IDAHO COURTS
and
IDAHO COMMUNITIES

Strategies for Public Outreach

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Letter from the Chief Justice

THE STATE OF IDAHO
SUPREME COURT

LINDA COPPLE TROUT
CHIEF JUSTICE

SUPREME COURT BUILDING
P.O. BOX 83720
BOISE, IDAHO 83720-0101

Dear Friends:

Over the last several years the Idaho Supreme Court, with the able assistance of judges and court personnel from across Idaho, has undertaken a variety of efforts to improve our communication with all of our constituents.

We have upgraded and expanded our newsletters, constantly improved our website, developed a Media Guide for Idaho reporters and editors, institutionalized regional dialogue on court-media-bar issues and generally taken on the effort to tell our story better, more professionally and more regularly.

This publication – Idaho Courts and Idaho Communities – is the next step in the development of more effective statewide public outreach.

A number of you have asked for suggestions and assistance to further public outreach in your region of the state. This handbook is designed with that objective in mind. It has been specifically constructed so that it can be periodically updated and expanded.

Many states have developed similar handbooks and public outreach tools for judges and court personnel and we have adapted many of their best practices to Idaho circumstances.

We know that maintaining and enhancing public trust and confidence in our institutions must be a major focus for all of us in the judicial branch. Effective, regular and compelling public outreach is one of the cornerstones on which improved public trust and confidence is built.

Please utilize these suggestions as a guide to your own pubic outreach efforts. Let us know what works for you. This handbook is truly “a work in progress” that will benefit from your experiences and ideas.

Sincerely,

Linda Copple Trout
Chief Justice

Communication Goals for the Idaho Judiciary

The Importance of Public Trust and Confidence

There can be no doubt that public trust and confidence in the judiciary is a major issue that demands and deserves continuing attention from judges, court personnel and the entire legal profession.

Most recent surveys that have focused on public perceptions about the courts indicate limited knowledge and a general lack of understanding about the work of the courts and the role of the judges. It is important that the court takes an active role in improving that public perception because without public support, it is not possible to carry out our role: to preserve the rule of law.

To gain public support, we must help the people we serve understand our commitment to them. With that understanding will come public confidence in the court, as well as the respect and support needed to effectively carry out our jobs.

I. The Idaho Response

In Idaho the judicial branch has moved on several fronts to improve the level of understanding and enhance the public's trust and confidence in the judicial branch.

A. Committee on Access

The Court has established a very active Committee on Access to address a broad range of issues relating to public access to the courts and the legal process. The Committee's major work has been the development of Court Assistance Offices (CAO's) in each of Idaho's seven judicial districts. The CAO's offer an extensive array of services to the public. A comprehensive website addressing the services of the Court Assistance Offices has also been developed at www2.state.id.us/cao.

B. Court-Media Committee

A Court-Media Committee has developed a well received "Media Guide" to the Idaho Courts and judges in all of the state's judicial districts have established "bench-media" dialogue aimed, at least in part, to improve communication and the quality of public information. The guides are

available from the court administrator's office, or the guide can be accessed online at the court's website, www2.state.id.us/judicial .

C. Videotapes

The Court has developed a series of videotape presentations that focus on helping non-legal personnel better understand the courts. A listing of the videos can be found at the Court Assistance Offices Website.

- ⚖ CTI-10 EL Sistema Judicial de Idaho: Derecho de Familia (flawspan.rtf)
  Family Law pamphlet - Español

- ⚖ CTI-10 EL Sistema Judicial de Idaho: Derecho de Familia (familys.ram)
  Family Law video - Español

- ⚖ CTI-10 The Idaho State Court System: Family Law (flaweng.rtf)
  Family Law pamphlet - English

- ⚖ CTI-10 The Idaho State Court System: Family Law (family.ram)
  Family Law video - English

- ⚖ CTI-11 An Introduction to the Idaho State Court System (introeng.rtf)
  Idaho Court System pamphlet - English

- ⚖ CTI-11 An Introduction to the Idaho State Court System (intro.ram)
  English video

- ⚖ CTI-11 Una Introducción Al Sistema Judicial de Idaho (intros.ram)
  Spanish video

- ⚖ CTI-11 Una Introducción Al Sistema Judicial de Idaho (introspa.rtf)
  Idaho Court System pamphlet - Español

- ⚖ CTI-13 El Sistema Judicial de Idaho: Violencia Domestica (domesspa.rtf)
  Accompanying Spanish pamphlet

- ⚖ CTI-13 El Sistema Judicial de Idaho: Violencia Domestica (domess.ram)
  Spanish video

- ⚖ CTI-13 The Idaho Court System: Domestic Violence (domeseng.rtf)
  Accompanying English pamphlet

- ⚖ CTI-13 The Idaho Court System: Domestic Violence (domes.ram)
  English video

- ⚖ SC-1 Small Claims in Idaho (smalclm.ram)
  Small Claims video - English

- ⚖ SC-1 Tribunal de reclamos menores en Idaho (smalclms.ram)
  Small Claims video - Español

- ⚖ SC-1a Information for Defendants in Small Claims (scdfn.rtf)
  Accompanying English pamphlet

- ⚖ SC-1b Collecting on your Small Claims Judgment (judgment.pdf)
  Accompanying English pamphlet

- ⚖ SC-1c Information for Plaintiffs in Small Claims (scpltf.rtf)
  Accompanying English pamphlet

D. Outreach to Idahoans

With this handbook – "Idaho Courts and Idaho Communities" – the public outreach and information effort takes another important step forward.

This handbook, which will be updated and expanded periodically, is designed to help judges and court personnel with specific, practical advice and suggestions designed to improve your ability to communicate the critical work of the Idaho courts to the citizens of Idaho.

The handbook includes sections on:

- ⚖ **Giving a Presentation**
  In all areas of public service, it is often necessary to reach out to the community through a presentation. This handbook offers helpful suggestions to utilize when planning your presentations. There are key points to remember before, during, and after your presentation, including a list of do's and don'ts, ways to inform others of your upcoming presentation, and important elements to include in any presentation. The goal of this section is to improve the communication skills of all presenters.

⚖ **Working with Youth and In the Schools**

This section will assist courts in reaching out to youth. A variety of programs, implemented in Idaho and other states across the country, are highlighted. These programs can serve as models. With some adaptation to make the programs suitable for your community, these programs can be the next step in making youth aware of the role of the courts in their lives.

⚖ **Juror Education and Appreciation**

The jury is a necessary and valuable group in any court case. This section highlights ways to show appreciation to jurors for all that they do. Suggestions from a survey completed by past jurors, as well as other ways to value the time and energy provided by jurors, are included.

⚖ **Courthouse Tours**

Members of the community can greatly benefit by learning the offerings of the courthouse. In this section, court leaders can learn important pieces of information to include in tours. Some ideas on creative ways to execute and publicize courthouse tour opportunities are also included.

Good luck! And please give us your reaction and recommendation regarding how this information could be made more useful.

Giving a Presentation

Mastering the art of persuasion

Good preparation is the key to a successful presentation. It is common knowledge that most people's greatest fear is speaking in front of an audience. But with proper preparation and practice, you can present an informative and effective presentation – and have fun doing it!

Good preparation is the key to a successful presentation.

Preparation consists of two parts: preparing the content of your remarks and preparing your actual delivery.

I. Preparing Your Content

Before you begin to write your presentation, ask yourself three key questions:

1. Who is your audience?
2. What is your goal?
3. What is your 'message'?

A. Know your audience

Knowing your audience is a key to a successful presentation. When you receive an invitation to speak, your first task is to gather the information you need to draw a mental picture of your audience – their age, interests and knowledge level.

This is important information, because the way you craft and present your message will differ, depending on your audience. For example, you would not present a basic talk on government to a group of professional lobbyists, nor would you give an in-depth analysis of quantum physics to the local garden club.

Even though your overall message will remain the same, your presentation should be tailored to fit each particular audience.

B. Define your goal

Next, decide what you want to accomplish with your talk.

In many cases, your goal will be to persuade: If you are in sales, you want to persuade your audience to buy your product or service. If you are in politics, you want to persuade people

to vote for you. If you are explaining a controversial issue, you want to persuade the audience members to support your point of view.

While the substance of your message is important, the key to persuasion is emotion. To persuade people to your point of view, you must tap into their emotions, earn their trust and get them to identify with you and your cause.

> ***To persuade people to your point of view, you must tap into their emotions, earn their trust and get them to identify with you and your cause.***

C. Determine your message

You accomplish your goal through your message. Your message is not the speech itself, but rather the one or two key thoughts you want your listeners to take with them when they leave.

For instance, while your speech may be on modern politics, your message is "…now, more than ever, it's important for people like you to be involved." Or, while you may tell your audience that your company has won several quality achievement awards, your message is "…buy our products, we're the best."

II. Writing Your Presentation

Now that you know your audience, have defined your goal and determined what your message will be, it is time to write your talk. In many cases, you'll have 20 to 30 minutes to speak, so plan to write a 15- minute talk, leaving an additional 10 minutes for questions.

The Beginning

The first step is to write your "headline." Your headline is a beginning sentence which embodies the essence of your message. It helps you start your speech, capture the attention of your audience and signal what your message will be. In addition, the task of determining your headline forces you to figure out precisely what your message is.

For example, if you're trying to assure a community group that a planned petroleum facility is safe, your headline might be, "I'm here to tell you that the Smith-Jones facility will be environmentally safe – 100 percent safe." You then proceed to show them why that's the case. If your goal is to motivate people to join your grassroots movement, your headline might be, "You may not realize it, but you are the most powerful people in this country." Your speech will then establish why that's true.

The Middle

Once you have captured the attention of your audience, it's time to deliver your message. There are a variety of tools you can use to do that effectively.

1. conversational writing
2. examples, images and anecdotes
3. visuals
4. third party validations
5. handouts

> ***You will be most effective if your speech seems more like a conversation than a lecture.***

1. Conversational writing. You will be most effective if your speech seems more like a conversation than a lecture. Writing in a conversational tone has many advantages.

- It is a more natural way of speaking and thus easier to deliver;
- It is friendlier, and will help build a rapport with your audience;
- It is more personal and makes it easier for you to engage the emotions of your listeners.

Perhaps the most important value of conversational writing is that it enables you to "be yourself." You are your best asset. When you are at ease – simply having a conversation rather than delivering a lecture – you come across as relaxed, genuine and credible.

2. Examples, images and anecdotes. These are excellent tools to support your message. Listeners remember examples, images and stories more vividly than anything else.

For example, who can forget the image painted by Winston Churchill's 1946 "Iron Curtain" speech in Fulton, Missouri when he warned of the advance of communism by telling his audience that "…an iron curtain has descended across the Continent."

Anecdotes and stories not only clarify your message, they create a personal and informal moment, drawing you closer to your audience and enabling you to touch their emotions.

> ***It always helps to have independent validation of what you are saying.***

3. Visuals. The expression, "one picture is worth a thousand words" may be an old cliché, but it's true. A bright, colorful graph, photo or animation crystallizes and supports your message. Today's Powerpoint technology enables any speaker to enhance a presentation with colorful, animated visuals.

But there are few things more frustrating for an audience than visuals that are impossible to decipher. Some of the common problems:

- **Too small.** The size of your text should be large enough to read across a large room. Minimum font size should be 48-point type.

- ⚖ **Too wordy.** Good visuals are not pages from a book, but rather short, punchy phrases which support your point.
- ⚖ **Too complex.** Good graphics are simple, featuring only the most basic aspects of a point or process. Use several separate visuals to make your point, if necessary.

4. Third party validations. It always helps to have independent validation of what you are saying. For instance, you can justifiably tout the value and benefits of your company, but it helps your credibility – and the effectiveness of your message – if you have third party validations which support your point. Examples of such validations are awards, testimonials or independent research results.

5. Handouts. In many cases, it is a good idea to prepare and distribute information packets prior to your remarks (they are often placed on the seats before the audience arrives). This packet should contain (1) a short biography; (2) a copy of your remarks (especially when press coverage is likely); (3) copies of your graphs and visuals; and (4) in-depth background or supporting material.

Handout packets are particularly helpful when your topic is controversial or complex. They allow your audience to comfortably follow what you're saying, knowing they can go to the handout later for quotes, supporting data and background information. Handout packets also allow you to provide your audience with information that is too complex or detailed to include in your remarks.

The End

Always give a verbal clue that you are about to conclude your remarks, such as "In conclusion…" or "My final point…" or "In closing…"

These phrases spark a new level of attention in your audience, which you can use to reinforce your "message." You can accomplish this by presenting a brief summary of your major points and repeating your original "headline."

Always give a verbal clue that you are about to conclude your remarks.

Example:

Your headline was, "I'm here to tell you that the Smith- Jones facility will be environmentally safe – 100 percent safe."

In your remarks, you used tools such as conversational writing, examples, stories, visuals and third-party validations to prove your point.

Your conclusion should include a series of brief "bullet point" phrases summarizing your message, ending with the phrase, "So now you can see that the Smith-Jones facility will be environmentally safe – 100% safe. Thank you."

In short, you will have fulfilled the old journalism maxim of how to construct a good news story:

1. Tell them what you're going to tell them.
2. Tell them.
3. Tell them what you told them.

> ***How you respond to audience questions is often as important as the presentation itself, particularly if the topic is controversial.***

Question & Answer (Q&A)
We encourage you to have audience members ask you questions either during, or after your presentation. Questions add to the conversational atmosphere of the presentation. How you respond to audience questions is often as important as the presentation itself, particularly if the topic is controversial. Be prepared. Compile a list of the most likely or most difficult questions on the topic and write out the appropriate answers. Practice your answers so you will be well prepared for the actual presentation .

III. Preparing Your Delivery

Now that you have written your speech, it is time to rehearse your presentation. Repeated rehearsals will help you learn your speech, hone your presentation skills and build your confidence, making your speech a more relaxed and enjoyable experience – for you and your audience!

Use note cards.
Rather than read from a prepared text, summarize your remarks on a series of 3"x5" note cards. Note cards are easier to handle during your actual presentation and, because you're not reading, it is easier for you to speak in an informal, conversational tone.

On each card, write only a few brief phrases in large type to remind you of your key points and number each card so you can keep them in the proper sequence.

As you practice your speech, rest your note cards on the podium, if possible, and slide each card to the side when you are finished with it.

Practice aloud.
Using your note cards, practicing giving your remarks out loud. Phrases that look good in writing may cause you to stumble when you deliver them out loud. If possible, practice in front of a few friends to get the feel of a live audience.

Practice your gestures.
One of the keys to delivering a successful presentation is to be as comfortable as possible. Remember, this is a conversation. If you normally use your hands when you talk to someone, plan to do so during your presentation. In fact, if you are going to be speaking in a large room, you might practice enlarging your gestures a bit.

Move around and make eye contact.
Podiums are handy anchors, but like anchors, they keep you in one place. In addition, a podium is a barrier between you and your audience.

Practice moving away from the podium. Walk toward different sections of your audience on occasion and make eye contact with friendly faces. This will help you "touch" your audience and reinforce the friendly, relaxed nature of your presentation. (Note: In order to be able to walk around during your speech, you will need to use a wireless microphone. Be sure to ask your host if such a microphone is available.)

Practice moving away from the podium. Walk toward different sections of your audience on occasion and make eye contact with friendly faces.

Vary your timing and tone of voice.
If you were to tape record your daily conversations with friends or co-workers, you would discover that you naturally use a variety of pacing, inflection and voice levels. You should do the same in your presentation. Pauses and changes in your voice level add drama and alert your audience to significant message points.

Practice with your visuals and props.

If you plan to use slides, overheads or a Powerpoint presentation, incorporate that in your rehearsals. Repeated practice will make you more comfortable and confident – and will alert you to any hidden logistics problems.

Record your rehearsals.
If possible, practice in front of a video camera. It will help you hone your performance and give you an idea of how your presentation will look to your audience. If you don't have a video camera, use a tape recorder to check your tone of voice, inflection and timing.

As the day approaches...
As the day of your presentation nears, there are several details to attend to.

1. **Bio and introduction.**
   Provide your host with a short biography and a brief introduction they can use to introduce you.

2. **Don't forget to publicize your presentation well in advance.**
   Local media will be interested in your comments, and even if they don't cover your remarks they will know that you were involved in efforts to reach out to the community. (You'll find suggested approaches in the "tools" section.)

3. **Check it out.**
   If possible, visit the actual site of your presentation ahead of time to check out the room, get comfortable with your surroundings and confirm the location of any electronic equipment or outlets you may need.

4. **Prepare backups.**
   Keeping in mind Murphy's Law that "anything that can go wrong will go wrong," prepare a backup set of notes and visuals. If you plan to make a Powerpoint presentation, prepare a backup set of overheads or slides in case your Powerpoint equipment fails.

> ***Keeping in mind Murphy's Law that "anything that can go wrong will go wrong," prepare a backup set of notes and visuals.***

5. **Create a checklist.**
   Ahead of time, write down everything you will need to take with you on the day of your speech: note cards, visuals, laptop, overheads, handout packets and an extra bio and introduction. Check these items off as you load them into your car or suitcase.

6. **Decide what you are going to wear.**
   Your attire should be comfortable, presentable and suitable for the occasion. For example, a man would not wear a suit and tie or a woman wear high heels to kick off Parents' Day festivities at a Boy Scout camp in the middle of the woods. Don't wear anything distracting, such as a loud tie or a frilly hat with a bird in it.

The day of your presentation....

Even after you have arrived at the site, there are still things you can do to prepare.

For example, if your speech is preceded by a meal or reception, use that time to get to know some of the people in your audience. This will not only create a more personal relationship, it will give you material to use in your "warm up."

Last-minute check

Before you go on stage, go to the restroom to check your appearance including: nair, tie, makeup, etc.

Last-minute prep
The most important element of any speech is energy! You must energize yourself before you hit the stage to have the gestures, animation and voice inflection you need to be effective. If you're not energized and excited about your topic, your audience won't be either. Come onto the stage pumped up and ready to go.

The most important element of any speech is energy!

Ascending the stage
When you are introduced and come to the podium, thank your host and make eye contact with your audience. Don't look down and fiddle with your papers. Instead, take a few seconds to smile, look across the crowd and perhaps nod at the people you chatted with beforehand.

The warm up
The next step is to begin your warm up. A warm up is a short story or a few phrases which serve to establish a relationship and a comfort level with your audience. A good warm up uses references that link you to the audience or remind them that you and they have a common bond.

Example:
"You know, during lunch, Fred Atkins, your Accounts Manager, and I were talking about the good times we had at last year's meeting. That was the first time we had ever worked together, and to this day, I remember how impressed I was at the sense of family and teamwork in this organization."

Bridge to your remarks
A bridge is a phrase used to transition from your warm up to your speech.

In the above example, a bridge phrase might be: "That spirit of teamwork is what's going to make the difference between success and failure in the year ahead."

State your headline, then move into the text of your speech.

Ending your speech
When you have wrapped up your speech and summarized your points, thank the audience and, if appropriate, open it up for questions.

Question & Answer (Q&A)
If you have properly prepared to answer questions, you will find that you have accurately anticipated the majority of questions. If however, you don't know the answer to a question, say it. Let the questioner know you will get back to them with the requested information.

If the topic of your presentation is controversial or emotional, questions can be hostile. You must keep your cool. If you lose your temper, your presentation will not be remembered only your negative demeanor. Keep positive, keep friendly, and you will be successful even under the most difficult circumstances.

If the topic of your presentation is controversial or emotional, questions can be hostile. You must keep your cool.

Helpful Hints

Do:

- Bracket important points of your presentation so if you run long and have to shorten your remarks, these points will still be covered.
- Place your watch on the podium so it is easy to keep track of time.

- Keep your eye contact moving to audience members throughout the room.

Don't:

- Play with change in your pockets.
- Fidget with items such as laser pointers or ballpoint pens.
- Rustle your papers during your presentation.
- Turn your back to the audience while discussing visuals displayed behind you.

Top Ten List For A Successful Presentation

1. Know your audience.

2. Define your goal and develop your message.

3. Start your presentation with an attention grabbing “headline.”

4. Substantiate your points with validation, anecdotes, and visuals.

5. Prepare a thorough Question & Answer. ***Q & A***

6. Rehearse your presentation out loud in front of an audience or on-camera.

7. Just before your presentation, take a last peek in front of a mirror. Check your hair, tie, makeup, etc.

8. Energize yourself – use gestures, be animated, display emotion for your topic.

9. Warm up your audience before you bridge to your speech.

10. Your closing is what the audience will remember. End with your headline.

Sample Letter:

Date
Name
Address
City, State Zip

Dear (name)

I am writing to let you know that I have developed a program on the topic of (topic name). I am interested in sharing this presentation with (name of organization). The presentation focuses on the role of courts and the issues and needs of the community in court-related matters. As a community service, I can speak at your (meeting, event or school). I, and other members of the court, have created this presentation for two reasons: One, to increase public understanding and knowledge of the judicial system, and two, to provide a forum to discuss common concerns with members of the community.

If you are interested in conducting a forum to open the dialogue between the community and the courts, please call me to schedule a time where we can get together. I am happy to work with you in developing an appropriate presentation with content that will interest your organization.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

(name)

Press release:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
For more information,
Contact: (name, phone)

(Name) to Address
(topic)
(Date, Place)

(City, Date)- (Name) of (County) will discuss (topic) at the (type of function) of the (name of organization) (time, date) at (place).

(Two to three lines about points to be addressed and any background about the issue in the community, e.g. statistics scope of problem, concerns expressed by organization and/or community).

(Name) is available as a community service to organizations and schools. (Name) volunteers (his/her) time to talk with groups about the role of the courts in the community and to discuss the needs and problems affecting the community in court-related matters.

For more information about (topic) and (name) contact (name) at (phone).

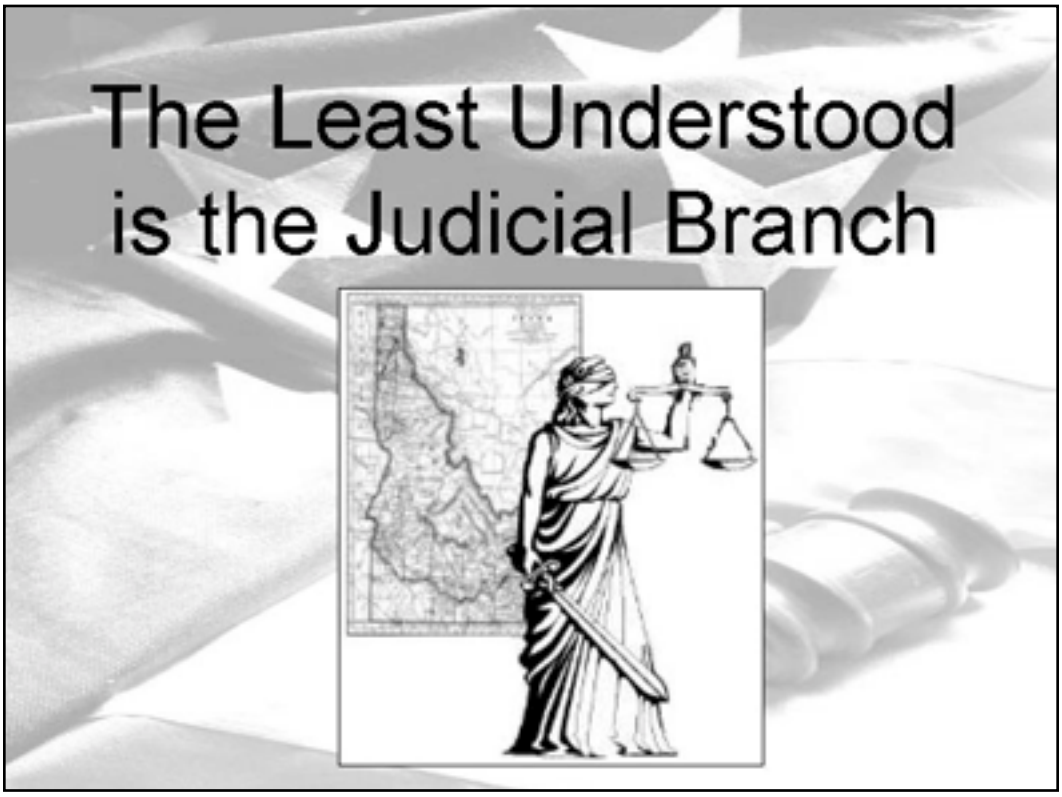
Judges Presentation:

⚖ The Courts in Idaho

⚖ Remember Your American Government Class

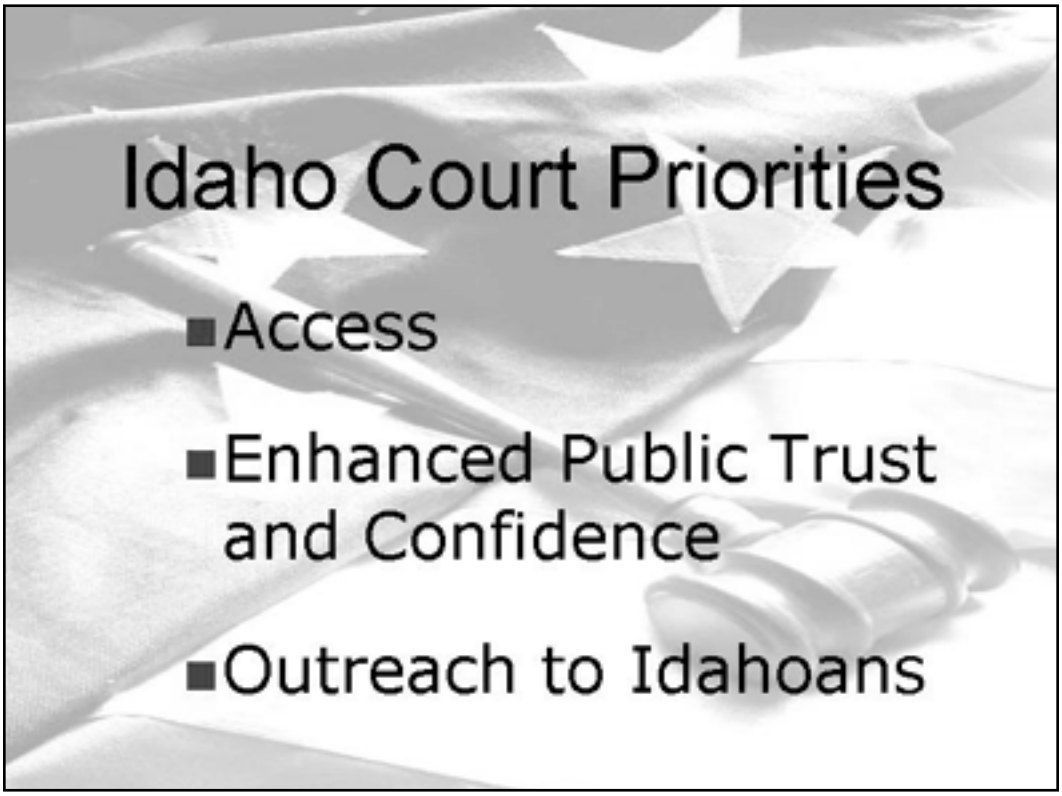
⚖ The Three Branches – Executive, Legislative, Judicial

⚖ Least Understood is the Judicial Branch



⚖ The Idaho Courts – Magistrate Division, District Courts, Court of Appeals, Supreme Court

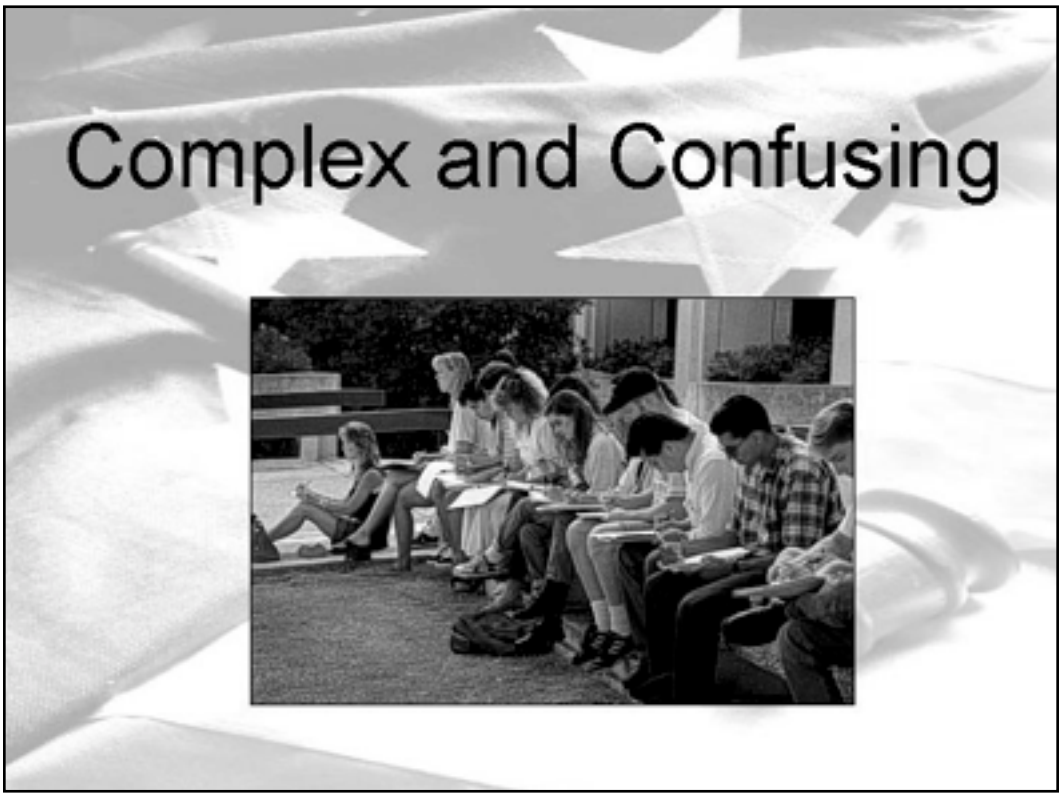
⚖ Idaho Court Priorities – Access, Enhanced Public Trust and Confidence, Outreach to Idahoans



⚖ The Work of Judges

⚖ Local Initiatives – Drug Courts, Youth Courts, Attendance Courts

⚖ Complex and Confusing



⚖ For More Information

Working with Youth and in the Schools

Young People Still Learn By Example

I. Introduction

Public perception and understanding of the courts, in Idaho and nationally, is often the product of what people see on television, hear on the radio or read in the newspaper. First hand information is limited.

While most young people are exposed in the classroom to the basics of our legal system and to the Constitutional basis of our judiciary there is little depth of understanding and no widespread awareness of the role judges and courts play in creating an environment to resolve dispute and render judgments when crimes are committed.

Outreach to school aged young people – teenagers, elementary students and at-risk youth – can help establish a life-long understanding of our system of laws and justice.

II. Getting Started

School aged youngsters can be a tough audience! It may be useful to keep in mind some Do's and Don'ts.

(These suggestions are adapted from Law in the Classroom: Activities and Resources, revised. By Mary Jane Turner and Lynn Parisi, Social Science Education Consortium, Inc.)

A. Do's and Don'ts

Do:

- Consider the ages and experiences of students or participants.
- Prepare yourself adequately.
- Start off with an "attention grabber."
- Maintain eye contact.
- Actively involve students or audience. Ask questions and give them time to answer.
- Seek assistance for demonstrations.
- Be yourself; come across as a real human being.

Don't:

- ⚖ Lecture to students or read a prepared speech.
- ⚖ Use jargon or unfamiliar words.
- ⚖ Come across as being condescending or omniscient.
- ⚖ Let yourself get angry at heckling or passive unresponsiveness.
- ⚖ React defensively to criticism of the legal system.

(Source: Law in the Classroom: Activities & Resources, revised. By Mary Jane Turner and Lynn Parisi, Social Science Education Consortium, Inc., 3300 Mitchell Lane, Suite 240, Boulder, Colorado 80301-2272.)

B. Some Thoughts on Organization

1. Most teachers and school administrators are eager to add real-life experience from real persons to their classroom experience. Outreach to teachers, administrators, members of school boards and groups serving young people can help develop ideas about how to meet the needs of young people.

2. Make an effort to understand the potential resources available in the judiciary, the court staff and with the local state bar association. A combination of all these, and other resources, may be very effective in developing a strong and continuing educational component for use in the classroom.

3. Consider whether there are partners in your community – business groups, service clubs, and professional organizations –- that might partner with the judicial branch in bringing programs and presentations to local schools.

III. Things That Work

The most effective programs that teach youngsters about the courts and our judicial system are those efforts that allow observation and participation. Some examples from Idaho and elsewhere:

A. Taking Court to School

Taking the court to the schools gives students a front row seat to observe the justice system in action. It also saves time and the costs of transporting students to the courthouse. Students personally witness how a court operates and how disputes are settled in a courtroom setting.

In cooperation with the community's high schools, the Superior Court of California, County of Butte, conducts small claims court at the schools where the judge, court clerk, bailiff, and litigants meet at the high school on the court day to conduct trials. Classes rotate during the school day so that students may observe cases in progress. In order to hold court at school sites it was necessary for the Butte County Board of Supervisors to designate the schools as court sites. (Contact: William Scott, 530-895-6502.)

In southern California, the Superior Court of California, County of Orange, convenes actual court sessions of small claims and traffic trials at local high school campuses. Students have the opportunity to ask questions of the judge, court staff, and representatives from police agencies. Law enforcement agencies and local school districts are also involved in this program. (Contact: Lyle Robertson, 714-472-6985.)

(Source: Dialogue: Courts Reaching Out To Their Communities, Judicial Council of California.)

B. Mock Trials

Role playing allows students to experience in a positive way what it is like to take part in the justice system. Mock trials give students the opportunity to get inside the system and experience how it works and how the different players relate to each other.

The Los Angeles Municipal Court uses the mock trial method with students from the Aviva Center, a residential placement facility for adolescent girls. Ten students are selected to participate in a 7-week program in which they develop their own tactics in handling a legal case. One or two bench officers work with the students for the 7-week program. The scenario involves either a misdemeanor violation such as shoplifting or a civil trial involving a landlord-tenant dispute. The bench officer reviews topics with the students, including questions of fact and law, burden of proof, evidence, and examination of witnesses as preparation for their mock trial. Practicing lawyers from the private bar, Public Defender's Office, and City Attorney's Office are invited to help students develop their roles.

The mock trial is videotaped and students review the proceedings with the bench officer. By the end of the program, students have established a beneficial relationship with the judge or commissioner and have learned valuable lessons about the justice system. An additional benefit is that some students who are ordinarily withdrawn, often due to family difficulties, become more confident and outgoing through the experience of the mock trial. (Contact: Marcia Skolnik, 213-974-6358.)

C. Youth Court

Youth Courts are a diversion program for first-time offenders who plead guilty to status offenses such as tobacco charges, alcohol consumption or other non-violent crimes. Teen peers serve as attorneys, bailiffs, clerks, jurors and program coordinators generally with an adult judge presiding. A jury of peers sentences the offender to community service, tobacco and alcohol awareness programs, self-esteem courses, essay writing and/or Youth Court jury duty. Once the offender completes the sentence, the offense is dismissed from their record. Participation in Youth Courts is voluntary with parent involvement encouraged. Youth Courts create a learning environment for both offenders and volunteers to increase understanding of the court system and respect for the justice system.

Youth Courts are an important tool in the restorative justice-based "balanced approach" which focuses on competency development, accountability and community safety for these first-time, non-violent offenders. The peer concept takes advantage of the extremely strong influence of peers in the decisions and behaviors of youth. Youth respond better to peers than adult authority. Youth Courts require the offender to face his or her peers and accept a sentence that encourages accountability and positive development. Rather than a fine or detention, youth are required to attend classes, complete community service and write essays.

The Idaho Legislature appropriated a grant from the Millennium Fund for Youth Courts. A Youth Court Planning Committee developed a strategy to build capacity of existing Youth Courts and provide resources to expand the Youth Court program in the state. Refer to the samples and tools section for resources to help establish a Youth Court in your county. Further resources and links are available on the Supreme Court website: www2.state.id.us/judicial/.

IV. Getting the Word Out

Most schools will be delighted to work with judges or court personnel to create opportunities for educational interaction with students. At the same time they will appreciate the attention and recognition that comes from having a judge in a classroom or a mock court at a school.

Local news media outlets will also be interested in coverage of many such opportunities. News releases focusing on a visit by a judge or a special program in a school will have real news value. Suggest a feature article on a particular education-justice subject. Or, invite (with school approval) a television or radio station to tape a mock trial or a class visit.

By publicizing such events the public outreach effort is further extended to those who read, see or hear about the courts working with youth and in the schools.

Letter to teachers and school administrators:

Date

Name
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear (Name);

I am writing to inform you of the various programs the (name) Court sponsors to give students a positive perspective and experience of the judicial system. We believe that when we give students opportunities to observe and participate in the justice system, they will see how the justice system works and how it can affect their lives.

The programs below are designed to help students learn about their rights and responsibilities under the law, understand the legal consequences of their actions, and open doors to career opportunities.

(Insert descriptions of the programs that your court offers, or use the descriptions provided, as they apply to your county)

Mock Trials

Role playing allows students to learn what it's like to take part in the justice system. Mock trials give students the opportunity to get inside the system and experience how it works and how the different players relate to each other. In Idaho, the Bar Association hosts a competition to encourage students to become involved in mock trials.

Youth Courts

Being judged by one's peers for a real offense is a powerful way for teaching students both the consequences of their actions and the way the justice system works. Experience in a youth court can have a life-changing impact on the student.

Incentives to Learn

Rewarding your students for a job well done encourages them to want to learn even more. In our program for fourth- and fifth-grade students, we make the justice system come alive. Volunteer attorneys will go to your school and present an introduction to the criminal justice system. Students then visit the courthouse to view court sessions and meet judges and court staff. After these activities, the students may enter an essay contest and write about their experiences. First-, second-, and third-place winners from each grade level receive a special award.

Courthouse Tours

Courthouse tours are another fun and educational way to help youth better understand the courts. Tours offer students the opportunity to see (interesting area of the courthouse) and to learn about the different people that work at the courthouse. Courthouse tours can be coordinated through contacting (way to arrange courthouse tour).

We welcome the opportunity to conduct these programs at your school and to assist you in developing additional programs that meet the specific needs of your students. Please contact us to make arrangements. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Letter to parents:

Dear Parent of a Youth Court Participant,

First, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for attending this evening's Youth Court session with your child. I appreciate the encouragement it shows in supporting your child resolve this matter. Tonight is the first regular Youth Court session for the school year so I ask for your patience in this process. Please let me know if you have any questions, comments or suggestions so I can make the necessary adjustments in our program.

The success of your child's experience in Youth Court is based largely on his/her active participation throughout the whole process. Youth Court sentences are based on individualized sanctions, community service projects, and/or counseling classes. From the moment the juvenile signs the agreement to participate as a defendant, all of the contacts, phone calls, appointments, and arrangements for the community service work, classes and meetings are to be made by the youth and not his/her parent. This concept is extremely important because it supports the Youth Court's philosophy of accepting personal responsibility for one's actions. Ideally, these young people come to understand that an individual's choice today effect their tomorrow.

The Youth Court program is an educational program as well as a court proceeding. A great deal of time is committed to this program by community members who volunteer their services mentoring local students in the various roles of Youth Court. Please be aware that there may be some unavoidable delays, but we are striving to make Youth Court a positive educational experience for all the participants involved.

I will provide you with some information regarding the various classes and community service options, including the costs. We have tried to keep the charges for these services as low as possible, with the intention that the student will pay for the service, not the parents. The presiding Judge would like the students to have the requirements of the sentence completed by the deadline. Because many teens are very busy and tend to procrastinate, it is the advice of this court that all sentencing orders be started within three (3) days of their court date. Time limits are written on the Sentence Order and can be extended only under extenuating circumstances. We hope tonight is a positive experience for both you and your child. I am available tonight after court to assist with any questions you may have or please feel free to contact me at (208) XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

Name
Youth Court Administrator

Instructions for Youth Court Defendants:

- ⚖ You and your parent(s)/guardian(s) are to appear for Youth Court at 4:30 PM the night of your appearance. You will be at Youth Court until approximately 8:30 PM, so all of you may want to bring something to do during the time you will be waiting for your case to be heard and the verdict rendered.

- ⚖ Bring the Order to Appear in Youth Court with you.

- ⚖ Check in with the Youth Court Administrator or Student Coordinator.

- ⚖ Dress appropriately: No shorts, short skirts, halter tops, gum, hats or baggy clothing. Shirts must be tucked in. Pants must be at waist and belt must be in belt loops.

- ⚖ Go with your assigned student attorney to review your case.

- ⚖ When it is time for your case to be heard, a student bailiff will lead you and your parent/guardian into the courtroom. Be seated at the table with your attorney. Your parent/guardian should sit in the front row.

- ⚖ You will be called forward by the Judge and sworn in.

- ⚖ You and your parent/guardian are asked to stay in the courtroom while your jury deliberates and another cases are heard. Between two and four cases are heard during each Youth Court session.

- ⚖ You and your parent/guardian are asked to exit the courtroom while your jury deliberates and another cases are heard. Between two and four cases are heard during each Youth Court session.

- ⚖ When it is time for your verdict to be read, you will again be escorted into the courtroom. The Judge will request that you stand at the time of the verdict reading. Your jury foreman will then read the verdict. The Judge will then approve or modify the verdict.

- ⚖ The Judge will ask if you understand and/or have any questions about your sentence. If you have any concerns with the verdict, you should address them at this time with the Judge.

- ⚖ The Judge will instruct you to meet with the Youth Court Administrator, after all of the verdicts are heard, for the completion of your paperwork.

- ⚖ You are required to complete your verdict as instructed by the Court. You must send all paperwork to the Youth Court Administrator in a timely fashion. You may mail or fax the papers to the Youth Court office. If you do so, photocopy all papers first and retain them for your records, as they may be lost in the mail.

Case Model:

The Order of the Hearing
Traditional Case Presentation Model

- ⚖ The student bailiff brings the defendant and jury into the courtroom, then advises the judge that court is ready to begin.

- ⚖ First the Prosecuting attorney, and then the Defense attorney, deliver opening statements to the jury. These statements outline the charge(s) and points that each side will attempt to prove during the hearing.

- ⚖ The Defense attorney conducts a direct examination, asking the defendant about the case and his character through questions that do not lead the defendant.

- ⚖ The Prosecution attorney cross-examines the defendant to reveal any incriminating information concerning the case and to verify the defendant's story.

- ⚖ The Judge will then ask the Jurors if they have any questions of the defendant. The Jurors may question from both defense and prosecution perspective.

- ⚖ The Defense attorney has the option of "re-directing" the defendant with more questions related to the cross-examination. If the Defense chooses to do so, the Prosecution may request to "re-cross" the defendant.

- ⚖ The Judge will then ask the Jurors if they have any questions of the defendant. The Jurors may question from both defense and prosecution perspective.

- ⚖ Once again the Defense and the Prosecution will then have the option of questioning the defendant again.

- ⚖ The Prosecution and Defense attorneys then make closing statements to the jury in which they conclude the case, restate any important facts or evidence, and request a particular sentence.

- ⚖ The judge instructs the jury and directs the bailiff to take the jury to the deliberation room, where, in an orderly fashion, they choose a foreman and reach a unanimous verdict. When deliberation is complete, the jury returns to the courtroom to deliver the sentence.

- ⚖ The bailiff seats the jury in the courtroom once again. The Judge asks the jury if they have reached a unanimous verdict. The Judge will request that the defendant and his/her counsel stand at the time of the verdict reading. The Judge will request the jury foreman to stand and read the verdict. The foreman hands the verdict to the bailiff, who delivers it to the Judge. The Judge will then approve or modify the verdict.

- ⚖ The Judge will ask if the defendant and parent/guardian understands and/or has any questions about the sentence.

- ⚖ The Judge will then dismiss the jury and attorneys and recess the court.

Master Jury Model:

A master jury is used in cases with fewer circumstances and details. The procedure is the same as above, with the following exceptions:

- ⚖ No Prosecution attorney.
- ⚖ Opening statement by Defense attorney.
- ⚖ Defendant is instructed to relate the facts of the case, and therefore must be able to articulate clearly.
- ⚖ Jurors may question from both defense and prosecution perspective.
- ⚖ Closing by Defense attorney.

What is Peer Circle?

Adolescence is a time of deep concerns and the key decisions that can affect the rest of your life. Struggles for independence, searching for security, pressure to be like others and the need to be loved and approved of are all part of this period of growth. All of us feel pressured to perform and succeed, and we all experience stress while trying to meet expectations. Peer Circle is an outlet for youth to express confusing feelings, explore self-doubt, and realize that all of us, at one time or another, share the same feelings. “Group” discussion

allows us to discover new options when we are placed in situations that cause us trouble. Another benefit of Peer Circle is that others may be helped when you share your story or concerns and that you can help others by listening to their concerns. By talking together, we all move toward a better understanding of how we need to handle the stress we encounter. What you will get from these sessions depends on how much you contribute. Be sure to speak up. In the Peer Circle, your opinion counts.

Your Role in Peer Circle:

- ⚖ Be willing to talk about yourself openly - just sitting there is not enough.
- ⚖ Be open to learning new ways to communicate and express yourself.
- ⚖ Take risks working in a group. Everyone must have issues regarding trust; this is meant to be a safe place for testing new behaviors and alternative ways of statement.
- ⚖ Respect and be sensitive to others - you may disagree, but do not be hurtful. Learn to be sympathetic by putting yourself in someone else's shoes.
- ⚖ Offer feedback to other group members.
- ⚖ Don't just attend Peer Circle; participate.

Peer Circle sessions are required by all offenders referred to Youth Court. For each jury duty you complete, you will also be required to attend one Peer Circle session. They are held between 4:45 and 5:45. Volunteers are also welcome to participate. The sessions are always on the same dates that we have a Youth Court session, so you may fulfill both jury duty service and Peer Circle on the same evening.

All testimony here is private and confidential. You are held to Oath of Confidentiality you signed as a Youth Court volunteer or participant.

Confidentiality Statement:

YOUR DISTRICT YOUTH COURT, INC.
VOLUNTEER CONFIDENTIALITY OATH

As evidence by my signature below, I solemnly swear that I will not disclose, either in words or in writing, any information about actual cases which comes to my knowledge in the preparation for, or in the presentation of Youth Court proceedings which may be held in my presence, so help me God.

Further, I understand that if I break confidentiality by telling anyone else the names of Youth Court defendants or any other specific details of the case which may identify that juvenile, I will no longer be able to serve as a Youth Court participant.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Defendant Information:

YOUR DISTRICT YOUTH COURT, INC.
DEFENDANT INFORMATION

Please complete this at sign-in, and return it to the Administrator. This basic information will be furnished to both defense and prosecuting attorneys. You will have the opportunity to meet with your defense attorney to discuss further details, and prepare your case.

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

1. Offense: ___Alcohol ___Tobacco ___Marijuana ___Other (If other, please explain)

_____

2. Please provide the facts about the incident. (Items to include would be; the environment in which the incident occurred; were others involved; how the police were notified; etc.)

3. Is this a first offense of any kind? ___ Yes ___ No (If no, please explain) _____
_____

4. Why did you choose Youth Court?

5. Did your parents provide consequences for the offense? ____ No ____ Yes (If yes, describe them) _____

Jury Report Form and Sentencing:

YOUR DISTRICT YOUTH COURT, INC.
Jury Report Form and Sentencing Order

NAME: _____ CASE: #_____
OFFENSE: _____ DATE: _____

WE, THE JURY, duly impaneled in the above-entitled case, UNANIMOUSLY find that the sentence appropriate for the above named defendant is as follows:

MANDATORY:
1. Youth Court Fee – Tobacco $75.00 – Alcohol, Marijuana &/or Paraphernalia $125.00
2. Serve on a Youth Court Jury
*3. Suspension of Driver's License through _____
*Ordered by the Judge on Alcohol, Marijuana, & Paraphernalia charges.

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS:
1. Community Service: _____ Number of Hours: _____
2. Education/Counseling Classes: (specify which class) _____
_____
3. *Essay: _____ # of words: _____
4. *Presentation: _____ *Topic: _____
5. *Poster(s): _____
6. *Research Paper: _____ # of words: _____ # of sources: _____
7. Letter of Apology _____ To whom: _____
8. Pick up Cigarette Butts: _____ Gallons _____
9. Pick up Empty Alcohol Containers: _____ Number of Bags _____
10. Other:_____

Completion Date: _____ (Recommended-90 Days)

_____ _____
Date Signature of Foreperson

☐ Approved ☐ Approved as Modified_____

_____ _____
Date Presiding Judge

Participant Registration:

YOUR DISTRICT YOUTH COURT, INC.
PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION

Program Fees: Tobacco Violations $75.00
Alcohol, Marijuana and/or Paraphernalia Violations $125.00
Payment is due the evening of Youth Court. Check, money order, or cash is accepted (Please bring correct change).

Please complete this form and the defendant information form and return them to the Clerk of the Court.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ ZIP_____

School: _____ Grade: _____ Age: _____ DOB:_____

Participating Parent's Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____
(If different from child's)

⚖ Offense(s): (check all that apply) ___Alcohol ___Tobacco ___Marijuana ___Other (explain) _____

⚖ Participant: I understand that I am committing myself to success in the ____ District Youth Court program, and that when I complete my sentence to the best of my ability, this charge(s) will be removed from my record. In the event I choose not to complete this sentence, my case will be referred to the Magistrate Court.

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

⚖ Parent: I understand that my child is committing to success in the ____ District Youth Court Program, and will support and assist him/her in the goal of completing the peer jury's sentence. I also understand I may be required to attend education and/or counseling sessions as a part of my child's sentence.

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Date _____

Receipt # _____

☐ Check # _____ ☐ Cash

Amount $ _____

Staff Initials _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Sentence Date Completed

☐ Community Service: _____ hrs _____

☐ Education/Counseling Classes: (specify which class) _____

☐ *Essay _____

☐ *Presentation _____

☐ *Poster _____

☐ *Research Paper - # of sources _____

*Topic: _____

☐ Letter of Apology _____

☐ Pick up Trash/Cig butts _____

☐ License Suspension _____

☐ Other: _____

Youth Court Jury Date: _____

SENTENCE DEADLINE: _____

Sentencing Options:

YOUR DISTRICT YOUTH COURT, INC.
SENTENCING OPTIONS INFORMATION SHEET

Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol Classes &/or Counseling Sessions –

Substance Abuse Education – This is an eight-week course combining the Idaho National Guard's Substance Abuse Education classes and the CROSSROADS group.

Members of the Idaho National Guard's Drug Demand Reduction Team conduct the first three sessions of this course. During the first two classes, students and parents will be given current, pertinent, and useful information regarding alcohol, marijuana, methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin and club drugs. Fatal vision goggles, visual aids, statistics and local trend information will be utilized to reinforce learning.

The third class is based on the 40 Assets/Protective and Risk factors work of the Search Institute of Minneapolis, MN. Designed to be interactive, hands-on, and fun, students and parents together will gain skills in communication, negotiation, teamwork and trust through facilitated activities.

Crossroads – may be assigned individually or in addition to another class or group. It is also the required second part of the Substance Abuse Education classes.

This is a coeducational group designed to help adolescents examine their past, evaluate their present, and anticipate their future. The focus for these teens will be to become more proactive in shaping their future through examination of their self-identity, attitudes, individual purpose, their belief systems, opportunities, and life choices. The group is facilitated by a clinical social worker with extensive experience working with adolescents. Meetings will be held one night a week for four consecutive weeks.

Black Lung – A one-hour class covering the facts, effects, and consequences of tobacco use. The class is good for occasional and habitual users of both smoke and smokeless tobacco. A "scared straight" format, very graphic.

Teen Tobacco Cessation – A special group focused on helping teens break free from their nicotine addiction. Eight sessions, two hours in length, with long term follow-up and support. Sessions address nicotine addiction and its consequences, quitting techniques, withdrawal and coping strategies, stress management, and relapse prevention.

Written Sentences -

Letter of Apology - The jury may recommend that the defendant write a letter(s) of apology to the victim(s). This writing requires the minor to admit to the unlawful action and communicate to the person(s) hurt by his/her actions. Letters of apology may be written to security officers, manager/business owners, teachers/administration, family members, friends, peers, etc.

Essays - Essays are an excellent way to have the defendant reflect upon his/her actions and create acceptable ways to solve problems, to behave lawfully and responsibly. The topic should correlate to the offense or circumstances leading to the defendant's behavior.

Some topic examples are:

1. Why I should follow the law, even if I don't agree with it.
2. People I can call when faced with a crisis.
3. Positive ways to spend my time.
4. Lessons learned from _____ (offense) _____.
5. The effects of _____ (offense) _____ on the community/victims.
6. How I would feel if I were my victim.
7. How my behavior effects my family.
8. How Drugs/Alcohol can ruin my life.
9. Why ___ (offense) ____ is unacceptable.
10. Ways to solve my problems without fighting/violence.
11. Why I should not _____ (offense).
12. The importance of cooperating with law enforcement.
13. The negatives and positives of Peer Pressure.
14. The importance of school to my future.
15. Responsible means _____.

Research Paper

If a research paper is assigned, please include on the jury report form, the topic and the number of sources to be used.

Sentencing Requirements:

YOUR DISTRICT YOUTH COURT, INC.
SENTENCING REQUIREMENTS INFORMATION SHEET

Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol Classes &/or Counseling Sessions - The classes/sessions meet for one to eight weeks and last one to three hours each, depending on the class/session. You must attend every class/session! There are no make-ups. A parent/guardian may be required to attend also. Please contact (NAME), Youth Court Administrator, at XXX-XXXX for your course registration. It is suggested you call as soon as possible in order to finish the class within the time the Judge has given you to complete your sentence.

Community Service - You are responsible for arranging your own community service time. The cost for this program is $25 for 1 to 19 community service hours and $50 for 20 hours or more. Verification of your completed community service hours will be sent to the Youth Court office.

Pick up Cigarette Butts or Garbage - You are to contact the Youth Court office upon completion of this task. The cigarette butts are to be collected in a plastic gallon milk container with a lid. Recyclable garbage (glass and/or aluminum) must be collected in 30-gallon plastic sacks (DOUBLE BAGGED).

Essay or Article and/or Presentation - Your report or article must be typewritten, double spaced and using proper grammar. If required by the jury you must approach a teacher about presenting the essay to a class. The teacher must notify the Youth Court office that the essay/article was presented. A copy of the essay/article must be brought to or mailed to the Youth Court Office for verification of work completed.

Other - _____
_____
_____

* IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR SENTENCING OBLIGATIONS, PLEASE CONTACT Name, YOUTH COURT ADMINISTRATOR, AT XXX-XXXX OR Address here *

DATE OF COMPLETION: _____

JURY DUTY DATE: _____

LICENSE SUSPENSION UNTIL: _____

Volunteer Verification:

YOUR DISTRICT YOUTH COURT, INC.

Volunteer Service Verification Form
Your County

This memo verifies that _____

volunteered in Youth Court as a student _____, for

_____ hours, on the _____ day of _____, 20__.

Thank you for allowing your student to participate in Youth Court. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (208) XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

_____
Name
Title

Youth Court Sign In:

Your District Youth Court

SIGN IN SHEET
(Insert Date Here)

As evidence by my signature below, I solemnly swear that I will not disclose, either in words or in writing, any information about actual cases which comes to my knowledge in the preparation for, or in the presentation of Youth Court proceedings which may be held in my presence, so help me God.

With my signature below, I affirm that I understand and will honor the **OATH OF CONFIDENTIALITY from this day forward.**

STUDENT ATTORNEYS	**SCHOOL**
PROSECUTION	
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
DEFENSE	
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
CLERK OF THE COURT	
_____	_____
BAILIFFS	
_____	_____
_____	_____
STUDENT COORDINATORS	
_____	_____
_____	_____

JURORS

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

13. _____

14. _____

15. _____

16. _____

17. _____

18. _____

Youth Court Volunteer Application:

NAME_____ SEX _____ AGE_____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

ADDRESS_____ CITY _____ ZIP_____

TELEPHONE NUMBER _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S NAME _____

SCHOOL YOU ATTEND _____ GRADE _____

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES _____

_____

_____

ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL (CHURCH, COMMUNITY, ETC.)

_____

_____

HOW DID YOU BECOME INTERESTED IN YOUTH COURT?

_____

_____

_____

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU HAVE THAT WOULD MAKE YOU A GOOD YOUTH COURT VOLUNTEER?

_____

_____

PLEASE LIST TWO REFERENCES (NON-RELATIVE, ONE REFERENCE MUST BE AN ADULT FROM THE SCHOOL YOU ATTEND)

NAME _____ RELATIONSHIP_____

PHONE _____

NAME _____ RELATIONSHIP_____

PHONE _____

_____
VOLUNTEER'S SIGNATURE

I have read the information about Youth Court and am allowing my daughter/son to participate as a Youth Court Volunteer.
I understand that we, as a parent(s)/guardian(s) are invited to attend the Youth Court Training Session with our daughter/son.
I further understand that all Youth Court Volunteers are required to keep cases CONFIDENTIAL.

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S SIGNATURE _____
DATE _____

When application is complete, return to: YOUR DISTRICT YOUTH COURT, INC.
Attn: Contact Name
Contact Address
City, State, Zip
FAX: (208) XXX-XXXX

Youth Court Implementation Plan:

"Best Practices" for Youth Courts in Idaho

Adapted from the National Youth Court Guidelines

Youth Court is a juvenile diversion, intervention and prevention program that is used as an alternative to the juvenile court system for certain crimes. The juveniles who plead guilty to their crime are represented, prosecuted and sentenced by a group of their peers. The program positively impacts the larger community through the involvement and education of adult and youth volunteers.

The following components should be considered and addressed in the planning and operation of a Youth Court Program in Idaho:

I. Program Planning and Community Mobilization

- ⚖ Establish an advisory committee from the community to assist with programmatic and policy decisions.
- ⚖ Foster community support and community involvement in the program by working with groups such as juvenile justice representatives, government officials, educators and social service organizations. (Examples include private and public educators, alternative schools and home school organizations, County Commissioners, State Legislature, Chamber of Commerce, City Officials, YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, and media organizations.)
- ⚖ Integrate Youth Court with other like-programs in the community to prevent competition for resources and participants. (Programs to consider include diversion court, traffic court, school's discipline program, police diversion programs.)
- ⚖ Make an effort to partner with other youth service providers to access all available resources in the community. (District Health Departments, Hospitals and Colleges)
- ⚖ Consider cultural differences and seek diversity when involving the community and planning operations.
- ⚖ Define a purpose that encompasses both equitable and effective sentencing of defendants while educating and creating a positive environment for volunteers.
- ⚖ Establish goals and objectives to further this purpose as a foundation of operation and evaluation of the program.

II. Program Staffing and Funding

- ⚖ Draft a staffing plan to address short-term and long-term personnel issues for the operation of the program today and into the future.
- ⚖ Develop written job descriptions and conduct routine performance review.

- ⚖ Implement a strategy to be self-supporting and to plan for the on-going funding of the Youth Court program.

III. Legal Issues

- ⚖ Familiarize staff, volunteers, participants and board members with legal issues such as due process, ethical and confidentiality issues.
- ⚖ Develop oral consent and voluntary participation forms and liability waivers.
- ⚖ Consider liability issues related to the operation of Youth Courts.
- ⚖ Consult with a legal advisor on issues related to volunteers in the workplace.

IV. Target Population and Referral Process

- ⚖ Define the class of offenders who are eligible for diversion to the Youth Court Program. The program is most effective for first time offenders who have been charged with misdemeanor or status offenses. (traffic, juvenile, petty theft and truancy)
- ⚖ Determine and describe the screening process for diverting the juveniles to the Youth Court, whether it be by the Juvenile Court, Prosecuting Attorney, Law Enforcement, School Resource Officer, School Administration, a representative of the Department of Juvenile Justice, or a combination of referral sources.
- ⚖ Maintain the ability to use case-by-case discretion and establish a process to refer inappropriate cases back to juvenile court.

V. Sentencing Options

- ⚖ Establish a method of informing teens of what they are facing.
- ⚖ Define levels of offenses with corresponding ranges and types of punishment permitted to be assigned by the jury to the offender.
- ⚖ Incorporate the concept of restorative justice in sentencing of offenders, choosing sentencing options that are positive and teach accountability.
- ⚖ Design a method of follow-up for ensuring that offenders complete their court sentences.
- ⚖ Incorporate provisions for parental involvement in the Youth Court judicial process.
- ⚖ Incorporate a philosophy of victim restitution in sentencing options.
- ⚖ Establish a procedure to modify sentencing, if necessary, that is understandable to the jury and supportive of their process.

VI. Volunteers

- ⚖ Establish eligibility requirements for students and adults who serve as volunteers in the court system. (Volunteers can come from local BAR, high schools, colleges and previous Youth Court defendants)
- ⚖ Assign student coordinators to oversee the process.
- ⚖ Define duties and training requirements for each of these roles; provide job descriptions.
- ⚖ Write a code of conduct for volunteer behavior.

- ⚖ Consider diversity issues when recruiting and utilizing volunteers.
- ⚖ Establish method of tracking volunteer hours for program use.

VII. Youth Court Model and Case Management

- ⚖ Establish court procedures and practices and define a Youth Court Model. (ie Adult Judge, Youth Judge, Youth Tribunal, or Peer Jury Model)
- ⚖ Develop a system to collect, record and maintain defendants case information.
- ⚖ Establish time standard for processing cases within 2 to 4 weeks.

VIII. Program Evaluation

- ⚖ Implement the Youth Court Evaluation System developed by the Youth Court Planning Committee to measure success and outcomes and assess the effectiveness of current procedures utilizing the following tools:
- ⚖ Number in Program and Demographic Information
- ⚖ Recidivism Rate (Reoffend within one year excluding traffic violations)
- ⚖ Survey/Exit Interview for parents, offenders and volunteers.
- ⚖ Collaboration with Community Programs
- ⚖ Rate of Completion of Sentence
- ⚖ Implement a software system to track and maintain data.

IX. Resources

- ⚖ Acquaint yourself with local and national resources. Links available on the Supreme Court website at www2.state.id.us/judicial.

Youth Court Presentation:

What are Youth Courts and who do they serve?

- ⚖ Diversion program for first-time offenders who plead guilty to status offenses such as tobacco charges, alcohol consumption or other non-violent crimes
- ⚖ Promotes education and positive development for offenders and participants
- ⚖ Sentencing court staffed and operated by youth volunteers
- ⚖ Teen peers serve as attorneys, bailiffs, clerks, jurors and program coordinator
- ⚖ Most Youth Courts in Idaho utilize an adult judge
- ⚖ Voluntary participation with parent involvement
- ⚖ Youth court requires offender to face peers and accept a sentence that encourages accountability and positive development
- ⚖ Key tool in the restorative justice balanced approach (competency development, accountability and community safety) for these first-time, non-violent offenders.
- ⚖ Allows court system to focus on more serious offenders.

How do Youth Courts operate?

- ⚖ First-time offender pleads guilty to offense;
- ⚖ Agrees to participate in Youth Court;
- ⚖ Diverted from regular court system to youth court;
- ⚖ Appears before the court staffed with youth as attorneys, bailiff, clerk and jurors
- ⚖ Adult judge conducts the hearing utilizing standard court procedure;
- ⚖ Jury of peers sentences offender through community service, tobacco and alcohol awareness programs, self-esteem courses, essay writing and/ or jury duty;
- ⚖ Sentences are educational and encourage accountability and responsibility for actions;
- ⚖ Once the offender completes the sentence, the offense is dismissed from their record.

How are Youth Courts operating in Idaho?

District	County(s)	Established	Youth Served
First	Bonner, Kootenai	1994	80
Second	New	New	New
Third	Canyon, Owyhee, Payette, Washington	1997	85
Fourth	Ada	1990	270
Fifth	Blaine, Camas, Cassia, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Minidoka, Twin Falls	1994	300
Sixth	Bannock, Caribou (new), Oneida (new)	1991	150
Seventh	Bonneville, Fremont	1994/1991	75

- Budgets range from $5,000 to $25,000

- Size of courts vary number of adult volunteers and ability to fund paid staff positions.

How were the Millennium Income Funds of $170,000 distributed?

Distributed to Youth Courts as follows:

First District - Kootenai / Bonner County	$13,350
Second District - To be determined (new)	$ 2,500
Third District - Districtwide	$20,500
Fourth District - Ada County	$21,950
Fifth District – Districtwide	$19,500
Sixth District - Bannock County	$13,700
Sixth District - Oneida County (new)	$ 2,750
Sixth District - Caribou County (new)	$ 2,750
Seventh District - Bonneville County	$13,000
Distributed directly to Youth Courts	**$110,000**

- Funds used to build capacity of court to allow increased caseload in some counties or more effective handling of caseload in others.

- Funds allow increase in paid staff hours to work directly with youth, administer the Youth Courts and leverage volunteer time.

- Funds utilized to increase the sentencing options available to offenders.

Utilized for Project Management - BSU **$10,000**

- ⚖ Convene Youth Court Planning Committee to develop statewide strategy.
- ⚖ Publish "Best Practices" for Idaho Youth Courts to guide development of new Youth Courts and support the operations of existing Youth Courts.
- ⚖ Compile a statewide resource manual consisting of state Youth Court manuals, forms and national resource listings.
- ⚖ Develop and implement a statewide evaluation strategy for Youth Courts in Idaho.
- ⚖ Website development with links to national resources.

Buhl Substance Abuse Program **$50,000**

Are Youth Courts effective in meeting their goals?

Generally have two goals:

(1) Provide a court experience that instills responsibility and accountability for youth offenders.
(2) Provide a learning environment for both offenders and volunteers to increase understanding of the justice system.

- ⚖ The peer concept takes advantage of the **extremely strong influence of peers** in the decisions and behaviors of youth: Youth respond better to peers than adult authority.
- ⚖ An effective teen court can move offenders from arrest to sanctions in a **more timely** manner than the regular juvenile court system.
- ⚖ Sentencing encourages **accountability**. Rather than a fine or detention, youth are required to attend classes, complete community service and write essays.

Cost effective:

- ⚖ Youth Courts are cost effective. Heavy reliance on volunteers allows low costs per offender ranging from $65 to $95 in Idaho.

- 1999 Operational Costs in Idaho range from as low as $5,000 to $25,000 in larger jurisdictions.

- Diversion of first time offenders reduces number of cases in the regular juvenile court system creating further cost savings.

How are Youth Courts evaluated?

- **Use of the Youth Courts and sentence completion rates of offenders.** Currently Youth Courts in Idaho are in high demand with court sessions at capacity. Sentence completion rates are well over 90%.

- **Some national studies show recidivism rates for Youth Court participants** are 5% to 15% lower than comparison group of offenders in regular juvenile court system. Youth Court recidivism ranges from as low as 6% to 25%, depending on the study. (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Programs ~ Juvenile Justice Bulletin October 2000) Note: Article also states that study results vary widely on this measure. The Urban Institute continues to try to tie it down through current research.

- **Perceptions of Justice and Educational Benefit** are the most important contribution of Youth Courts. Over 2,000 volunteers operate Youth Courts in Idaho.

- One study showed over 90% of teens referred to the court believe the experience increased their understanding of the legal system, improved their behavior and made them more responsible. (Colonie, NY)

Idaho's Evaluation Strategy

- Track number and type of offenders.

- Track sentence completion rate.

- Calculate recidivism rates. (Offense other than traffic within one year)

- Survey offenders and volunteers for increased education and positive perceptions of the justice system.

What is the future of Youth Courts in Idaho?

- ⚖ Create a stable funding base for existing Youth Courts.
- ⚖ Encourage development of new Youth Courts using “Best Practices.”
- ⚖ Implement evaluation strategy and develop data to assess the effectiveness of Youth Courts in Idaho.
- ⚖ Continue to provide resources and support to Idaho's Youth Courts as part of a continuum of juvenile diversion and prevention programs.

Juror Education and Appreciation

Trial by Jury is the Foundation of our Judicial System

I. Introduction

Idaho has recently placed increased emphasis on the issues that confront jurors when they enter the courthouse to serve and how judges and court personnel can better structure their service to be both productive and rewarding.

Efforts aimed at juror education reinforce the importance of jury duty and the essential role jurors play in the administration of justice.

This section of the handbook centers on practical steps to implement juror education efforts and provide appropriate recognition for jury service.

II. Idaho Jury Committee Recommendations

By way of introduction, the chairman of the Supreme Court's Jury Committee has prepared a summary of the group's recommendations. For purposes of this handbook, we concentrate most directly on quality of life for jurors.

JURY COMMITTEE SUMMARY REPORT
By Justice Jesse R. Walters, Chairman

In April 2001, the Idaho Supreme Court approved a report submitted by a special committee created for the purpose of reviewing the jury system in Idaho. The committee was established by Chief Justice Linda Copple Trout in early 1999 and conducted its study over a two-year period. The committee was composed of district judges and magistrates, a trial court administrator, clerks of the district court, jury commissioners, former jurors, a deputy attorney general and former prosecuting attorney, representatives of the criminal defense bar, civil law practitioners, and members of the supreme court staff.

The efforts of the committee mirrored a current movement across the country led by the American Bar Association and the American Judicature Society to bring about an infusion of improvements to the jury systems in the various states. Several national studies had shown that many systems could benefit from an assessment of existing practices and consideration of new processes that may prove instrumental if adopted and applied with respect to the use of juries in both civil and criminal trials. Consequently, the committee was given the responsibility to recommend changes, including proposed amendments to statutes and

procedural rules, for improvement of the jury system within Idaho. This would include a recommendation of new ideas regarding any needed jury reforms, which ultimately will be provided to the public and to the legislature.

The report from the committee covers three general areas of concern: (1) out-of-court jury selection; (2) in-court jury selection and trial procedures; and (3) quality of life for jurors. In each of these areas, the committee considered a number of suggestions for improvement and proposed statutory and rule changes needed to implement the recommendations. Implicit in the report are the desirability of standardized practices throughout the entire state, and the value of increasing the focus on the importance of jurors in attaining success in the judicial system. The following is a summary of the information and conclusions reached in the three divisions of the report.

(1) Out-of-court jury selection practices

The Committee arrived at eighteen recommendations relating to the improvement of the out-of-court jury selection process. These included a recommendation that each county will undertake to assure that it has the statutorily mandated and funded jury commission required by I.C. § 2-205; that a statewide training program be established for jury commission members; that certain changes be made to statutory and rule provisions governing the manner by which potential jurors are chosen and the master jury wheel is maintained, including refilling the wheel more frequently than every two years and enlarging the time period during which a former juror shall not be recalled for service; that standards be developed for determining postponements, excuses, and disqualification of jurors, exemption of military personnel and providing criteria for determining residency. Finally, the report addressed preservation of the confidentiality of information disclosed in jury questionnaires.

(2) In-court jury selection and trial procedures

In this portion of the report, the committee arrived at twenty-two recommendations. Many recommendations reflected existing practices used in some but not all venues, and without resorting to suggested changes beyond the need for standardization. These include a form of jury questionnaire to be used uniformly throughout the State; the preservation of peremptory challenges and the retention of lawyer-conducted voir dire but with emphasis on time, relevance, and privacy limitations important to the interests of jurors; the permitting of opening statements to the entire jury panel; the giving of pre-evidence instructions after the jury is selected; the use of anonymous juries; non-designation of alternate jurors until submission of the case for deliberation; juror note taking; juror questioning of witnesses; management of trial exhibits; and providing to the jury individual copies of the instructions. The committee recommended that the Supreme Court, through its technology committee, continue to develop technological software for improved presentation of information to jurors and prospective jurors. Finally, the committee prepared and submitted a proposed general orientation handbook for jurors, a guide for jury deliberations, and a proposed

instruction relating to the submission of questions by jurors. Many of these items, including the two publications, have already been put into practice by several courts and clerk's offices.

(3) Quality of life for jurors

This aspect of the committee's report contains six recommendations. They are directed at improving the likelihood of prospective jurors to willingly undertake jury service. The committee perceived that younger generations are less likely to appreciate interruptions in their daily routine in the interests of the public, primarily because of a lack of understanding of the importance of jury service. Accordingly, the committee reported that education directed toward young persons is needed to encourage respect for juror service. This could be provided through distribution of pamphlets and written information explaining the judicial system and focusing on role of the jury, together with public service announcements and jury orientation videos that stress the importance of the jury process and civic duty and pride in fulfilling this responsibility. The committee suggested that there be an attempt to detect and address juror stress, particularly with jurors who may suffer emotional distress because of serving on high profile cases where public attention follows the jurors' activities. The committee also discussed the financial impact on individuals selected for juror service, including day care expenses, the effect of transportation costs and parking fees, and the loss of income because of low juror compensation. The committee considered several solutions, which ranged from providing day care assistance, improved juror compensation, and a deferral program where jurors are able to select a more convenient time to serve. The committee noted that most of these solutions required public expenditures, which in turn would require a united effort on the part of the state, counties, courts and the legislature to devise ways to mitigate the financial impact of juror service.

Implementation of the recommendations of the committee has already begun. During the 2001 legislative session, several housekeeping bills were enacted updating and modernizing statutes relating to the composition of juries in Idaho. Additional proposals that depended upon the Supreme Court's approval of the committee's report will be submitted to the next legislature to carry out recommendations in the report. In May, following approval of the report by the Court, the Chief Justice signed a number of orders either amending existing court rules or creating new rules that adopt suggestions submitted by the Jury Committee. The overall success of this endeavor will be greatly enhanced by the effort of the practicing trial bar and the trial courts to cooperatively carry out the goals set forth in the recommendations of the committee.

III. Getting Started

- ⚖ Survey jurors for their opinions about the various aspects of their service, including waiting time, information, scheduling, and accommodations.

- ⚖ Identify ways to make jurors feel more connected to and valued by the process.

- ⚖ Provide informational materials that will enhance jurors' experience.

- ⚖ Prepare an annual report that evaluates the effectiveness of these efforts and makes recommendations for improvement.

IV. Things that Work

Making the best use of jurors' time is one way of saying that their time is valuable. Judges meeting directly with jurors waiting to be impaneled is essential to making jurors feel part of the process right from the beginning. This session gives jurors information to help them understand and perform their duties. In addition to judges speaking to jurors about the importance of their jury duty, the juror summons mailing and the jurors' time spent waiting in the assembly room are excellent forums for other educational opportunities. When mailing juror summonses or notices, the courts could expand juror understanding of the courts and their important role by including a brief educational brochure in the envelope. In jury assembly rooms, videotapes, posters, and written education materials could be provided to educate jurors more fully – and in an entertaining way – about the role and operation of the justice system and volunteer/collaboration opportunities with the courts. The more completely jurors are educated about their role and the role of the courts, and the more productive jurors experience their time to be in waiting to be called to sit on a jury, the more jurors will become "ambassadors" to the community at large.

The Idaho Supreme Court Jury Committee has offered several specific recommendations to address Quality of Life for Jurors:

1. Education on Jury Service in the Public School System

Provide an educational process in the public school system directed at young persons to stress the importance of the jury process and civic duty and pride in fulfilling this responsibility.

2. Publications of Pamphlets Emphasizing the Importance of Jury Service

Request that the Supreme Court develop pamphlets, public service announcements, and jury orientation videos for presentation to the schools and public service groups explaining importance of the jury process.

3. Develop Public Information Clearinghouse on the Jury Process

Request the Supreme Court develop an educational clearinghouse consisting of public information sources on all facets of the jury process.

4. Juror Appreciation Programs

Encourage counties to support a jury appreciation program and issuance of certificates of commendation to highlight the importance of jury service.

5. Training for Judges, Jury Commissioners, and Clerks Regarding Juror Stress

Request the Supreme Court establish educational training for judges, jury commissioners, and clerks of the district court to detect and address jury stress especially in high profile cases where public attention is on the jury.

6. Mitigate the Financial Impact of Juror Service

Encourage representatives of the state, counties, courts and legislature to devise ways to mitigate the financial impact of juror service including raising juror compensation and providing day-care services.

V. Getting the Word Out

MEDIA

If you are planning special recognition of jurors or of the importance of jury service remember to let the local media know. The media can be encouraged, and will be interested, in efforts to highlight the importance of jury service.

Display jury service information in the courthouse and in other suitable public places.

Sample news release:

District Court Observes Juror Appreciation Week

(City) – (Date) – Idaho's _____ Judicial District will be observing "Juror Appreciation Week" (date) in order to highlight the fundamental role that the jury system and jurors play in our judicial system.

"Jury service is an important responsibility of citizenship that helps ensure that our system of justice is preserved," said _____, Administrative District Judge of the _____ Judicial District.

"We also know that jury service can involve significant personal sacrifice that deserves to be acknowledged and respected. By declaring the week of _____ "Juror Appreciation Week" we hope to bring additional attention to the thousands of citizens every year in Idaho who serve on juries and generously exercise this critical responsibility of American citizenship.

Last year more than _____ residents in the _____ Judicial District were called for jury service.

For additional information contact _____.

Letter of appreciation:

FIELD(1)
FIELD (2)
FIELD (3)

Dear _____:

On behalf of the judges and staff of the _____ Judicial District, I want to thank you for your recent service as a juror. I hope your jury service was a positive experience.

Our time-honored system of justice in the United States is built upon the essential importance of the juror system, which depends upon the willingness of individual citizens to assume the responsibility of giving of their time to serve. We know that it is not always easy to take the time away from work and families, but we also know that it is absolutely critical that individual citizens like you take jury duty so very seriously.

Thank you again for your contribution.

Sincerely,

In the
District Court
Ada County, Idaho

this

Certificate of Appreciation

is presented to

On behalf of the Judges of District Court and the citizens of Ada County, we commend you for the contribution you have made to the cause of justice and the American form of government. In exercising your duty as a citizen you have demonstrated the continuing strength and importance of the jury system. Having served with distinction, we honor you with this certificate in appreciation of your commitment and your conscientious performance of an important duty of citizenship and in recognition of a valuable contribution to the administration of justice in the District Court of Ada County, Idaho.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 2001

_____ _____

Jury Commissioner Administrative Judge

Touring the Courthouse

I. Introduction

In most Idaho communities the courthouse is the most visible and most tangible reminder of the third branch of government – the judiciary.

Of course we know that more goes on in the typical Idaho courthouse than hearings, trials and other judicial proceedings, but it's a safe bet that most citizens still view the courthouse as the domain of judges, juries, clerks and members of the bar. The courthouse truly is the community center of the judiciary.

Using the physical presence of the courthouse, and those who work there, to educate and inform the general public about the role of the judicial branch can be a very effective strategy of public outreach. The building and the activity inside can be a great teaching tool. Direct access through tours helps increase public awareness and understanding of the role of the courts and judges.

Tours can offer information about the building itself, the people that work in the building, and all the services that are provided at the courthouse. Tours can be made available by appointment for groups, or they can be scheduled regularly to allow individuals to drop by for a tour during designated tour hours.

II. Getting Started

There are two important steps to consider before offering tours to the public. First, tour facilitators should be designated. Facilitators can be any courthouse staff member, or perhaps a local volunteer. With some basic training and information, a tour will be easy to lead.

Next, the content of the tour must be determined. Deciding what to include in a courthouse tour is relatively simple. When you think about the courthouse in your county, what comes to mind? Is it impressive architecture? Maybe an historical event that took place at the courthouse? Were recent renovations completed? Or perhaps you think of the people at the court or the services the court offers. All of this information can be included in the courthouse tour. Visitors will want to know what makes your courthouse unique, as well as what it holds in common with other courthouses. They will also find all of the offerings of the courthouse interesting, and valuable.

The audiences for tours of the courthouse is wide and varied: community groups, including service clubs and groups like the League of Women Voters, will be interested as will scouting groups and students at every level.

III. Carrying Out the Tours

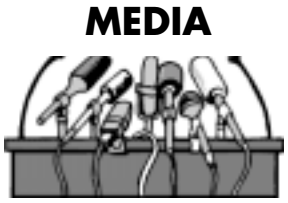
When possible, visitors should be able to observe on-going court cases and meet and talk to judges and court staff during their tours. Of course, an exploration of the building is a necessary part of the tour.

When the tour is complete, visitors should be able to leave the courthouse not only entertained, but also informed regarding what they can expect from their local courthouse.

IV. Handouts

Do not underestimate the usefulness of handouts during a courthouse tour. Handouts highlighting courthouse facts can help group members follow along with ease. Handouts also provide information for visitors to take home and reference later. Handouts are an excellent way to create age appropriate tours. For example, handouts with short, interesting facts about the building and its employees are great for grade-school students, while adults would better benefit from handouts that feature synapses of courthouse services and contact information to access these services.

V. Getting the Word Out



When the content of a courthouse tour has been established, you should publicize the new service. A press release to local media is likely the best initial way to inform the community that tours are available. You might consider offering a tour to local newspaper, television or radio reporters as a way to garner interest and awareness.

You can also send personalized letters to schools, boys and girls clubs, and other community organizations offering them the service for their group. A sample press release and a sample letter are included in the samples and tools section.

Sample Letter:

Dear _____:

I am writing to let you know that we have recently initiated a program of public tours of the (County) Courthouse in (city.) You may be interested in considering a tour for your group/school class/organization/etc.

The tours are designed to offer insight into the history of our building, as well as provide educational and informative material on the workings of the judicial branch of our government.

If you are interested in scheduling a tour or desire more information I would invite you to call _____ at _____.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Sample News Release:

Tours At Local Courthouse Offer Insights Into Justice System

(City) – (Name of court) is offering free tours of the (County) Courthouse to community and school groups to provide visitors with information on how judges and the judicial branch of government work.

Visitors are invited to contact _____ at _____ to schedule a tour or to receive more information.

"The courthouse is perhaps the most visible symbol of the judicial branch of government in _____ County. By taking a tour of the courthouse, learning a little more of the history and the procedures, we hope visitors will come away for a better sense of the how the justice system works," said _____(spokesman for the tours).

For more information or to schedule a tour call _____.

Acknowledgements

Two states – California and Ohio – have been pacesetters in the development of effective community outreach strategies and materials for judges and court personnel.

This manual owes a tremendous "thank you" to those excellent efforts. We have borrowed freely from their approach and format. We genuinely thank them for developing fine and thoughtful examples.

A thank you is also in order to the chairman, Justice Jesse R. Walters, and the members of the Idaho Supreme Court Jury Committee for their invaluable assistance.