

Court Performance Inventory

The Court Performance Inventory is intended to familiarize individuals with the Trial Court Performance Standards and Measurement System developed by the Commission on Trial Court Performance Standards, the National Center for State Courts, and the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The inventory is designed to collect individual perceptions (which may be pooled with the perceptions of others) about specific trial court performance. Results of the inventory graphed onto the Court Performance Profile (located on page 33) can be used to target further diagnostic efforts and management strategies.

DIRECTIONS: Read each of the following fifty statements. Based on your experiences with your court or another court of interest to you, determine whether you believe the statement is BROADLY TRUE or BROADLY FALSE about the way the court performs. If you believe the statement is BROADLY TRUE, place an "X" in the corresponding numbered box on the Court Performance Inventory Response Form found on page 33. For example, if you believe the first statement to be generally true about the court you are rating, place an "X" in the box with the "1" on the response form. Once you have completed the response form, add the number of boxes marked as BROADLY TRUE for each of the five columns. Each column refers to one of the performance areas. Use the five sums to complete the Court Performance Profile, which also is found on page 33.

1. An observer sitting in any courtroom's public seating area will have no difficulty hearing judges, attorneys, litigants, witnesses, and other participants in the proceedings.
2. The total elapsed time it takes the court to dispose of cases once they are filed complies with national standards.
3. The final juror pools used by the court are representative of the demographic characteristics of the jurisdiction's population.
4. The allocation of personnel resources among case types is defensible and based upon logic and reason.
5. The general public (a) perceives the trial court and the justice it delivers as accessible; (b) has trust and confidence that basic trial functions are conducted expeditiously and fairly and that the court's decisions have integrity; and (c) knows that the trial court is independent, accountable, and not unduly influenced by other government components.
6. An undercover law enforcement official, dressed in plain clothes, will not be able to breach either the court's security systems that protect the public or confidential court files and records.
7. An examination of court financial records will reveal that the various types of funds for which the court is responsible are disbursed in a timely manner.
8. An examination of relevant case file documents and court records will reveal that the court closely adheres to key legal requirements.
9. An analysis of the court as an equal opportunity employer would reveal that race and gender distribution for each job category is generally reflective of the available labor pool for each category.
10. Justice system representatives (a) perceive the trial court and the justice it delivers as accessible; (b) have trust and confidence that basic trial functions are conducted expeditiously and fairly and that court decisions have integrity; and (c) know that the trial court is independent, accountable, and not unduly influenced by other components of government.
11. Interpreter services provided by the court are performed by individuals with language proficiency, interpreting skill, and knowledge of professional conduct.
12. The court promptly implements changes in substantive and procedural laws that are a result of federal and state legislation and new federal regulations.
13. A statistical analysis conducted of data collected from closed files for bail, bond, and release on recognizance decisions will reveal that these decisions are not based on extralegal factors such as the defendant's race or gender, the judge assigned to the case, or the geographic location of the court.
14. The court does a good job in disseminating information to the public about its programs and operations.
15. Court employees (a) perceive the trial court and the justice it delivers as accessible; (b) have trust and confidence that basic trial functions are conducted expeditiously and fairly and that court decisions have integrity; and (c) know that the trial court is independent, accountable, and not unduly influenced by other components of government.
16. Observers of court proceedings are likely to find all court personnel courteous and responsive.
17. The court keeps up with its incoming caseload by disposing of as many cases as are filed each year.
18. Record examinations and statistical analyses are likely to reveal that sentencing decisions of the court are based mostly on legally relevant factors and not on extralegal factors such as the defendant's race or gender, the judge

- assigned to the case, or the geographic location of the court.
19. A group of knowledgeable persons both within and outside the court would conclude that the court has acted responsibly in responding to public policy issues of concern within the jurisdiction such as domestic violence, discrimination, substance abuse, or others that could have affected the fair and effective administration of justice by the court.
 20. Individuals who have had contact with the court such as litigants, jurors, witnesses, victims, or those conducting other business with the court consider the court's decisions and treatment of individuals as fair and equitable.
 21. The court takes measures to reduce costs and facilitates affordable access to the judicial system for financially disadvantaged persons.
 22. The court responds promptly to requests for information from the public.
 23. A broad examination of appeal outcomes reflects that the trial court adheres to substantive laws and procedural requirements.
 24. Selected knowledgeable individuals are likely to conclude that the trial court maintains its independence and institutional integrity, but that it still has good relations with other units of government.
 25. Regular users of the court (i.e., court employees, attorneys, probation officers, and jurors) are likely to say that they are able to conduct their business with the court with relative ease and convenience.
 26. A person relatively unfamiliar with the court will have no difficulty in locating and actually entering the courtroom in which a particular hearing is taking place.
 27. The court promptly implements changes in administrative procedures required by the state supreme court and the administrative office of the courts.
 28. The court does a good job of communicating clearly the terms and conditions of criminal sentences.
 29. The court's responses to requests for information from the media are accurate and timely.
 30. The results of a survey of regular court users, court employees, attorneys, probation officers, and jurors are likely to conclude that judges and other trial court personnel are courteous and responsive to the public and all others with whom they come into contact.
 31. A person who attempts to determine the specific time and location of a particular court event will have no difficulty getting this information from the court by telephone.
 32. Cases scheduled for trial are heard on the first scheduled trial date.
 33. The court is well positioned and organized to enforce or facilitate the enforcement of its orders and judgments.
 34. A group of knowledgeable individuals is likely to conclude that court personnel practices and decisions are fair.
 35. Citizens are likely to report that access to court services is generally not hindered because of costs or complexity of procedures.
 36. Persons with physical disabilities are able to conduct transactions in the court with relative ease.
 37. The various services available from the court (such as indigent defense services, interpreter services, and mental health evaluations) are provided promptly.
 38. A test of the timely retrieval of individual case files will reveal that the court's file control system is reliable and efficient.
 39. The court has adequate statistical reporting capacity to make useful assessments of the relationship between the court's workload and the distribution of court resources.
 40. Members of the bar who have appeared regularly in the court in the past year would assess the court's actions and decisions as fair and equitable.
 41. Court observers are likely to find that litigants are treated with a high degree of courtesy and individual respect by judges of the court.
 42. The number of pending cases exceeding national or state time standards for case processing is low.
 43. The court clearly states the terms and conditions of obligations imposed as a result of adjudication of a civil dispute.
 44. Court employees and media representatives are likely to be satisfied with policies and practices for responding to media inquiries.
 45. Court staff will rate highly the degree of independent control that the court exercises over its fiscal operations, personnel, and services related to case flow.
 46. Indigent persons who have never tried to obtain legal assistance are likely to obtain affordable legal assistance with relatively routine legal problems.
 47. The court complies with established schedules for routine court reports such as statistical reports required by the State administrative office of the courts and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.
 48. An examination of a sample of case file data will show that most files are complete and accurate.
 49. The court conducts periodic internal and external audits of its financial practices and responds to auditors' suggestions for improvements.
 50. Court employee responses to structured questions about fairness in personnel practices related to employee morale and competence are likely to reflect general satisfaction.

COURT PERFORMANCE INVENTORY RESPONSE FORM

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35
36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45
46	47	48	49	50
Col. Total	Col. Total	Col. Total	Col. Total	Col. Total

Access to Justice

Expedition and
Timeliness

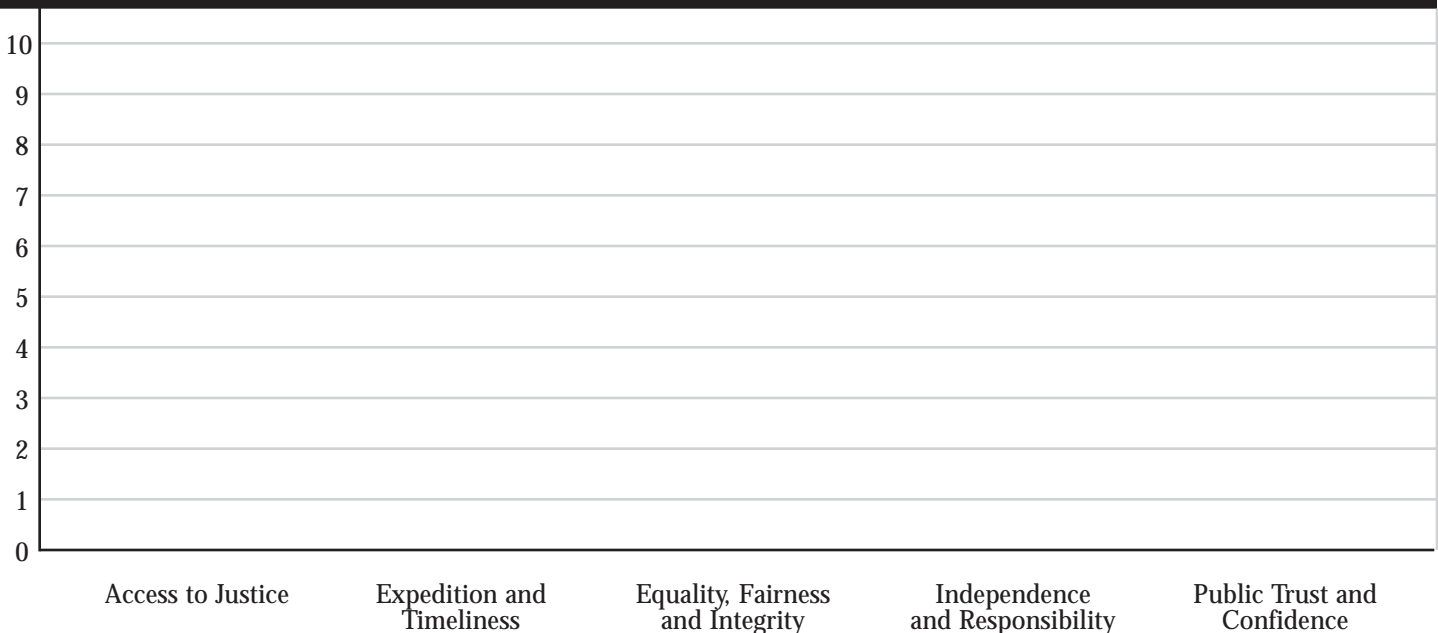
Equality, Fairness
and Integrity

Independence
and Responsibility

Public Trust and
Confidence

Directions: Add the number of X's in each column.

COURT PERFORMANCE PROFILE



Directions: For each performance area, place a dot next to the total number of X's recorded on the response form. For example, if the total number of X's in the Access to Justice column on the response form is three, place a dot next to the three in the first column of the graph. When the total score for each of the five areas has been recorded on the graph, connect the five dots, starting with the dot in the first column and ending with the dot in the fifth column. The lines will depict which areas are rated highest and which are rated lowest. The results can be used to compare perceptions of court performance across court officials and staff and to initiate discussion regarding priorities for targeting improvement efforts.

Source: BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE, TRIAL COURT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND MEASUREMENT SYSTEM, App. D (1997).