



Wisconsin Court System

Planning & Policy Advisory Committee

The Wisconsin Supreme Court established the Planning and Policy Advisory Committee (PPAC) in 1990 to advise the Court and the director of state courts on planning initiatives, the administrative structure of the court system and the expeditious handling of judicial matters (see Supreme Court Rule 70.14). The committee functions as the court system's long-range planning committee.

Committee Structure

By Supreme Court Rule, PPAC consists of the Chief Justice of the Wisconsin Supreme Court, one judge from the Wisconsin Court of Appeals (selected by the Court of Appeals), 12 circuit court judges (elected in the judicial administrative districts), one municipal judge (elected by the Wisconsin Municipal Judges' Association), two people selected by the State Bar of Wisconsin Board of Governors, and the following people appointed by the Chief Justice: three non-lawyers (one of whom shall be an elected county official); one public defender; one court administrator; one prosecutor; one clerk of circuit court; and one court commissioner (selected alternately for one term by the Wisconsin Family Court Commissioners Association and Wisconsin Association of Judicial Court Commissioners). PPAC subcommittees are convened as needed to address specific issues.

Strategic Plan for the Wisconsin Court System

PPAC and its Planning Subcommittee participate in a biennial process that solicits input from the judiciary, court commissioners, district court administrators, clerks of court, attorneys and other stakeholders to establish current priorities and develop a Critical Issues report. This report is used to advance the mission, vision and long-term goals of the court system, identify current issues/trends facing the court system, establish priorities, suggest how the Court System might approach priorities, and inform the Court's budget process.

Each biennial Critical Issues report addresses a small number of priorities and identifies both short- and long-term strategies for addressing each priority. As part of the process used to identify critical issues, PPAC often highlights particular topics for more rigorous analysis.



Members of PPAC meet with the Wisconsin Supreme Court Justices at their annual joint meeting in April 2022.

Some of these analyses have culminated in new Supreme Court rules or statutes, such as the implementation of mandatory statewide eFiling, the creation of courthouse security standards, and guidelines for attorneys to provide specific services to self-represented litigants.

Recent Critical Issues include the following:

Mental Health

As one of the most complex issues facing the court system, mental health is being examined at both the state and national levels to identify strategies that can help judges, law enforcement officers, and treatment providers secure the tools and resources they need to more effectively address the mental health needs of Wisconsin residents.

Technology

Technology plays a pivotal role in court system operations. In Wisconsin, one of the most important developments in recent years has been the adoption of electronic case filing, or eFiling. Following initial implementation at the circuit court level in 2016, eFiling expanded to the Court of Appeals in 2021 and may soon expand to the Supreme Court. In addition to the widespread use of eFiling, videoconferencing technology has increased as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The PPAC Videoconferencing Subcommittee reconvened in 2021 to develop a rule petition to support the use of remote technology for court proceedings. The petition is currently under review by the Supreme Court. Finally, digital audio recording, or DAR, is being implemented in every courthouse to support the ability of court reporters to accurately capture the court record.

Effective Justice Strategies/Substance Abuse

The Effective Justice Strategies (EJS) Subcommittee (formerly known as the Alternatives to Incarceration Subcommittee) was formed to focus on studying, developing resources, and making recommendations regarding evidence-based approaches to solving problems.

Members of the EJS subcommittee have been actively involved in developing treatment court standards and training for judges and treatment court professionals on the proper application of specialty court principles. The addition of a state-level position to support training, technical assistance and evaluation of treatment court programs has further underscored the importance of this issue to the court system.

Courthouse Security

Proper court security procedures, technology, personnel, and architectural features not only protect the people and property within and around the courts, but also preserve the integrity of the judicial process. The existing SCR Chapter 68, Court Security, Facilities and Staffing, was adopted by the Supreme Court in 2012. Chapter 68 includes guidelines for courthouses regarding security infrastructure, staffing, and staff training, as well as guidelines for how to create county-level security committees and track security threats and incidents that impact court proceedings, personnel or facilities. Revisions to the existing rule are awaiting review and approval by the Supreme Court. Proposed updates to the rule focus on modernizing the rule and integrating updated language related to technology and courtroom facilities, and clarifying the duties of local security and facility committees.

Court System Budget

Supreme Court Rule 70.14 (4) provides that PPAC shall be kept fully and timely informed by the Director of State Courts about all budgetary matters affecting the judiciary. PPAC's primary role in the budget process is to review budget proposals and initiatives to ensure that they conform with the court system's long-term goals. This review includes providing recommendations for the Supreme Court to consider during budget deliberations.