

# Wyoming Judicial Branch STRATEGIC PLAN

FY2023–2024



## *Mission Statement*

As an independent branch of government, we provide access to justice through the timely, fair, and impartial resolution of legal disputes.

## *Vision Statement*

The Wyoming Judiciary is a cohesive and collaborative court system, characterized by excellence, that provides justice for the individual and society through the rule of law.

## *The Wyoming Judicial Branch is committed to excellence in:*

Delivering just and efficient resolution of people's disputes;

Promoting public confidence in the law and providing access to justice;

Faithfully discharging our duties as judges through adherence to the law;

Ensuring fairness and impartiality by providing quality service that continuously improves, that meets or exceeds the public expectations, and that ensures that all are treated with courtesy, dignity, and respect;

Fostering an expectation of excellence in the work of the Judiciary through recruitment, training and retention of all judicial officers and employees;

Acting as a cohesive system that speaks with a single voice and shares a common purpose; and

Ensuring the highest professional conduct, integrity and competence of the bench and bar.

# 1 *Access to Justice*

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**Advance the just and efficient resolution of people's disputes by:**

**Providing resources for self-represented litigants to assist in accessing and navigating the court system.**

- Establish a court navigator program for the judicial branch.
- Create and maintain standardized forms that are fillable or take the litigant through a guided interview process.
- Make Access to Justice Commission a standing committee of the Wyoming Judicial Council.
- Ensure that indigent litigants have access to the courts through fee waiver or reduction for qualified applicants.

**Ensuring that the members of the bar are well trained and accessible.**

- Explore incentives to promote practice in rural areas of Wyoming.
- Facilitate a mentoring program for attorneys.
- Explore opportunities for collaboration with the University of Wyoming and the Wyoming State Bar to enhance the skills of lawyers.

**Providing resources for the courts to efficiently move cases to resolution.**

- Investigate the possibility of expanding the role commissioners and magistrates play in the courts.
- Evaluate alternative approaches to resolving domestic relations cases and cases that involve families by:
  - Exploring family courts.
  - Investigating the shift of child support cases to the Office of Administrative Hearings.
  - Exploring a position to screen and triage domestic relations cases.
- Improve the reports Judges can use to manage their dockets.
- Investigate positions for circuit courts – circuit court judicial assistant and circuit court law clerk.

## **2 Effective Operation of the Judicial Branch**

**Establish branch wide priorities through the Wyoming Judicial Council.**

**Promote a quality workplace for judicial officers and employees.**

- Ensure a safe workplace for judicial officers, staff, jurors, and the public.
- Develop secondary trauma and well-being programs and services for judicial officers, staff, and jurors.
- Formalize and fund the use of retired Justices and Judges to provide assistance as needed.
- Create formalized education opportunities for employees.
- Create a mentorship program and expectations for new employees and Judges.
- Provide a more robust and effective judicial orientation for new Judges.
- Create a new employee onboarding program.
- Increase workplace flexibility where possible.
- Maintain adequate compensation for judicial officers and Judicial Branch employees.

**Enhance consistent technological infrastructure and associated education to ensure our increased reliance on technology is supported while maintaining strong cybersecurity standards.**

- Conduct training with judicial officers and court staff on remote interpretation software and Bizmerlin.
- Continue to provide routine security awareness training to all members of the branch.
- Upgrade or replace aging infrastructure hardware/software to ensure network security.
- Create uniform cybersecurity and technology standards for the branch.

**Meet the needs of our courts by providing excellent branch wide administrative support.**

- Centralize administrative functions of the circuit courts as appropriate.
- Create a court services office to better support the Judges and their staffs.

**Enhance the use of problem-solving (drug) courts.**

- Conduct training on problem-solving courts with judges, court staff and other stakeholders.

## 3 *Public Trust and Accountability*

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**Promote public confidence in the law, ensuring fairness and impartiality by providing quality service that continuously improves, that meets or exceeds public expectations, and that ensures that all are treated with dignity and respect.**

- Assess public expectations and obtain feedback.
- Publish annual State of the Judiciary.

**Provide proactive communication to and from the public about the Judiciary.**

- Educate the public on the accessibility of the Judicial Learning Center and the courts.
- Plan and implement Law Day activities statewide.
- Secure funding for a public information office for the AOC.
- Ensure media coverage of the State of the Judiciary.
- Create an outreach strategy.

**Establish internal criteria, policy, and procedures to ensure data quality and integrity.**

- Train judicial officers and court staff on procedures for entering data and the importance of data quality and integrity.
- Perform annual audit on data integrity.
- Consider a data access policy for internal and external customers.
- Create a data governance policy for the Branch.

## 4 *Adequate, Stable and Predictable Funding for a Fully Functioning Branch*

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**Maintain sound budgeting principles and practices by application of data-driven information for forecasting, planning, and follow-up each biennium.**

- Update 10-year budget need projection for IT support and hardware and long-term projection for other areas.
- Update the statistical workload model.

**Establish and maintain relationships with legislative committees to promote understanding of the financial needs of the Judicial Branch.**

- Develop informational resources to provide to legislators.
- Educate members of the Judicial Branch on operations of the Judicial Branch so they may convey a consistent message to members of the other branches of government.
- Provide civics for legislators course.
- Support court administration in its role as legislative liaison.