

Full Court Press

Newsletter of the District of Columbia Courts

Open To All, Trusted By All, Justice For All

January 2007

Volume XIX Number 1

D.C. Courts' Employee Survey Results 2006

By Julie Klier, Research Assistant, Research and Development Division

D.C. Courts' employees view safety and security, expanded use of technology, and public trust and confidence as the three most important issues facing the Courts in the next few years. These findings were reported by court personnel who were surveyed in August 2006 to provide input to the Courts' next strategic plan.

In developing the 2008-2012 *Strategic Plan*, the Courts' Strategic Planning Leadership Council (SPLC) has been conducting surveys of principal stakeholders: attorneys, judicial officers, employees and managers. A survey of court participants (i.e., parties in cases, witnesses, jurors and others) is planned for later this month.

Over 500 employees, or approximately 50% of the Courts' workforce, responded to the survey, representing all grade levels and divisions. In addition to asking about the most important issues facing the Courts, the survey asked for input on topics such as employee training and advancement, performance evaluation, facilities, case processing and job satisfaction. Despite some concerns, employees are overwhelmingly positive about the D.C. Courts as an employer, with 82% rating the Courts favorably in 2006 compared to 69% in 2002.

Based on the survey results, most employees enjoy their jobs (92%) and have favorable relationships with their supervisor. Eighty-nine percent say they are able to

communicate well with their supervisor, 83% of employees receive the support they need to perform their job, 82% receive fair and constructive criti-

cism from their supervisor, and 75% say they receive positive feedback for a job well done. These are improvements since 2002, the first year that the SPLC conducted employee stakeholder surveys. Nearly eight in ten employees (78%) feel that what they do every day helps their division meet its MAP objectives, thereby helping to achieve the Courts' strategic goals. In addition to the top three important issues facing the Courts, employees also rated as important: improving case processing time, enhancing fair-

ness and equal treatment for litigants and providing services to litigants without lawyers.

Still of concern to employees, based on a comparison to a 2002 survey, are: the performance evaluation process, promotional opportunities, responsiveness to employee concerns, and the condition of some court facilities as a work environment. Less than half (45%) of employees feel that the performance evaluation process accurately reflects how they do their job, although 61% believe that the job elements

they are rated on reflect the duties of their job. While most employees (77%) feel that they are able to take advantage of training opportunities, they do not feel that training helps prepare them for promotions (46%) or that they have clear opportunities for advancement (40%). Approximately 39% of employees agree that the Courts address employee issues/concerns, although one in five survey respondents answered "Don't Know" in response to this question. Finally, employees who work in Moultrie, Building A and some satellite offices are less satisfied with court facilities than those who work in Gallery Place, as might be expected given that many of these locations are under renovation.

The SPLC intends to use the results of this and all the stakeholder surveys to help identify strategic issues and goals for the 2008-2012 *Strategic Plan*, which will be released in late 2007.



Included in this issue:

- 2 Focus Group Invitation
- 3 Court Participant Survey Flyer
- 4 Black History Month

A Special Invitation to All Court Employees

The Strategic Planning Leadership Council is hosting a series of **focus groups** for employees to hear your views on what the Courts' priorities should be in coming years. **Your input is needed** to help develop the Courts' Strategic Plan for 2008 – 2012.

Many of you participated in the very successful focus group initiative held in 2002, when the Courts' current Strategic Plan was being developed. At these sessions, which were facilitated by Multi-Door staff, employees engaged in **lively and stimulating discussions about the role of the Courts and ways to better serve the public and improve our work environment**. Several employees commented that this was the first time they had an opportunity to be a part of a courtwide planning effort, and they were pleased to be heard.

As a focus group participant, you will be asked to consider questions like **“How Are We Doing?”** as a court system and as an employer. You will have an opportunity to discuss issues identified in a survey of employees distributed in the

summer, and to be **“CEO” for a day** and say what you would do if you were in charge of the Courts.

Don't miss this opportunity to have a voice in the Courts' future!

Plan to attend one of the sessions listed below. Please call David Bell, on ext. 1-1258, to RSVP, so that we can ensure adequate seating. Of course, drop-ins are always welcome!



Strategic Planning Focus Group Schedule

Date

Time

Location

Employees:

Monday, January 22	12:00 noon – 1:00 pm	Gallery Place, Room 613
Wednesday, January 24	10:00 am – 11:00 am	Building A, Room 104J
Tuesday, January 30	1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	Room 1500
Thursday, February 1	3:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Room 1500

Branch Chiefs and Supervisors:

Thursday, February 15	3:00 pm – 4:30 pm	Room 1500
Friday, February 16	12:30 pm – 2:00 pm	Room 1500
Tuesday, February 27	12:30 pm – 2:00 pm	Room 1500
Wednesday, February 28	3:00 pm – 4:30 pm	Room 3300

Senior Managers:

Thursday, February 15	12:30 pm – 2:00 pm	Room 1500
Friday, February 16	9:00 am – 10:30 am	Room 1500
Tuesday, February 27	3:00 pm – 4:30 pm	Room 1500
Wednesday, February 28	12:30 pm – 2:00 pm	Judges' Dining Room 2



District of Columbia Courts



Attention Judges and Employees!

- On January 29, 2007 — for one day only — the D.C. Courts will ask the public to complete a short, anonymous survey so the people we serve everyday can tell us how we are doing. (Judges, managers, and employees have already completed surveys.)

How Can You Help?

- We are asking court employees to volunteer for 1 hour to help distribute and collect surveys.
- Volunteers are needed from 8 am—5 pm for Moultrie Courthouse and Buildings A and B.
- Surveys will also be printed in Spanish and we are seeking bilingual volunteers.
- To volunteer, please call David Bell (1-1258)
- Please encourage parties, attorneys, police officers, and the public to fill out the survey.

Upcoming events:

Black History Month:

February 2 – Court employees and judges who are members of the ‘Divine Nine’ wear their colors.

February 9 – Performances by Poetry Slammers from Howard Road Academy and the H.D. Woodson Senior High School Choir. A history of the DC Courts by Duane Delaney. Jurors Lounge - noon

February 16 - Court employees who went to Historically Black Colleges and Universities wear jerseys from their schools.

February 23 - Black History Live Museum performance, special guest speaker and luncheon. Jurors Lounge - noon

Awards and honors:

The District of Columbia Bar’s Family Law Section honored the Family Court Self-Help Center at a reception in December. The honorees were: Family Court Presiding Judge Anita Josey-Herring; Family Court Director, Dianne King; Self-Help Center Branch Chief Avi Sickel; Self-Help Center Paralegal Facilitator Corey Thompson; Self-Help Center Paralegal Facilitator Edith Anna Roque; and Vera Stanley, Administrative Aide in the Self-Help Center.



Judge Anita Josey-Herring, Dianne King and Avi Sickel.

The last issue of Full Court Press covered last November’s 20th Annual Adoption Day celebration but neglected to mention awards presented to the three co-founders of the event: Senior Judge Bruce Mencher; Ms. Evelyn Andrews, former Adoption Branch Chief at Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA); and former Family Division Director Ed Ricks. Family Court and CFSA staff presented Judge Ronna Beck with the Family Court "Determination" Achievement Award for her time as the adoption judge; Superior Court Clerk Duane Delaney presented Dianne King with the Family Court "Visionary" Award from the Family Court staff honoring her dedication and leadership. Judge Mencher spoke briefly, thanking all involved over the years and noting that the event was “witness to what good people can do when they set their hearts and minds to it.”

The Full Court Press is published by the District of Columbia Courts to provide information about the D.C. Courts. Inquiries should be submitted to Room 1500.

*Leah Gurowitz, Editor
Dennis Shipley, Creative Director*