continues.

EAL:dt

Appendix E. Memo from Clerk of Court to Judges  
Explaining Grant Project.



CRIMINAL DISTRICT COURT  
PARISH OF ORLEANS  
OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF COURT  
EDWIN A. LOMBARD, CLERK  
EX-OFFICIO CUSTODIAN OF VOTING MACHINES

2700 TULANE AVENUE  
NEW ORLEANS, LA. 70119  
504/586-3061

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 2, 1980  
TO: Honorable Judges, Criminal District Court, Sections "A" - "J"  
FROM: Emmett H. Fremaux, Chief Deputy Clerk *EHF*  
SUBJECT: Clerk of Court Reorganization Project

I am writing to advise the Court that the Clerk's Office is initiating, effective this date, a one-year grant project to reorganize trial court support operations, with primary goals of improving case management, personnel training, clerical efficiency, and services to each individual judge and courtroom.

Incorporating each section into the reorganization will be a somewhat gradual process, but by about May 1, 1980 all ten trial sections will be involved. Initially, and for the next several weeks, only sections D, E, F and H (in which we began a pilot program in September to prepare for this project) will be directly impacted. Prior to the implementation of any fundamental changes in the remaining six sections, I plan to contact and meet with each judge and courtroom staff individually to explain project goals and methods.

One noticeable change which we will implement effective with cases filed by the District Attorney in January of 1980, will be the color-coding by court section of each individual case with a small color dot next to the file folder label. The color dot will identify the 1980 cases, which will be processed completely under this project. The initial change which we will make in these records which the court should note is the relocation in the file of bonds and witness information. The attached yellow sheet entitled "Bond and Witness List Master" will be filed behind the Minutes and Docket Master in each case folder, and beneath this sheet all Certified Bonds and State or Defense Witness Lists will be filed, with the appropriate notations made on the Master Sheet to indicate which documents should be present. Using this method, it will be easier for clerks and courtroom personnel to locate relevant bond and witness information and also will provide a control check on the presence of all necessary documents of this sort in the file. Please note that this method will apply only to color-coded cases in your section, that is, filings in 1980 forward.

1/2/80  
Hon. Judges, Criminal District Court  
Page 2

From time to time we anticipate instituting similar clerical procedures to upgrade our system and I will advise of such as we proceed. We will be seeking suggestions and input from courtroom staff and judges on particular problems occurring in your sections and will welcome your comments accordingly. The primary staff members of the Clerk's Office, incidentally, in addition to myself who will be involved in this project, and who will be made regularly available to all the courts for investigation of particular problems or needs will be Ms. Velda McCraine and Ms. Fay Carbo, who are the full-time project supervisors, and Joseph Broussard, Jr., of our administrative staff, who will assist with the project part-time.

Thank you for your attention and assistance, and best wishes for the New Year.

BOND & WITNESS LIST MASTER  
(Filings With Clerk of Court)

\* WITNESS LIST(S) & CHANGES:

	Date	By	Notation
1. STATE <input type="checkbox"/>			
2. STATE <input type="checkbox"/>			
3. STATE <input type="checkbox"/>			
4. STATE <input type="checkbox"/>			
5. STATE <input type="checkbox"/>			
6. STATE <input type="checkbox"/>			

	Date	By	Notation
1. DEFENSE <input type="checkbox"/>			
2. DEFENSE <input type="checkbox"/>			
3. DEFENSE <input type="checkbox"/>			
4. DEFENSE <input type="checkbox"/>			
5. DEFENSE <input type="checkbox"/>			
6. DEFENSE <input type="checkbox"/>			

\* CERTIFIED BOND(S) & CHANGES:

Number Bonds in Case: 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐

Change of Address on Bonds:

Defendant(s):	Date	Notation

\* SPECIAL NOTATIONS RE: SUBPOENAS/NOTICES

Date	

\*\*\*\*\*

PUBLIC INFORMATION

DATE

Appendix F

PUBLIC INFORMATION

DATE

\*\*\*\*\*

Case No.

Section

Name

Early Form of Public Information Counter

Case No.

Section

Name

Slip

Request By:

☐ D.A.
☐ Prob.
☐ Public
☐ O.I.D.P.
☐ Atty.
☐ Other

\*\*\*\*\*

PUBLIC INFORMATION

DATE

Appendix F

PUBLIC INFORMATION

DATE

\*\*\*\*\*

Case No.

Section

Name

Early Form of Public Information Counter

Case No.

Section

Name

Slip

Request By:

☐ D.A.
☐ Prob.
☐ Public
☐ O.I.D.P.
☐ Atty.
☐ Other

\*\*\*\*\*

PUBLIC INFORMATION

DATE

\*\*\*\*\*

Case No.

Section

Name

Request By:

☐ D.A.
☐ Prob.
☐ Public
☐ O.I.D.P.
☐ Atty.
☐ Other

\*\*\*\*\*

PUBLIC INFORMATION

DATE

\*\*\*\*\*

Case No.

Section

Name

Request By:

☐ D.A.
☐ Prob.
☐ Public
☐ O.I.D.P.
☐ Atty.
☐ Other

\*\*\*\*\*

PUBLIC INFORMATION

DATE

\*\*\*\*\*

Case No.

Section

Name

Request By:

☐ D.A.
☐ Prob.
☐ Public
☐ O.I.D.P.
☐ Atty.
☐ Other

\*\*\*\*\*

PUBLIC INFORMATION

DATE

\*\*\*\*\*

Case No.

Section

Name

Request By:

☐ D.A.
☐ Prob.
☐ Public
☐ O.I.D.P.
☐ Atty.
☐ Other

# Appendix G. Case Process Stamp Samples as Explained in Training Manual

Samples of settings indicated on the Process Stamp are shown below. Notice that the Clerk who performs each function in the process must check and initial the function performed. Each person is thus accountable for their part in the process.

CASE PROCESS

SET FOR

Hearing on Pleadings

1-10-80

10:00AM

DATE

TIME

NOTIFY: DEPT

JAIL

BOND

ATTY

CRTY

STATE

DEF

DOCKETED

ISSUED

OK/ CHRG

CALENDAR

CASE PROCESS

SET FOR

TRIAL

1/20/80

9:30AM

DATE

TIME

NOTIFY: DEPT

JAIL

BOND

ATTY

CRTY

STATE

DEF

DOCKETED

ISSUED

OK/ CHRG

CALENDAR

CASE PROCESS

SET FOR

SENTENCE

1/30/80

9:00AM

DATE

TIME

NOTIFY: DEPT

JAIL

BOND

ATTY

CRTY

STATE

DEF

DOCKETED

ISSUED

OK/ CHRG

CALENDAR

CASE PROCESS

SET FOR

MOTION TO SUPPRESS

1/15/80

10:00AM

DATE

TIME

NOTIFY: DEPT

JAIL

BOND

ATTY

CRTY

STATE

DEF

DOCKETED

ISSUED

OK/ CHRG

CALENDAR

Appendix H  
EMPLOYEE EVALUATION

EMPLOYEE NAME \_\_\_\_\_ NEW \_\_\_\_\_ REGULAR

EVALUATION NO. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

RATE PERFORMANCE: POOR FAIR GOOD EXCELLENT

DAILY ATTENDANCE

AT WORK ON TIME

CONDUCT AT WORK

JOB CAPABILITY

INITIATIVE & EFFORT

WORK QUALITY

WORK QUANTITY

COOPERATION w/ CO-WORKERS

FOLLOWS INSTRUC. OF SUPER.


CHECK AS APPLICABLE: POOR FAIR GOOD EXCELLENT

LEARNING ABILITY

TYPING SKILLS

SUBPOENAS/NOTICES

DOCKET MASTERS

CLOSE-OUTS

FILES ORGANIZATION

DOCKET BIN ORDER

CALENDAR BOOK ENTRIES

DAILY DOCKET SHEETS

SERVICE TO COURTROOM

SERVICE TO PUBLIC


COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Employee \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
cc: Personnel File



Appendix I: Project Response

CRIMINAL DISTRICT COURT  
PARISH OF ORLEANS  
OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF COURT  
EDWIN A. LOMBARD, CLERK  
EX-OFFICIO CUSTODIAN OF VOTING MACHINES

2700 TULANE AVENUE  
NEW ORLEANS, LA. 70119  
504/586-3061

March 31, 1981

Mr. Frank R. Serpas, Jr.  
Director, Criminal Justice  
Coordinating Council  
1215 Prytania St. Suite 418  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70130

Dear Frank:

I am writing to add a few comments for inclusion in the publication of the recently completed staff evaluation of the Clerk of Court Management Assistance Program.

The project we undertook, in the short span of 12 months during 1980, involved the fundamental restructuring of an out-moded court support organization in order to meet the rising production and management demands of today's mounting caseloads. Our theory was that by redesigning the organizational structure within the office--vertically differentiating a horizontal network and instituting a new division of labor based on work function rather than Court section--we could more effectively and permanently impact overall work productivity, than by using the grant resources to merely add personnel or bolster immediate work flow needs with extra equipment or supplies.

Changing the shape of an organization to better comport with its operational environment, its users, and its personnel--even where the need to do so is, as in our case, demonstrable--is no task to be taken lightly. Structures, like the people within them, strongly resist change, and the changes we sought to bring about in this project were of the most basic sort. A short catalogue would include: the standardization of fundamental work procedures previously defined in 10 autonomous patterns by 10 sections of Court; documentation of a complex clerical process previously defined by "unwritten law"; alteration of individual job functions to the extent that even the most experienced veteran employees had to "start from scratch" in most areas; imposition of Supervisory authority over employees previously functioning without direct supervision; introduction of formal "classroom" training programs to old and new staff where "OJT" had sufficed for the past fifty years; utilization of written employee evaluations and written tests where job performance had been assessed informally in the past. Add to the foregoing the perils of a physical relocation, a new telephone/communication system, a variety of unfamiliar new equipment, forms, and records, and the innumerable other "little" adjustments needed to make the big adjustments fit--and you have the essential ball of wax.

Mr. Frank R. Serpas, Jr.  
March 31, 1981  
Page 2

A year later, the significant fact is that the new structure is operating and intact--and not too much different from the drawing-board design found in the grant application. After the trauma of staff turnover, work backlogs, endless evening training sessions, and the recurring effort to overcome that resistance to change that constantly crops up, we have stabilized our personnel and our work process, with even a respectable increase in efficiency and quality control during the conversion. Our staff--to some extent our "new" staff--have become believers in the new system and are in fact proud of their role in building it and in assuming its new responsibilities. We are entering a period of refinement and "fine-tuning" at present, and it is easy to see that the benefits of the reorganization will continue to accrue through this process over time. What makes me feel best, as I watch the new structure and methods take root, is to observe that these basic changes we have made are becoming truly permanent and will endure with this Court institution--rather than (as is typical with bureaucracy) become undermined and revert to former conditions when the special resources that brought the change are discontinued.

I enjoyed to opportunity, provided through CJCC support, to develop the "text book" organizational re-design that this project represented. Our office and the Court agencies we serve are the better for it, and all concerned have learned much in the process. I would in particular like to thank Ms. Fay Carbo and Ms. Velda McCraine who were the Court Division Head Supervisors under the grant and whose fine efforts made our success possible. Key members of our Administrative staff, our Docket Clerks, Clerical Division workers, Public Information Sections staff and many others also deserve thanks for their assistance.

I would finally like to complement the objective and professional manner in which Ms. Linda Marye, the project evaluator from CJCC, designed and conducted the formal assessment of this project. The document she produced is a comprehensive and detailed view of the project--its successes and its shortcomings--which I think would be useful to anyone interested in reviewing in depth the course of a serious organizational redesign effort in a public agency.

Your assistance and support and that of the CJCC staff are always most appreciated.

Sincerely,

Emmett H. Fremaux, Jr.  
Chief Deputy Clerk of Court

cc: Ms. Linda Marye  
Ms. Fay Carbo  
Ms. Velda McCraine

**END**