

**WHO TO CONTACT**

If you are interested in volunteering for this project, and/or would like more information about the court performance project, please contact Emily Garrett at the Administrative Office of the Courts, P.O. Box 2448, Raleigh, N.C. 27602, or via e-mail at [Court.Performance@nccourts.org](mailto:Court.Performance@nccourts.org) or by phone at (919) 715-0228.



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North Carolina  
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***Court Performance Standards  
Project***



**Volunteering for Justice**

Join in partnership  
with your local courts  
and be part of a  
coordinated statewide effort  
to give  
citizens a voice in  
North Carolina's court system

Prepared by  
The Administrative Office of the Courts  
Office of Research and Planning

## **TRIAL COURT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

***The North Carolina Judicial Branch of Government is committed to improving the quality and efficiency of justice in service to the public.***

The Judicial Branch is taking a positive step towards becoming a performance-based court system, promoting the most effective and efficient trial court operations for the public it serves.

In 2001, the North Carolina Judicial Branch adopted a performance standards system developed by the National Center for State Courts. This system is designed to help trial courts identify and set standards for their operations, measure their performance, and make improvements to better meet the needs and expectations of the public.

***“Perhaps most important, the Standards are designed to assess (court) performance with the needs and expectations of the public we serve as our guiding compass, as it should be.”***

***From Chief Justice I. Beverly Lake, Jr. in a letter to all court officials, October 4, 2001.***

For more information about North Carolina’s courts and the Standards System, visit the Judicial Branch of Government website at:

[www.nccourts.org/](http://www.nccourts.org/)



## ***Court Performance Standards Statewide Pilot Project***

To adapt the standards to serve the needs of North Carolina’s courts, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) is conducting a grant-funded pilot project to put the court performance standards into use.

The pilot involves a statewide initiative to assess the public’s view of the courtesy and responsiveness of court personnel.

### **Project Objectives**

- ◆ Obtain an overall picture of how the public views the courtesy and responsiveness of court personnel.
- ◆ Identify areas where court performance is strong and areas that need improvement.
- ◆ Establish approaches to improve court operations and public perceptions in those specific areas of need.

### **Project Activities**

The project will use two methods to obtain feedback from the people who use the court system:

- ◆ Confidential surveys printed in English and Spanish will be available in all courthouses statewide and on the Internet.
- ◆ Citizen volunteers will observe courtroom proceedings and record their reactions.

This pilot initiative will be implemented statewide in all county courthouses and is scheduled to begin in June and continue through July and the middle of August 2003.

## **Volunteer**

***Help your courts begin a process to improve court performance and public satisfaction.***

### ***Volunteer Participation***

The AOC is seeking volunteers to partner with their local courts to assist with the statewide pilot initiative.

Local volunteers are needed at each local courthouse statewide to:

- ◆ Help distribute surveys
- ◆ Observe courtroom proceedings

Volunteer court staff from each county will be available throughout the process to assist the volunteer participants.

By volunteering, you will:

- ◆ Help strengthen the connection between the court and the community.
- ◆ Provide a vehicle for citizens to have a voice in the court system.

Participating in partnership with the local courts will provide volunteer citizens an opportunity for:

- ◆ A better understanding of how the court system operates
- ◆ Individual interaction with local court staff
- ◆ Involvement and input in a process that improves court operations
- ◆ Developing and maintaining meaningful communication with the courts
- ◆ Continued involvement in on-going court performance projects
- ◆ Involvement in a process that brings people together to work towards a common end