



## **Judicial Council of Georgia**

### **Administrative Office of the Courts**

**Chief Justice Hugh P. Thompson**  
*Chair*

**Cynthia H. Clanton**  
*Interim Director*

### **Report of the States: Georgia**

### **National Consortium on Racial & Ethnic Fairness in the Courts**

### **June 2015**

The Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) of Georgia is currently involved in several important projects dedicated to advancing access and fairness in the courts. A summary and update of state activities over the past year is provided in this report.

#### **Judicial Council Access, Fairness, and Public Trust and Confidence Committee**

The Judicial Council Access, Fairness, and Public Trust and Confidence Committee was formed in 2014 and held its inaugural meeting on January 7, 2015. Its charge is to improve the public's trust by focusing on access and fairness through the elimination of systemic barriers in the judicial system related to gender, race, ethnicity, disability and language. Through three subcommittees, the Committee is currently focused on three primary projects:

- Partnership with the Center for Court Innovation on a Human Trafficking Court pilot project summit to be held in Fall 2015;
- Coordination with the State of Georgia ADA Coordinator's Office to complete a comprehensive revision and update of the 2004 publication *A Meaningful Opportunity to Participate: A Handbook for Georgia Court Officials on Courtroom Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities*, a guidebook for judges and court personnel; and,
- Planning for the 2017 Conference of the National Association of Women Judges, to be held in Atlanta.

#### **Baseline Customer Experience Survey**

In 2013, the Judicial Council/AOC adopted a Strategic Plan for State Fiscal Year 2014 through Fiscal Year 2016. Overseen by the Judicial Council Strategic Plan Implementation Committee, the Plan is composed of nine Priority Initiatives. Priority Initiative 1 (Baseline Customer Experience Survey) examined access and fairness measures within Georgia Courts using the National Center for State Courts' *CourTool* Measure 1 (Access & Fairness). In partnership with the Kennesaw State University Burruss Institute of Public Service and Research, staff completed a statewide Baseline Customer Experience Survey (in 109 counties with over 3,800 respondents)

from August through December 2014. The findings reveal that court customers in Georgia express generally positive opinions about the ways they were treated in the courts. The Strategic Plan Implementation Committee will discuss plans for repeated assessment to monitor aggregate performance while staff analyze data with local courts and provide technical assistance and *CourTools* support.

### **Access to Justice**

The Judicial Council/AOC continues to liaison with the State Bar of Georgia's Access to Justice Committee, which works to enhance the delivery of pro bono services and access to the courts for self-represented litigants.