

## Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. What is a plan of concurrent jurisdiction?**  
MCL 600.401(3) states: “A plan of concurrent jurisdiction shall provide for the transfer or assignment of cases between the trial courts affected by the plan and to individual judges of those courts as necessary to implement the plan and to fairly distribute the workload among those judges.” In addition, the plan may include substantive administrative and staff reorganization that would serve to improve services to the public. The State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) is available to assist in the development, submission, and implementation of any concurrent jurisdiction plan.
- 2. Does this mean that the courts would become a unified trial court?**  
Not necessarily. If your courts want to become a unified trial court, then certainly concurrent jurisdiction is the means to do that. Concurrent jurisdiction plans vary greatly and may include the consolidation of only parts of the courts’ services and processes as appropriate to best serve the public while fairly distributing the workload.
- 3. Why would courts want to develop a plan of concurrent jurisdiction?**  
Each jurisdiction in Michigan has unique resources, needs, and population distributions. By permitting the judges, court staff, and stakeholders most familiar with the community to determine how those services are best provided, concurrent jurisdiction plans enable courts to more evenly spread workloads, respond to budget concerns, make better use of facilities and staff by reducing redundancies, and more efficiently serve the needs of the public.
- 4. If a jurisdiction is interested in developing a concurrent jurisdiction plan, how does it begin the process?**  
Courts should contact their SCAO Regional Administrator to discuss their ideas on concurrent jurisdiction. The Regional Administrator will provide details regarding the development and approval of the concurrent jurisdiction plan.
- 5. Does SCAO provide any assistance in the development and implementation of the concurrent jurisdiction plan?**  
Yes, SCAO staff is available to assist courts in the development of their plans, including an analysis of the feasibility of implementing the proposed changes. SCAO staff will also assist in the implementation of the plan, as needed.
- 6. Who must approve a concurrent jurisdiction plan?**  
Concurrent jurisdiction plans must be approved by the judges, SCAO, the Supreme Court, and the courts’ funding unit(s). Circuit courts should develop plans in consultation with the County Clerk.

# Examples of Concurrent Jurisdiction Goals

## **Judicial Resources: Establish goals on the best use of judges, magistrates, and referees.**

- Greater flexibility in assigning judges and quasi-judicial officers to cases
- Reduce redundant judicial activities
- Consolidate related matters
- Assign judicial resources based on need and workload
- More equitably distribute workloads
- Improve flexibility in covering absences and disqualifications

## **Governance and Decision Making: Establish goals on how the local courts participating in the plan will be governed and how decisions will be made.**

- Improve communication among judges and administrative staff within the court
- Establish a formal method of communication with funding unit – consultation and involvement
- Ensure that decision making considers the needs of all court units
- Reduce competition between court units for resources
- Improve cooperation and teamwork

## **Administration and Fiscal Control: Establish goals to more efficiently design your administrative structure.**

- Improve ability to assign support staff based on need
- Reduce duplication and redundancy of administrative activities
- Increase uniformity of budgeting and financial reporting
- Increase coordination and effectiveness of collections
- Maximize utilization of staff, facilities, and capital resources
- Improve utilization of courtrooms
- Standardize rules, policies, and procedures
- Create opportunities for planning, innovation, and self-evaluation

## **Information Systems: Establish goals for how the court can best use and/or improve technology?**

- Improve integration of case management systems
- Improve public access to court information
- Achieve timely reporting of required data

**Case Management: Establish goals to manage case processing more effectively and efficiently.**

- Reduce delay, duplication, and unnecessary appearances by litigants
- Provide for the same level of access to all case types
- Improve ADR
- Improve compliance with time standards