

# CONFERENCE OF STATE COURT ADMINISTRATORS

## Resolution 1

### **In Support of Promoting a Culture of Transparency and Accountability through Court System Performance Measures**

WHEREAS, the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) understands the relationship between judicial independence and accountability and recognizes that accountability and transparency are critical to judicial governance and to the preservation and strengthening of an independent Judiciary; and

WHEREAS, COSCA has repeatedly expressed its strong commitment to the pursuit of accountability and transparency in the conduct of state and local court operations and in overall judicial branch affairs; and

WHEREAS, State court leaders have a duty to hold their organizations accountable to the public and their inter-branch partners by instituting a set of empirical measures, and a program of on-going assessment of court outcomes with the wide publication of the results of those assessments; and

WHEREAS, court performance measurement is the evaluation of overall systems and programs, rather than individual judicial performance and encompasses both a quantitative and qualitative assessment of court effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, the assessment of court performance serves as a basis for organizational change and as a means for continuous improvement of court operations and programs; and

WHEREAS, it is important that State court leaders share outcome data in a public manner by publishing the results of their performance measurements so the public can make judgments about the effectiveness of state court systems; and

WHEREAS, although state court systems are working successfully in many different contexts to advance accountability and transparency, court performance measurement is one area in which state courts need to do better; and

WHEREAS, COSCA prepared a white paper, *Promoting a Culture of Transparency and Accountability: Court System Performance Measures*, which examined available performance measurement tools, best practices, and lessons learned.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that to create and sustain a court culture of accountability and transparency the Conference of State Court Administrators urges:

- Chief justices and state court administrators to assume a leadership role, regardless of their court system organizational structure, to promote and enact performance measurement systems;
- State courts to develop the automated capacity to collect, report, and analyze the data necessary to support performance management;
- State courts to, in practice, adopt policies requiring performance measurement;
- State courts to measure their courts' performance and publish those measures on their courts' websites, in annual reports, at budget hearings and other public meetings to improve understanding of the judicial branch;
- State courts to use their performance results to educate the legislative and executive branches of government;
- NCSC to serve as the clearinghouse for state performance measures and management solutions provided by the states via its website, including an implementation manual to assist state courts with performance measurements;
- State courts to share their information, methodologies, and results with one another and with NCSC in an effort to learn from these shared experiences and improve performance and management; and
- NCSC and NACM to continue to strengthen this theme of using performance measures and making data public in their educational programs for future court leaders.

*Adopted as proposed by the COSCA Policy and Liaison Committee at the 2008 Midyear Meeting on December 4, 2008.*