

# The Caseflow Management Maturity Model

August 2020

Nial Raaen  
Brian J. Ostrom, Ph.D.  
Richard Y. Schauffler  
Lydia E. Hamblin, Ph.D.

National Center for State Courts

### Introduction

The Caseflow Management Maturity Model<sup>1</sup> is a high-level framework that describes the critical hallmarks of caseflow management and is a self-assessment instrument for determining the level of adoption and institutionalization of caseflow management principles and practices by a court. The dimensions of the model include business layers and levels of development or maturity.

### Business Layers and Key Elements

There are four business layers in the maturity model that describe business requirements for implementation of caseflow management. As discussed in *Success in Criminal Caseflow Management: Lessons from the Field*, these are:

- Leadership & Governance
- Predictable & Productive Court Events
- Goals & Information
- Communication & Collaboration

### Levels of Development

With these business layers in mind, the Caseflow Management Maturity Model describes four levels of development or maturity that describe the degree to which the court has institutionalized caseflow management. The organizational maturity levels are:

#### *Developmental*

A court at this level has not widely adopted caseflow management principles and practices. The court is hampered in one or more business layers due to such factors as inattention by leadership, lack of clear and consistent policies and procedures, underdeveloped data and IT resources, or lack of cooperation from criminal justice system partners. Limited discussion and agreement on the importance of performance goals exists. Individual judges are relatively free to make their own determinations on when key procedural events are to be completed. Data are assumed to be correct; problems are handled when surfaced, but not taken as a stimulus to investigate deeper issues. Management is ad hoc. Information and skills are unevenly distributed within staff and management.

#### *Compliant*

This level describes a court that has adopted very basic or required caseflow management principles and practices. A court in this level may be complying with state-imposed requirements for monitoring and reporting criminal caseflow information, but is not taking a proactive approach to criminal case management. The court has not integrated caseflow management into its business

processes as some judges resist the adoption of court-wide practices and monitoring. General agreement on performance goals exists, but the adoption of improved practices is slow as the need for centralized judicial and staff leadership is downplayed. Data remain an IT responsibility. Management is reactive and responds to problems as they arise.

#### *Committed*

A court at this level is fully committed to the principles and practices of caseflow management and has integrated caseflow management into overall business processes. Caseflow management policies and procedures are well known and are consistently enforced throughout the organization. The court is actively monitoring its performance, using a court-wide set of performance metrics that are well understood at all levels of the organization. Work is managed with data. Data quality is understood as fundamental to effective management. The court is engaged with and communicates regularly with stakeholders. Management proactively addresses present and future issues through periodic assessment.

#### *Transformational*

This level describes a court that integrates caseflow management principles and practices into its overall infrastructure and business processes, and also reexamines and redesigns its work from the perspective of its customers. The court has made a commitment to making the court more accessible, while maintaining continuous monitoring and improvement of caseflow management. Detailed, high quality data and close collaboration between judges and staff are essential. Judicial expectations about the timing of key procedural events are built on the deliberate involvement and planning of the entire bench. Follow through on established goals is championed by the presiding judge. Court leaders seek to work collaboratively with criminal justice partners to build systemwide effectiveness with caseflow management. Management is forward looking.

### Evaluation Across the Court

To use the self-assessment, in each category check one statement that best describes the current situation in the court. This can be done individually by court leadership, or collectively among judges and staff. The latter provides an opportunity to compare the perspectives of judges and staff, and reach a consensus on where the court needs to take action. In a larger court it may be useful to conduct an assessment by division (e.g., criminal, civil, family).

---

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Nial Raaen, *The Caseflow Management Maturity Model: A Self-Assessment Tool for Trial Courts*, National Center for State Courts, 2015.

## The Caseflow Management Maturity Model

---

When conducting the self-assessment, court leadership may find that while the court has the necessary policies and practices in place, it may not have the information it needs or cooperation from other criminal justice partners. Therefore, the level of maturity may vary across business layers. Further, evaluation may reveal that the degree of maturity varies by division or type of case. For example, the court may have an active caseflow management program for civil cases (this division is *Committed*) but not devote the same

level of attention to traffic (this division might be assessed as *Compliant*).

Results of the assessment will provide the basis for discussion both internally among judges and staff and externally with criminal justice system partners. A strategy can then be put in place for making for changes in caseflow management policies and practices and measuring progress toward the adopted goals.

## Caseflow Management Self-Assessment Tool

*In each category below, check one statement that best describes the current practice in your court.*

### I. LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

#### Goals

- The court regularly reviews and re-calibrates its own CFM goals.
- The court has established its own CFM goals.
- The court adheres to externally mandated CFM goals.
- The court has not adopted CFM goals.

#### Leadership

- Court leadership actively promote CFM in the legal and criminal justice community.
- The bench as a whole has endorsed CFM goals and practices.
- Individual judges have endorsed CFM goals and practices.
- Individual judges have not indicated support for CFM.

#### Adoption of Performance Measures

- The court regularly measures and monitors CFM practices, shares performance information with criminal justice partners, and collaboratively takes steps to improve performance based on the results.
- The court regularly measures and monitors its CFM practices to improve performance.
- The court has adopted CFM performance measures but does not consistently use them to monitor or change its caseflow management practices.
- The court has not established CFM performance measures.

#### CFM Training

- Staff receives periodic, formal training about CFM and are encouraged to continuously apply that knowledge to improve business processes.
- Court staff has received one-time formal training about CFM and participate in periodic improvement efforts.
- Individual members of the court management team and/or lead staff are knowledgeable about CFM principles and practices.
- Staff has not received formal training or information about CFM.

## II. PREDICTABLE & PRODUCTIVE COURT EVENTS

### Early Court Intervention

- The court actively manages, in collaboration with justice system partners, the time to initial court appearance and to determine eligibility for counsel at public expense to meet set goals.
- The court measures and monitors the time to initial court appearance using time period set by state law and has set internal time goals to determine eligibility for counsel at public expense.
- The court measures and monitors the time to initial court appearance using time period set by state law and may monitor the time to determine eligibility for counsel at public expense.
- The court does not monitor the time to initial court appearance and determination of eligibility for counsel at public expense.

### Discovery Management

- The court actively manages a clear policy on the timely exchange of discovery in criminal cases and provides regular feedback to prosecution and defense regarding compliance.
- The court has an agreed-upon policy for timely exchange of discovery in criminal cases and periodically monitors compliance.
- Individual judges may monitor and set dates for exchange of discovery in criminal cases.
- There are no individual or court-wide policies for timely exchange of discovery in criminal cases.

### Predictable Events

- Judges monitor individual case progress, take steps to enforce readiness by parties and may impose sanctions for non-compliance in accordance with policies.
- The court has adopted policies or procedures to improve readiness and reduce continuances.
- Individual judges may monitor cases for progress and intervene to reduce delay.
- Parties generally retain control of case progress and scheduling of events.

### Trial Date Certainty

- The court ensures that resources are available and parties are ready to commence trials on their scheduled dates, with few exceptions.
- The court sets firm trial dates with the expectation that most cases will be resolved.
- The court sets initial trial dates which are frequently modified.
- Trial calendars are frequently under- or over-booked.

### III. GOALS & INFORMATION

#### Use of CFM Information

- The court regularly generates CFM reports and uses this information in planning and policy development; judges can view individual case data in real time.
- The court regularly generates CFM reports including clearance rates, number and age of pending caseloads, and time to disposition, and uses this information to monitor and enforce policies and/or adjust workload.
- The court generates externally mandated CFM reports such as clearance rate and filing/disposition information as required.
- The court generates basic information on filings and dispositions only.

#### Aging Information

- The case management system (CMS) provides aggregate and individual case information on age of pending caseloads, time to disposition, as well event interval monitoring at the individual case level.
- The CMS provides aggregate and individual case information on age of pending caseloads and time to disposition information on a regular basis throughout the year.
- The CMS provides only aggregate case age information, as required.
- The CMS does not generate case aging information.

#### Continuance Monitoring

- The court has adopted and enforces continuance policies, monitoring adherence to these policies (e.g., the number of continuances granted, party requesting continuance, and reason for request) on a regular basis.
- Continuances are consistently defined, tracked and recorded for individual cases, and the court periodically evaluates its performance in this area.
- Individual judges may monitor continuances in their own cases.
- The court does not monitor continuances and/or may not have policies or practices to limit them.

#### Performance Data

- The court reviews and regularly publishes CFM performance information for the court as a whole, as well as for individual judges, and shares this data with justice system partners.
- Judges are provided with CFM performance information for the court as a whole as well as their own CFM performance results (but not the results of other individual judges).
- CFM performance information for the court as a whole is published as required.
- CFM performance information is not collected or if collected is not made available.

#### IV. COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION

##### Consultation with Criminal Justice System Partners

- Court leadership meets regularly with criminal justice system partners and the bar regarding CFM policies and issues.
- The court periodically consults with criminal justice system partners regarding CFM issues.
- The court notifies criminal justice system partners of its CFM policies.
- The court does not engage or consult with criminal justice system partners regarding CFM policies or issues.

##### Inter-Agency Information Sharing

- The court routinely publishes CFM statistics and information and regularly shares and discusses this with other criminal justice partners to improve effectiveness.
- The court periodically makes CFM statistics and information available to criminal justice partners and communicates issues of concern to those partners.
- The court creates CFM statistics and information for internal use only.
- The court does not routinely create CFM statistics and information.

##### Policy Collaboration

- The court discusses and seeks input on CFM policy from criminal justice partners prior to adoption.
- The court notifies criminal justice system partners when developing (and prior to adopting) new CFM policies.
- The court notifies criminal justice system partners of newly adopted CFM policies.
- The court does not involve other agencies in the development or adoption of CFM policies or practice.

##### Jail Population Management

- The court actively works with local corrections to manage the pretrial population.
- The court takes pretrial detention status into account when scheduling.
- The court schedules in-custody cases to reduce pretrial detention time when requested by local corrections.
- The court does not consider custody status when scheduling cases other than to comply with speedy trial requirements.