



NAPCO LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE CAMPAIGN

2018-2021
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Strategic Planning Committee

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Introduction

“However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.

...Sir Winston Churchill

The **fair, impartial and efficient application of the Rule of Law** is essential if the judicial branch is to be worthy of the people’s trust. Leaders of the courts, specifically Chief or Presiding Judges and Court Executives play a unique role in ensuring these principles are achieved and sustained.

In doing so, **Presiding Judges and Court Executives must engender trust, integrity and collaboration in court operations** to provide the atmosphere for true foundational change and improvement thereby ensuring judicial systems are a place where all persons receive timely and dignified justice. When people believe their courts treat them in such a manner, and that decisions are fair and unbiased, our objective will be achieved. Admittedly, this is an ambitious agenda and requires creating a foundation for continual improvement.

As a leader organization that seeks to advance the objective of Court Leadership and Governance, **NAPCO is dedicated to providing leadership training for Chief / Presiding Judges and Court Executives, and promoting team building skills among them.** Furthermore, we are committed to work with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ), the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA), the National Association for Court Management (NACM), American Judges Association (AJA), the National Judicial College (NJC), the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System (IAALS), the Justice Management Institute

(JMI), the Center for Court Innovation (CCI) and other national and state partners in such an effort. Our unique place is the development of leadership and governance training and competencies for the executive component in state and local courts, which we believe lays the foundation for a high performing justice system. This work not only includes Presiding Judges and Court Executive Officers but their direct reports throughout the hierarchy of state and local courts so leadership proficiencies are nurtured and matured beyond just the top leaders.

An essential part of NAPCO’s leadership and governance value structure is succession planning. The availability of middle-level and senior managers to tackle future justice system challenges in responsible and effective ways is critical in sustaining high performing state courts. Succession planning must be built into the fabric of each judicial system at every level. NAPCO is committed to assisting court leaders in identifying and cultivating diverse, capable leadership potential within their courts, and by helping them create useful leadership succession strategies that meet best practice principles for courts.

NAPCO promotes change, including disruptive, innovative change as experienced by many courts in today’s high-tech, digital world. Court leaders must have the capacity to lead in such an environment. As technology assumes more court work, how will the workforce, work itself, judging, and customer service change, and what should court leaders do now to prepare for it? In living in our turbulent times, leaders must be able to promote creative, motivated and empowered employees, which in turn, frequently means reorganization, reengineering, and new ways of providing products and services. Loyalty, trust and support from the top is critical in ensuring judges and staff can perform and bear the dislocation required by change.

Increasingly courts are required to absorb responsibility for society's challenges in the form of unfunded mandates; court users coming to us in vast numbers for help and solutions with an array of legal, social, addictive, and behavioral problems. Workplace motivation and positive morale can be challenging. **Court leaders are powerful contributors and role models in tangible, everyday ways in making judges and staff feel valued and positive.** Research shows four conditions allow employees to thrive: providing decision-making discretion (empowerment), sharing information, promoting civility, and offering performance feedback. NAPCO embraces these values and is committed to providing leadership training and programs that promote them.

Positioned at the center of the local justice system, the court is the single entity vested with ensuring overall processes are fair and impartial and individual rights are protected based on Constitutional provisions and guarantees. **As such, court leaders have an obligation to coordinate interdependencies among justice system partners by working beyond the boundaries of the court itself.** This mandate positions the court as more than just a justice system stakeholder. It expects the court to take a systemwide problem-solving and coordinating role to ensure the decisional independence of judges in individual cases, the institutional independence of the court, and the effective functioning of the entire system. The court cannot effectively carry out its role as justice guardian, without simultaneously promoting systemwide efficiency and safeguarding fundamental due process rights. Presiding Judges and Court Executives are key to enabling those objectives by building workable and effective relationships with other justice system partners.

Lastly, as a new professional association on the national scene **NAPCO fully understands that if courts and justice systems are to maintain and grow in their public trust and confidence, court leaders must actively listen, clearly perceive, and creatively adapt to the concerns and problems of court users.** Great courts that continually exhibit high levels of accomplishment have an emotional relationship with their customers that has no barrier. And that emotional relationship rests on the most important characteristics of that connection... trust and confidence.

KEY CHALLENGES...

- ✓ Continued erosion of public trust in the courts.
- ✓ Judges are perceived as out of touch with the community.
- ✓ Public seeks greater engagement from the court.
- ✓ Access to justice in rural areas is too limited.
- ✓ Justice system is too complicated to allow self-representation.
- ✓ Public perceives that their customer service challenges could be addressed by simple technology solutions

NCSJ 2017 State of the State Courts Poll

Vision

NAPCO PROVIDES COURT LEADERSHIP TEAMS WITH THE COMPETENCIES, SKILLS, AND KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED TO ASSURE COURTS ARE LED BY INSPIRED AND CAPABLE JUDICIAL LEADERS AND COURT EXECUTIVES COMMITTED TO OPEN AND ACCESSIBLE COURTS DELIVERING ON THE PROMISE OF JUSTICE FOR ALL.

Mission

NAPCO WILL ENHANCE THE EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE THROUGH EDUCATION AND RESEARCH IN GENERAL, LIMITED, AND SPECIALIZED COURTS BY STRENGTHENING COURT LEADERSHIP TEAMS, MODERNIZING COURT PROCESSES, AND PROMOTING BEST PRACTICES OF FAIR, ACCESSIBLE, AND ACCOUNTABLE COURTS.

NAPCO WILL ACHIEVE THIS MISSION THROUGH THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

1. Build and enhance the governance and leadership skills and capacities of presiding judges and court executive officers.
2. Equip court leaders with the knowledge and tools needed to lead change and court improvement efforts.
3. Create collaborative, complementary alliances with justice system associations that seek to advance the interests of justice and principles inherent in the Rule of Law.
4. Promote and increase membership in NAPCO.

1. Build and enhance the governance and leadership skills and capacities of presiding judges and court executive officers

Presiding judges and court executive officers, as the principal leaders in a court system, are vested with the responsibility to make binding decisions regarding court policies, directions and strategies, and in doing so, are expected to lead with integrity, competence, and a dedication to the highest and best interests of the court and justice system. In its most productive form, such leadership requires a collaborative partnership between a presiding judge and a court executive officer based on a shared vision, clear roles and duties, maximum access to each other, frequent communication, and mutual trust and support.¹

NAPCO is dedicated to foster governance and teamwork skills and capacities for presiding judges and court executive officers in a variety of ways, including...

- An annual, national leadership conference featuring a one-day, hands-on Leadership Academy presented in partnership with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) and led by a nationally recognized leadership expert familiar with courts. Interactive exercises and break-out sessions are part of the event to help PJs and CEOs

improve their abilities to lead their courts. A variety of workshops, seminars, and discussion groups on current and emerging issues, trends, replicable programs, cutting-edge innovations, and ways to improve courts follow Academy Day over the next two days of the Conference.

- On-line webinars focused on leadership development in courts via NAPCO's website: www.napco4courtleaders.org.
- Facilitating and advancing e-court solutions in its educational programming and assistance to member courts. As process-oriented organizations, trial courts are being reshaped and reengineered by new, powerful digitized data, voice and image technology. How to harness these high-tech electronic approaches to deliver greater value and reduce costs is a significant challenge faced by state and local courts; the experimental leaders in doing so.
- Reducing court delay and improving productivity within state and local justice systems by sharing caseflow techniques, exchanging program ideas, and assisting each other in implementing improvements through NAPCO's trial court leadership network.

¹ Monograph: "Judge-Court Manager Relationships: The Integration of Two Cultures."

R. Dale Lefever, Applied Theory, Inc., University of Michigan (Ann Arbor).

- Participating in studies and research to improve court governance and leadership. As an example, NAPCO recently submitted (January 2018) a State Justice Institute (SJI) grant proposal to initiate a joint NCSC/NAPCO effort to update and promote a monograph entitled *Key Elements of an Effective Rule of Court on the Role of the Presiding Judge in Trial Courts*. The grant is pending before the SJI Board.

2. Equip court leaders with the knowledge and tools needed to lead change and court improvement efforts

As change leaders, presiding judges and court executive officers need current knowledge and expertise in all aspects of court operations and the delivery of justice services. Leading change, especially disruptive innovative change, requires leadership skill as well as useful, concrete data about a broad array of court and justice system issues. Applying that expertise and information in practical, evidence-based ways, enables PJs and CEOs to impact and correct problems and bottlenecks that impede the fair and impartial delivery of court services. NAPCO is in a unique position to identify, understand, and address common, troublesome issues facing court leaders and offer realistic, beneficial solutions through up-to-date information and its wide collection of resources both related to courts and various justice system partners.

In addition to developing change management competencies, NAPCO is also invested in PJ / CEO team development that address substantive areas in adjudication processes and court operations. Examples include reducing trial court delay, streamlining calendar processes, improving alternative dispute resolution programs, and encouraging high-tech, high-touch digital applications to increase staff productivity and expand customer access.

To that end, NAPCO will...

- Develop a leadership guide and brochures that PJs and CEOs can use to enhance their teambuilding as leaders of change in their courts and communities. These materials will focus on everyday ways to develop a shared vision, create clear roles and responsibilities, maximize access to each other, develop frequent communication patterns, and generate behaviors to help elevate mutual trust and support between each other.
- Identify 3 to 4 substantive issues, both commonplace themes and emerging trends, where court leaders need additional information and advice. Such topics can range from continuance controls, performance statistics, and governance mechanisms to new ways to address problem-solving dockets, handle opioid addicted defendants, or triage civil cases.
- Create, publish and endorse “white papers” on standards and principles directed at improved adjudication procedures and sound court management practices. And, develop, adopt, and promote resolutions compatible with the general directions, policies and guidelines valued by the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA).
- Facilitate easy and timely access to leadership studies, topics, and articles.

3. Create collaborative, complementary alliances with justice system associations that seek to advance the interests of justice and principles inherent in the Rule of Law

Throughout our nation and abroad, the justice community is supported and served by numerous organizations that exist to preserve and enhance the critical role of courts in society. While working toward this common goal, each has adopted its own distinctive and important focus. Educating and training judicial officers and court staff, advancing the independence and accountability of the judicial branch, enhancing the administration of justice, and improving court operations are just a few of the lofty tenets adopted by these associations.

NAPCO holds an exclusive place in this community through its concentration on developing and enhancing the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities of top judicial and executive leaders to successfully lead and manage state and local courts. Through its two-dimensional focus on improving both the individual leadership abilities of PJs and CEOs, and their symbiotic, collective leadership strength as a “productive pair,” NAPCO seeks to build, enhance, and sustain high performing courts nationwide regardless of size or jurisdiction. Few associations, if any, devote the time and resources to this important role.

NAPCO also understands the significant value to our members of collaboration, cooperation and building alliances with other professional court and justice improvement organizations. Given the breadth and complexity of issues facing courts

today, no one association has the capacity to comprehensively address the myriad of topics that impact courts.

Collaborative relationships with other justice system associations requires significant effort, open and transparent communication, and clear internal goals and directions. In this regard, NAPCO is committed to building strategic alliances with all professional justice associations, including most importantly the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ), and Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA). To achieve this initiative NAPCO will:

- Develop and implement a campaign to increase NAPCO’s visibility to all affiliated organizations by creating opportunities through formal letters, emails, newsletters, and other forms of communication that promote NAPCO’s important role within the state court justice community.
- Appoint liaisons to each association and seek reciprocal appointments. Utilize Board Members and Officers as appropriate to attend meetings and conferences of other justice community organizations.
- Invite partner organizations to do the same, and encourage their attendance at

formal NAPCO conferences and Board Meetings.

- Seek a designated seat on the National Center for State Courts Board of Directors. A seat on the Center's Board allows NAPCO a national voice on issues impacting state and local courts with its closest and continuing educational and operational partner, thus enhancing the important work of NAPCO and its commitment to develop effective and efficient leadership in courts.
- Work with affiliated organizations to develop complementary education agendas and sessions when appropriate. The Program/Education Committee, together with the President, Vice President and NCSC representatives, should consult with the partner associations prior to finalizing the NAPCO annual conference agenda to share educational content and utilize information to identify topics and issues that could benefit both NAPCO and other associations.
- Acquire allies among justice community associations to advance justice system initiatives and educate legislative and executive officials, and the public. Such efforts should be directed at fostering unity among national justice system associations on issues facing courts.

4. Promote and increase membership in NAPCO

State and local courts are the engines of our justice system, resolving 98 percent of all cases in the United States. With approximately 30,000 judges nationwide handling more than 100 million new cases every year, state and local courts have an enormous impact on everyday life. They are for most Americans their only tangible experience with a democratic court process and the Rule of Law.

As a result, governing, guiding, and nurturing court systems takes on an extremely important charge for court leaders. Picking, training, and energizing Presiding Judges and Court Executives in the art and science of leading frequently is the single most critical factor in determining whether judicial systems flourish and fare well, or struggle and merely get by.

NAPCO is in the business of court leadership and governance education. Its mission is to help court leaders excel and thereby cause their courts to thrive by serving their communities and constituents in fair, accessible, efficient and beneficial ways. NAPCO also serves court leaders by bringing them together to learn from seasoned experts and from each other. The most convenient and effective way to benefit from NAPCO's array of learning opportunities is through membership in the Association.

To this end, it is incumbent on NAPCO officials to structure a compelling message about the worth, importance and benefit of the Association to the national community of state court leaders. The message must be short, simple, direct, and

gripping. Core values in recruiting should reflect state and local court diversity in jurisdictions, geography, governance structures, leaders, and ideas. To achieve these initiatives, NAPCO will:

- Increase and promote member benefits by delivering timely products, services and educational programs.
- Develop communication plans informing current and prospective members of upcoming events, recent leadership developments in state courts, and NAPCO products and services. Social media systems should be part of a communications strategy.
- Strengthen NAPCO's website with endorsements and links to updateable and valuable resources such as national job opportunities and "NCSC Trends" articles.
- Establish an outreach strategy with all state courts and national court associations promoting NAPCO and its member benefits. Explore dividing the Board of Directors by geographic area and assigning them membership recruitment responsibilities.
- Research additional membership benefits as possible.