

Western Regional Office

ORGANIZATION AND WORKFLOW ANALYSIS
OF THE
SONOMA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COURT

OCTOBER 1, 1984

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Project Director

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The National Center for State Courts' project staff interviewed personnel of the Sonoma County Municipal Court, Superior Court, County Clerk's Office, District Attorney's Office, Probation Department, Public Defender's Office, Sheriff's Office, Data Processing Department, and County Administrator's Office. Individual recognition of all of these people is not possible in this brief space, but we extend our deep appreciation for the substantial time and cooperation given by each. This study could not have been completed without their thoughtful guidance.

David Sontag, Court Administrative Officer/Jury Commissioner, (referred to as Court Administrator in this report) willingly shared his experiences and perceptions in an effort to produce a product of value to the Sonoma County Municipal Court. Dianne Naber, Clerk of the Municipal Court, provided assistance and encouragement to investigate thoroughly all aspects of the Sonoma County Municipal Court's clerical operations.

John McCamman, Administrative Analyst to the County Administrator, provided valuable logistic and scheduling support. His help and guidance enabled project staff to make optimum use of its time.

Project staff especially appreciate the time and effort Paul Buzanski took to explain to each project staff member the plans for implementation of the Integrated Justice System (IJS).

The observations and conclusions, and hence any errors of omission or judgment, belong solely to the project staff. If this report assists in improving the workflow of the Sonoma County Municipal Court, however, much of the credit belongs to those numerous court personnel who gave so graciously of their time and expertise and who will be responsible for successful implementation of the recommendations. Many of the recommendations made in this report are products of the learning experience of meeting with the clerks of the Municipal Court. When the purpose of this study was explained to Court personnel, they began immediately to think of ways that they could improve workflow and actively sought to develop improvements. Already numerous recommendations are in the process of implementation.

The project staff wishes to extend thanks to the Project Steering Committee: Leonard Whorton, County Administrator; Lou Funk, Grand Jury member; Robert Connor, Auditor; and Raymond Giordano, Judge of the Municipal Court. If the project staff is correct in its assessment that this study has served as a catalyst to encourage the Municipal Court to improve its workflow, the Steering Committee deserves credit for shaping the direction of the study and offering the staff of the Municipal Court the opportunity for improvement.

Finally, the project staff received substantial administrative support from Rochelle Rodgers, Maxine Rhodes, and Helen Ogata in the Western Regional Office and from Dawn Meyer of the Institute for Court Management in Denver.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Statistical evidence (see Appendix A), interviews throughout the court, and project staff's observations all suggest that the Sonoma County Municipal Court is a court in transition: in transition from a court whose staff and judges are able to meet the workload demands to one in which workload demands may soon exceed staff capabilities; in transition from a court only partially automated to one with significant automation. This is a court with a number of improvements and changes already in place but which also needs to attend to some basic matters before instituting any new major initiatives.

In the chapters that follow the National Center's project staff review in detail their perception of the Court's needs and appropriate responses to those needs. This Summary includes in general terms the project staff's findings and recommendations. The reader interested in a more detailed explanation of the nature of a problem or the rationale for a recommendation is invited to review the appropriate substantive chapter.

Computer Systems

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the Court's transition process today is its participation in the new integrated computerized justice information system (IJS). The first phase of implementation for the Court, the indexing function, has just been made operational. The second phase, calendaring, will be implemented during November. The final phase, document preparation and statistical tabulation and analysis, will be

operational in June 1985. The Court's traffic department has been automated since 1976, but there have been some difficulties with that automated system. Because of those difficulties, special care is needed in the implementation of the new IJS. The project staff suggests that the County's Data Processing Department provide the Court's staff with more information about the system and its implementation schedule and that all staff be scheduled for training by the Data Processing Department. There also is need for the Court's supervisors and the Data Processing Department to plan more thoroughly the placement and utilization of terminals within the Clerk's offices. The project staff also suggests that a case-scheduling enhancement to the present system and the development of management information programs receive a high priority following implementation.

Workload and Workflow Analysis

The symbol of the justice system is Lady Justice. Her life blood is a court's record creation and record keeping operations. A major portion of the National Center's study, therefore, focuses on the creation and flow of information from desk to desk and generally through the Clerk's office. The project staff's findings in this area are reported in Chapter III.

a. Civil/Small Claims

The civil and small claims department is staffed by six clerks, one of whom is temporary and one of whom also is a clerk for the Cloverdale branch court. This department processes 16.5 percent of the Court's workload based on the Judicial Council's non-judicial weights. If this department had 16.5 percent of the

staff, it would have 10 clerks in this Department rather than six; nonetheless, the department is reasonably current in its work.

Much of this department's case processing will be computerized when the IJS is fully implemented. In anticipation of the new computerized system, the project staff believes several manual procedures should be adjusted to prepare for the impending computerization. For example, the docket sheets should be physically separated into three groups, one for active cases that do not yet have a memo to set filed, one for active cases in which a memo to set has been filed, and the third for cases that are concluded. This physical separation will be helpful during implementation of the IJS because necessary docket-cleaning will be undertaken, thus reducing the number of dockets remaining after the new automated system is implemented. The physical separation also can ease the process of collecting statistics for the California Judicial Council. The automated system will use only one number to identify a case and can automatically produce a list of active cases, if desired. Pending full implementation of the computerized system, the court's use of a control number and typing of a civil active list should be terminated.

In this department the clerk's minute entries are made directly on the typed daily court calendar. The project staff recommends that these notes be the final minute entry, thus eliminating the need to transfer these notes from the calendar to a separate minute sheet form when the clerk leaves court. Also related to the question of forms, the department would benefit from a thorough re-examination of the forms it uses.

b. Criminal Department

The criminal department, which handles misdemeanor filings and the paper associated with felony preliminary hearings, presently has 11 of the Court's 66 clerks, including two clerks who are temporary employees. It has a different set of problems from those found in the traffic department. The problems in this department tend to be associated closely with the processing of paper. These paper processing problems are compounded by some lack of clarity in staff assignments.

The project staff urges clearer definition of who is to staff the telephones and the front counter for the criminal department and the training of clerks by the supervisor in the processing of appeals and in handling the mail.

The principal paper-related problem in the criminal department involves updating of the docket and maintaining current information about case status. The docket is a sheet used by the Court to maintain a running history of all actions in a case. When a case has a hearing in court, an entry is made, called the minute entry, showing the results of that hearing. The information from those minute entries is to be transferred to the docket sheets. Because of backlog that developed in transferring the minute entries to the docket sheets, the Court recently instituted a procedure of attaching the minute sheets to the docket sheet so that information will be available without necessarily being entered on the docket sheet itself. Nonetheless, there has been a continuing backlog involving this transfer of information. The IJS will relieve some of this problem, but in the meantime the project staff suggests that

priorities be established to assure the daily updating of the dockets.

The criminal department also has had some problem in maintaining information about when a case is calendared to appear in court and in the preparation of the calendars on the day of court hearings. Again, the IJS will contain a calendaring function that is scheduled to be implemented in November. When implemented, the new calendaring system should relieve some of the problems the criminal department has been having in this area. If the implementation of this function is delayed at all, however, the project staff suggests further training for the calendaring staff so they can have the full benefits of the word processing equipment available to them.

c. Traffic Department

Without doubt, the traffic department of the Clerk's office is the Court's busiest; almost 85 percent of the cases disposed by the Court in 1983 were traffic-related. The Court's processing of moving traffic citations has been automated since 1976. That system is undergoing modification to expand its capability; the enhancements should be completed by the end of 1984. Thus, the Court's present use of data processing is an integral part of the workflow of the traffic department.

Fourteen of the Court's 66 clerical positions are in the traffic department. Four of these positions are "extra help" or temporary positions. Tasks are allocated functionally, in that staff have been assigned to specific, individual procedures required to process files from their opening to their closing. Overall, staffing levels appear to be adequate within this

department, but current practices such as the use of full-time but temporary help and rotating staff among the various desks or areas of responsibility seem to have had adverse effects on the overall workflow within the department. The use of temporary staff in this department has been justified by the pending modifications to the data processing system. Implementation of the modifications may ease the need for overtime in this department, but it is unlikely to eliminate or markedly change the need for full-time personnel. The department has experienced some backlog in processing work; the practice of rotating clerks may have contributed to the development of this backlog.

The flow of work through the traffic department is keyed to the courtroom and data entry. The Court recently instituted a walk-in arraignment procedure that appears to be an improvement over previous procedures under which the cited citizen had to call or come to the Court to schedule an arraignment date. This part of the process appears to be working reasonably well. The Court has had some trouble following entry of a conviction, particularly if the cited citizen is ordered to attend traffic school as part of the sentence.

There are several points at which the workflow in this department is slowed down, although for different reasons at each point. One is in the entry of a new trial date into the computer system after a continuance has been granted. Presently, the information is entered into the computer by a supervisor after it has been entered manually by a clerk. Clerks could be authorized to enter these new dates into the computer; the project staff understands they presently are being trained to do so. Another

delay comes because the Court has only one cash register for entering both payments made by mail and payments made at the counter. Although this problem will be addressed with implementation of the modified automated system, in the meantime the project staff suggests leasing an additional cash register.

Some data are being entered more than once in the computer or once in the computer and again into a manual system. To address these problems, the project staff proposes that the traffic citation number be used as the Court's case number and that only the most necessary information about the case be recorded on the file jacket used in traffic cases. To reduce the problem of inability to locate the files, the project staff recommends color-coding the docket sheets to indicate at which work station a missing file might be found.

Information from the traffic school back to the Court about successful completion of traffic school often is delayed, which might result in automatic issuance of a warrant by the computer in an inappropriate case. This process of obtaining information from the traffic school should be re-examined. The Court also should investigate conducting its own traffic school rather than using an outside contractor. The project staff understands that both of these are being addressed by the Clerk.

d. Accounting

The financial management of the Court presents a mixed picture. The budget for the Court has increased 86 percent between 1977-1978 and 1982-1983. On a cost-per-case basis, there has been an increase from \$18.50 per case in 1977-1978 to \$22.16 per case in 1982-1983, an increase of 20 percent. This per-case

cost increase is lower than the rate of inflation and is as low as it is because there also has been a significant increase in court revenues. In the last five years, revenues have increased from less than \$500,000 to over \$1,300,000 a year, an increase of 168 percent. In fiscal 1978-1979, revenues represented 36 percent of the Court's actual expenditures. By 1982-1983, revenues represented 53 percent of the Court's actual expenditures. As good as the revenue picture looks, the Court has exceeded its budget for expenses in each of the last six fiscal years.

The Court's accounting department contains an Accountant and five clerks plus a volunteer who works four hours a week. In just the last three months, the accounting department has spent 321 hours in overtime work, most of which was spent processing bench warrants for offenders with delinquent payment accounts. In light of the number of hours of overtime the accounting staff has worked recently, the Court should consider adding a full-time position for the processing of bench warrants rather than continuing the practice of having staff work overtime. The additional position might be cost-justified and also might improve general productivity.

The Court has not monitored its expenses as it should. The documentation of expenditures is the responsibility of the County Auditor's office. Although the figures produced by the County Auditor are cross-checked by the Court's Accountant, there is little management analysis of areas where overruns are occurring or might occur or procedures that can be instituted to control expenditures. The Court needs this type of systematic monitoring and review.

Better monitoring also is required in the area of fine payments. The Court should know, but does not now know, the percentage of offenders who make partial payment and the percentage of those who make full payment of fines imposed; those who request and are granted additional time to pay; and those for whom a warrant is issued but on whom the warrant never is served. The Court also needs to monitor information about traffic and other fines collected to assist it to predict revenue trends and identify particular revenue collection problem areas.

e. Court Clerks

Court clerks presently are assigned to individual judges for one year. This assignment system appears to be working well except for some communication problems between courtroom clerks and the two judges' secretaries. The clerks also would benefit from having a supervisor, although there are some personnel classification problems associated with the creating of a supervisor's position.

Personnel

There are four key issues in the general area of personnel management: management structure and responsibilities, the number of staff, the use of temporary staff, and training for staff.

The management structure of the Court is unique: There is a Clerk of the Court and a Court Administrative Officer/Jury Commissioner, both of whom are judicial appointees. The Court Administrative Officer/Jury Commissioner (referred to as Court Administrator throughout this report) has responsibilities in both the Superior Court and Municipal Court. An administrative assistant serves the Court Administrator, while a Court Services

Supervisor and an Accountant report directly to the Clerk.

When the position of Court Administrator was created in 1971 it was thought that both the Superior and Municipal Courts would best be served by one administrative officer providing support to both courts, while the clerical operations were overseen by an elected Clerk in the Superior Court and an appointed Clerk in the Municipal Court. As the County and the courts have grown since 1971, all aspects of both courts have become more complex; the relationship and responsibilities of the Court Administrator and the Clerk of the Court have evolved in ways that might not have been anticipated in 1971. In the most general terms, the Clerk handles the daily administration of the Court and the Court Administrator is responsible for providing policy direction and support to the judges and the judicial support staff. The Court Administrator also is responsible for budget preparation, although in fact his role now has evolved to assembly and presentation of the budget rather than its analysis and preparation. The appointing, firing, and disciplinary responsibilities for Municipal Court belong to the Court Administrator but in fact are exercised by the Clerk. Were it not for the high level of cooperation between the incumbents, this division of responsibility could be very disruptive.

The incumbents have devoted commendable effort to sharing of their responsibilities and the information they possess. Unfortunately, their responsibilities have grown to the point where their sharing of information also takes considerable time away from actual management. Because of the needs of the Municipal Court and the problems inherent in the current division

of responsibility, the project staff recommends that the Court Administrator position be allocated solely to the Superior Court and that the Clerk of the Municipal Court position be changed to that of Clerk/Administrator of the Municipal Court. Appendix C reviews the project staff's proposal on the allocation of responsibility between the two new positions as they now would relate to the Municipal Court.

The Sonoma County Municipal Court has gone from a small, rural court where people knew each other and the atmosphere was fairly informal to a Court serving a mobile, more urban population that has substantially more employees and substantially greater volume with which to deal; the environment has become much more high-pressured and somewhat less oriented to public service. The project staff does not recommend significant additions to the clerical staff, but a courtroom clerk will be needed for the new judicial position and additional temporary resources are needed to work through the backlog in paper work in the accounting and criminal departments. This paperwork backlog should be addressed through the use of temporary personnel hired only for short term and only until the paperwork backlog is eliminated. Except for this one use of temporary personnel, the project staff recommends that the use of temporary personnel be abandoned and that all seven current extra-help positions be made permanent positions. Staff should be classified as general municipal clerks except in the accounting and data entry departments. The accounting department should be staffed with clerks in the account clerk classification and the data entry staff should be classified as data entry operators in the County system.

Training is a key aspect of retaining staff and making them productive. It has several facets. The key facet is the need for procedural manuals to assist each of the clerks to do her or his job better. There are some manuals for a few desks and a few written procedures, but overall training manuals need to be created and made readily available to all staff. Another aspect of training is cross-training of staff to perform more than one function, both for general development of staff and to provide staff who can back up others during vacations and illnesses. Moving staff from task to task for the purpose of cross-training is valuable; movement of staff to new departments with little or no prior training, similar to the recent rotation of 20 percent of the clerical staff, should not be undertaken in the ordinary course. Finally in the training area, the Court should set training objectives for all staff, to include a minimum number of hours of orientation in court procedures, time management, and working with the public.

Space Planning

The Municipal Court occupies approximately 7,500 square feet of space, but only about 5,000 square feet of that is working space for clerks. The problems of limited space are compounded by poor organization and under-utilization of a few areas.

The problems of space management can be addressed without assigning additional space to the Court at this time. They can be addressed by rearranging the departments of the Court within the available space, changing the counter areas, and changing the doorways for public access. The Court also should start using a limited number of partitions to provide supervisors with some

separation and privacy and to separate working departments. In order to limit the problem of largely unlimited public access to work areas and file areas, the chain across the entrance to the criminal department should be replaced by a controlled swinging door and members of the public and other agencies looking at files should be separated from the clerks' work area and limited in number.

Other Issues

a. Forms

The report concludes by looking at several significant management issues that cannot easily be classified into the areas already discussed. One of these is forms design and management. The project staff was unable to conduct a comprehensive review of the forms used in the Sonoma County Municipal Court, but it appears based on the review that was possible that significant improvements can be made in the forms used in the Court. The project staff proposes a review of all the Court's forms in light of four guidelines suggested in the report.

b. Branch Courts

The project staff also did a preliminary analysis of the use and effectiveness of the four branch courts in Petaluma, Sonoma, Sebastopol, and Cloverdale. These four courts cost the County very little in terms of physical plant, necessary budget for the four courts totaling \$12,215 in 1983-1984. The full-service branches in Petaluma and Sonoma have five and three clerical personnel, respectively, while the partial service branches in Sebastopol and Cloverdale have one part-time clerk each. The part-time clerks assigned to Sebastopol and Cloverdale spend the

balance of their time in Santa Rosa performing duties that are essential for operations in Santa Rosa but that do not require attention every day. Based on its preliminary analysis of usage and costs, the project staff recommends closing the Sebastopol and Cloverdale branch courts.

c. Court Hours

Because of the high volume and the paperwork logjam that has developed, the Court has put some staff on a flex-time basis and is reviewing the possibility of instituting a four day, ten hour day work week or a two-week schedule in which employees would work 80 hours in nine days. Before these alternative staffing patterns are attempted, the National Center suggests court hours of 8:30 to 4:00, with the hour from 4:00 to 5:00 being reserved for training sessions, staff meetings, and to organize workflow.

The length of this report and the number of recommendations offered should not be viewed as an indictment of the Court's operations. The Court on its own, prior to the initiation of this study by the National Center for State Courts, had adopted a number of personnel and management changes that already have had positive effects. The Court also has adopted several of the recommendations made in this report prior to formal receipt of the report because of its interest in improving matters as quickly as possible.

For the next two years the Court will face the difficult task of implementing the IJS and dealing with some of the basic workflow and management issues covered in this report. The Court should not attempt any major new initiatives in this period. If it concentrates on improving its basic operations and procedures

and on implementing the IJS it will be well along the way to providing citizens of Sonoma County with a Court that meets their needs.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 1984, Sonoma County initiated a request for proposals to "conduct an organization and clerical workflow analysis of the court." That topic is the subject of this report. Following a competitive selection process, the National Center for State Courts was selected to conduct the study. A principal objective of the study was to analyze issues which the Sonoma County Municipal Court and Sonoma County officials believed to be of pressing concern in the operations of the Municipal Court. The analysis specified that the National Center for State Courts would:

- review the existing organization, staffing, workflow, and administrative procedures of the court;
- evaluate the current needs of the court and, if appropriate, the projection of the court's needs in the future;
- present recommendations for improving the existing organization and workflow of the court and the bases for these recommendations.

The scope of the study covered the following operational areas:

- workload and workflow analysis
- management structure
- court personnel and personnel management
- financial management
- court facilities (and, to a lesser extent, branch courts)
- data processing

In assessing these aspects of the court's operations, the project staff looked at the current situation and at historical trends regarding the court's workload and staffing problems.

Methods used in the study included:

- review of relevant provisions of law and of documents including budgets and other statistical data;
- collection and analysis of data;
- observations of work procedures including in-court clerical procedures;
- interviews with court personnel and with representatives of other agencies within the Sonoma County Judicial System.

The project staff's analysis of available statistics (see Appendix A for complete analysis) indicated that among California's 86 municipal courts, 57, including Sonoma County, had five or fewer authorized judgeships. Sixty-five of those 86 courts have fewer total filings than the Sonoma County Municipal Court. The relatively heavy caseload in Sonoma is apparent when one examines filings per judge. Only 16 of the 86 municipal courts in the state have a higher number of filings per judge than the Sonoma County Municipal Court. The pace of civil case processing in the Sonoma County Municipal Court is good. Median time from Memo to Set to the start of trial is sixth best in the state. Only five municipal courts in the state are faster in scheduling and holding nonjury trials for general civil cases.

The court has performed at the levels indicated above with only six judicial positions (five judges and one commissioner) while its weighted caseload would indicate that eight or nine judicial positions is more appropriate. The weighted caseload numbers for clerical staff also indicate that the court does not have the clerical staff its workload would justify, although the discrepancy is much smaller at the clerical level than at the judicial level.

The good news in these numbers is tempered by other numbers. Only once in the last five years has the court been able to dispose of as much as 90 percent of the cases filed in that year. The court suggested to the project staff that the "selected" portion of its caseload which requires the most judicial time is increasing as a percentage of the total caseload. The clerical weighted caseload has proceeded similarly. The importance of tracking selected cases as a percentage of total weighted filings is that these cases represent the most difficult cases for both judges and clerks. Filings in the court have increased since 1978, but if the percentage of selected cases falls as the total caseload rises, the relative impact of the selected cases either rises at a slower rate than total cases, does not rise at all, or may even fall.

The percentage of bail forfeitures was less in 1983 than in 1979; the total number of bail forfeiture dispositions increased by almost 21,000 during this period, but on a relative basis a smaller percentage of dispositions were achieved solely through clerical procedures than in 1979. Dismissals represented a greater proportion of total dispositions in 1983 than in 1979. Pleas also increased as a percentage of total dispositions. These numbers, which are all set forth in Appendix A, suggest that it may be possible to help the clerks use their time more effectively.

Nevertheless, there are encouraging signs at the clerical level. In the last two years the clerk's office has instituted a centralized filing system; new procedures have been developed to identify and purge old files; envelopes now are being used for

traffic cases; a telephone recording has been installed to help respond to and screen out calls to the traffic department and, in fiscal 1984, a telephone operator was added to relieve other clerical staff of the need to respond to calls. The court is changing its method of updating docket sheets to eliminate duplication of effort. Attention also has been given to improving organization and management of the Clerk's office. Some of these changes include new staff evaluation procedures, weekly staff meetings, education for supervisors in training and supervisory skills, and the introduction of Quality Circles.

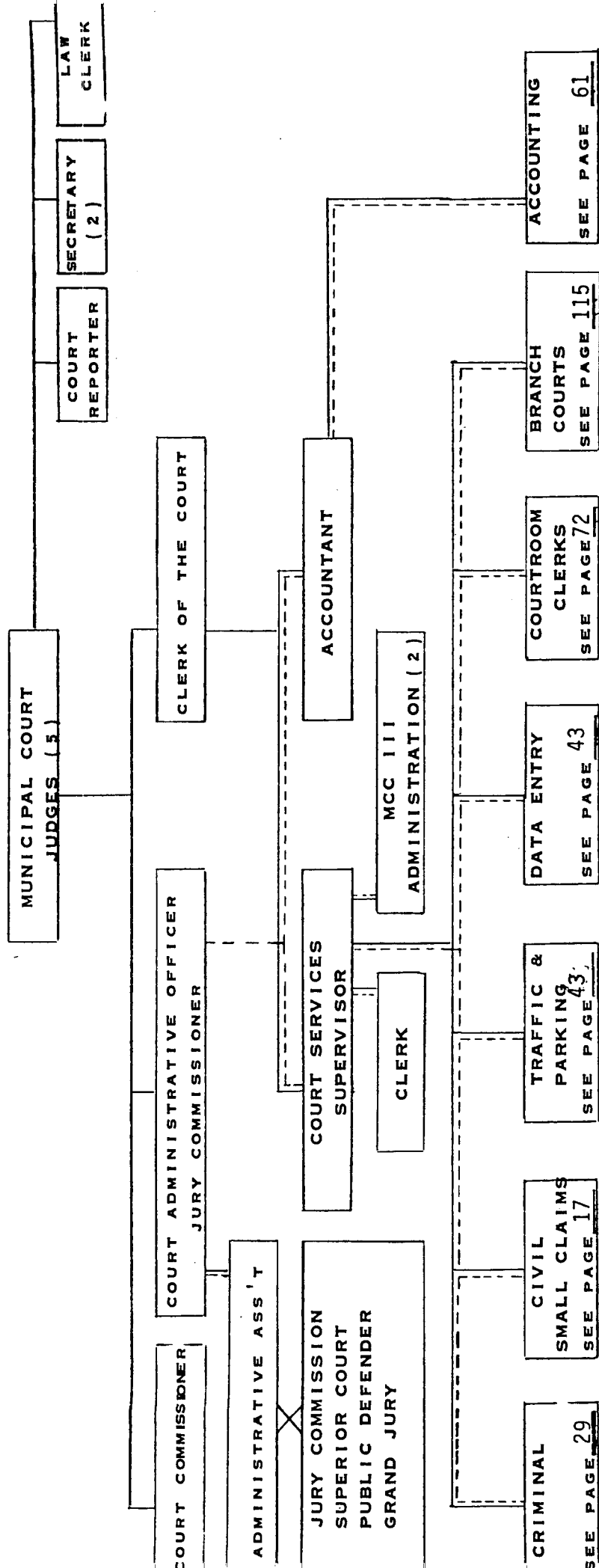
In sum, the Sonoma County Municipal Court can point to a number of positive achievements, both in relation to other municipal courts in the state and within the context of its own operation, but, as in all courts, there remains room for continued improvement. This report offers suggestions to build on the solid foundation present in the Court and to address problems the Court's administration has not yet had time to solve.

The Municipal Court Clerk's Office consists of six discrete work units: traffic, data entry, civil/small claims, criminal, accounting, and courtroom clerks.

The work of the traffic and data entry departments is closely interwoven; criminal and civil/small claims departments are independent to a great extent; the accounting department performs financial operations for the entire office; the courtroom clerks operate as an independent unit although courtroom clerks interact with all the clerical departments. Additionally, clerks from the various departments may be assigned to courtroom clerk duties.

Except for the Accountant who reports directly to the Clerk of the Court, reporting responsibilities flow upward through each department supervisor and the Court Services Supervisor to the Clerk of the Court.

SONOMA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COURT ORGANIZATION CHART SEPTEMBER 1984



KEY:

----- BROKEN LINE INDICATES APPOINTING AUTHORITY ONLY

_____ SOLID LINE INDICATES NORMAL REPORTING AND SUPERVISORY AUTHORITY

X _____ CROSSED LINES INDICATE PROVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANCE

II. COMPUTER SYSTEMS

A. Overview of the Integrated Justice System (IJS)

September 1984 will be the first month that Sonoma County has an on-line integrated justice system performing data processing tasks. The implementation of the IJS has been long-awaited. The County has allocated considerable resources for development of the IJS and the Court has done much of its planning based on expectation of the implementation. Since workflow will change considerably with the implementation of the IJS, the National Center's project staff believes its general observations on the status of the implementation process to be equally as important as its recommendations for improving the present mostly manual operations of the Court.

Two and a half years ago, the County's Data Processing Department performed a feasibility study on an integrated system and in its August 1984 project description the system was introduced as follows:

"Administration of justice is a complex and involved process, requiring the interaction of many different types of personnel in several departments. The offices of the County Clerk, Municipal Court Clerk, and Probation Department directly support the Superior and Municipal judicial departments. The District Attorney, Public Defender, Sheriff, and other law enforcement agencies all play important roles in the justice process. Juvenile, adult, criminal, civil, and other non-criminal cases add to this complexity a variety of supporting paper work and scheduling requirements needed to handle the growing Sonoma County caseload.

Automation will be used as a tool to relieve many of the manual tasks now being performed by all the justice departments. Additional benefits will be derived by the ability of the computer to provide all departments with the same information at the same time.

Sonoma County's Integrated Justice System is designed to support three basic functions for the Justice community.

1. Indexed inquiry into case and administrative information;
2. Central maintenance of all court calendars;
3. Production of clerical, statistical, and management documents and reports.

The automation of these functions is expected to produce benefits in several areas, including clerical workload, reduction of lost time, dissemination of timely and accurate information, statistical data for analysis, and improved caseload management."

In the Sonoma County Municipal Court the IJS will be implemented first by entering case index information for all criminal, civil, and small claims cases. This information was expected to be on-line by the end of September 1984.¹

The calendaring function of the IJS is due to be implemented in November 1984 and the documents phase to be operational by June 1985. The documents phase will include automatic preparation of Judicial Council reports and will integrate the system's word processing function with data processing so that court notices can be automatically generated.

The computer hardware that was chosen for the IJS is the Wang VS computer. Each terminal has word processing capabilities and some of the terminals are stand-alone microcomputers with their own floppy disk drives and microprocessors.

When the hardware was first installed, the Data Processing Department believed that it would be advisable to begin implementation with the word processing and microcomputer systems

1 The Integrated Justice System does not apply to traffic, parking, and some minor municipal violations nor does it perform accounting functions for the Municipal Court.

to allow staff to independently make some use of the hardware and software. Clerical employees were trained in word processing and some have used the terminals since this training in late Spring, 1984.

After the first three phases are implemented, the Data Processing Department plans not to allow any enhancements for a period of approximately one year. This will allow all of the agencies using the system to have adequate time to identify and work out any bugs.

The project staff reviewed written materials on IJS and met with the head of the Data Processing Department and with the senior systems analyst assigned to the IJS. Many of the design elements of the system were reviewed during these meetings. The Data Processing Department was unable to provide projections of case processing economies that are expected to result from full implementation of the IJS as they have not attempted to conduct an empirical analysis of these potential savings. Similarly, a comprehensive analysis of the workflow savings that might be realized was beyond the scope of this study.

When fully implemented, the indexing system will save the civil and criminal clerks case processing time. Much of the entry work that is done on criminal cases will already have been performed by the District Attorney's office; the Municipal Court will only have to enter its case number and other information exclusive to the operation of the Municipal Court. Civil cases are initiated in the Municipal Court and, therefore, the index will be completely entered by the civil clerks. However, there will be time saved from not having to record the same case

information on indexes, dockets, and calendars. These savings will be realized more fully when the second phase of the system is implemented. For small claims cases the litigants fill out a multi-part complaint, the last sheet of which serves as an index card for indexing of small claims cases. Therefore, the small claims clerks do not presently perform a clerical function in indexing cases. The automated system initially will be extra work for the small claims staff.

Starting in June 1985, the IJS will allow the clerks to perform noticing tasks automatically. For example, to send a notice of a continuance to litigants the clerk will simply call up the case index and a preset continuation notification letter and merge the two documents, the computer will automatically print out a letter to the litigants.

B. Implementation of the IJS

Recommendation No. 1

The Clerk of the Municipal Court in conjunction with the Data Processing Department should prepare a biweekly newsletter to inform the staff of developments with the Integrated Justice System. The schedule for implementation of the three phases of the system should be included in this newsletter.

The Data Processing Department has developed its own schedule for system implementation and training, but it has not effectively communicated this to the Municipal Court users. Communication by the Data Processing Department is particularly important in light of the previous bad experience with the automated traffic system which has been demoralizing to the Court staff. The Data Processing Department has provided news of its schedule via a relatively user-friendly mail function, but the mail program can be used only by those people who are using the terminals. Since

the vast percentage of the court employees are not using the system, they remain uninformed.

Recommendation No. 2

The Court administration in conjunction with its supervisors should meet with the Data Processing Department and the senior systems analyst to develop a plan for the placement and utilization of all the terminals allocated to the Municipal Court.

The Data Processing Department has already installed six IJS computer terminals in the Municipal Court clerical area. It is the project staff's understanding that four additional terminals will be received by the Municipal Court.

During the first phase of the implementation of the IJS, only case indexing will be performed. Because of this the clerks will be able to share terminals without much difficulty. During the second and third phase of the implementation of the IJS, however, the system will perform more functions and more clerks will want to access the system. It is not clear now who will be receiving computer terminals and for what purpose. If it remains unclear it will lead to confusion about the implementation of the system and perhaps animosities among staff and between the Court and the Data Processing Department.

C. Training

Recommendation No. 3

The IJS training plan should include initial and follow-up training sessions for all users. Training should be conducted exclusively by Data Processing staff trainers.

The quality of data generated by automated systems is only as good as the data entered into it. In fact, one of the axioms of

automated data processing is "garbage in, garbage out." The easiest way to assure reliable data is to adequately train those people who will be working with the system.

The system was designed so that the operator can press a single "help" button to explain what the input options are. This is a well-programmed feature and should be very helpful in training staff, although this special feature cannot replace training. It was originally envisioned that Data Processing staff would train supervisors in the new system and train the supervisors in how to train their staff. The training capabilities of the supervisors vary tremendously and reliance upon line supervisors to train the rest of their employees is not advisable. Although the Data Processing Department has plans to train the staff of the Municipal Court and has been preparing training manuals, greater concentration on the training efforts is needed.

The Data Processing Department told project staff that it hopes to train Municipal Court staff individually in single one-hour sessions. The project staff believes that the training schedule should include not only a one-hour session but a follow-up session shortly thereafter to review the basic training and to assess the employee's understanding and ability to adapt to the automated system.

The Data Processing Department believes that it is possible to proceed with the relatively basic indexing phase of the system without fully training all the designated users. The project staff cautions that except in extraordinary circumstances training prior to implementation is necessary. It is also important for

the persons conducting the training to understand that many of the court's employees have never worked with a computer terminal and will need a considerable amount of orientation during the training process.

As noted above, it should also be remembered that the automated system existing in the Municipal Court in the traffic department has had many problems. It has not performed as well as was hoped and some employees harbor the attitude that computer-assisted data processing can be more of a hindrance than a help. In short, the Data Processing Department needs to "sell" the features of the system and the training program.

The approved budget for automated data processing systems for the Municipal Court for 1984 is approximately \$240,000. Allocating the proper resources to training during the implementation phase would be a prudent use of a relatively small amount of money. Initial training costs will be considerably higher than training after implementation. It should be noted that data processing departments in Bay Area industries allocate 5% to 15% of their budgets to on-going training, budget allocations for training during implementation is even greater.²

Recommendation No. 4

A representative from each criminal justice agency should be appointed from the on-line staff to serve on a user's group. This person would listen to suggestions or complaints from staff within his or her particular agency and discuss the matter with the representatives from all agencies.

² Survey conducted by Midas Project, Computer Systems and Services Training Committee, Pacific Gas & Electric Co., 1984.

The Municipal Court regularly interacts with the District Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, Probation Department, the Sheriff's Office and the Superior Court. These communications will take on an added dimension with the implementation of the IJS. Undoubtedly, there will be some difficulties in communication among the agencies utilizing the IJS. These difficulties will be resolved most easily when the communication gap which is normally at the staff level is worked on and solved by people at that level. The users group will need to convene regularly scheduled meetings attended by support staff of the Data Processing Department. The user's group should be distinguished from the Criminal Justice Committee which includes department heads or designees from each criminal justice agency. The Criminal Justice Committee advises the Data Processing Department in its programming and maintenance of the system. The user's groups should be comprised of hands-on employees from the various agencies.

D. System Enhancements

Recommendation No. 5

A case-scheduling enhancement should receive as high a priority as possible.

One of the enhancements to the system as it is planned allows for a program through which scheduling conflicts can be reduced. The criminal justice agencies enter and update their own schedules, i.e., schedules for District Attorneys, Public Defenders, Sheriff's employees. With this enhancement the IJS will calendar cases only when there is no conflict among those people who must attend a particular hearing. This is a very

important enhancement and would cut down considerably on the rescheduling of cases which now occurs.

Recommendation No. 6

The Data Processing Department should develop computer programs that would allow the Court to obtain case management information.

Currently, the Court is limited to compiling information that is required on an annual basis by the Judicial Council. Other information that may be beneficial to the Court includes the number of failures to appear (FTAs) for the different types of court proceedings, number of cases continued over a given time period, number of cases that are disposed prior to arraignment and number of cases that are disposed of on the day of trial without a trial. This kind of information will assist the court in identifying problem areas and when and where resources may have to be shifted to meet changing needs.

E. Automated Traffic and Parking Systems

The above discussion of the IJS does not specifically address the automated data processing system in the traffic section of the Municipal Court.

Currently, the only department that is automated is traffic; it has been automated since 1976. This automation allows the Court to quickly monitor a case from the original citation to final disposition. Additionally, the Court's master file can be updated on a regular basis. The index can retrieve citation information in four ways: offender's last name, case number, new citation batch ID number, and violation code. The computer generates daily, weekly, monthly, and annual reports.

Presently, the automated traffic citation system is being revised. The modified system will allow for on-line updating of the computer files when a bail payment is received. This eliminates the duplicative effort of receipting payments through a cash register and later entering the payment information into the computer to update the citation file. The modified system will also tie in with accounting, i.e., it will account for and automatically calculate the distribution of bail and fine payments. This eliminates errors caused by manual calculation and will also provide an audit trail each day to balance receipts. This enhancement is scheduled for completion by the end of 1984.

Because the amount of parking fines has increased significantly, the County deemed it advantageous to design an automated system to process parking citations. The parking citation system will allow access to files by vehicle license number, citation number, or offender's last name. Under this system, citations will be entered on-line rather than in batch mode. Like the traffic system the recording of payments will also be done by traffic department staff at the computer terminals at the traffic counter. Audit trails and statistical reports will be produced on a regular basis. The automated parking system design is complete and is scheduled for use in Fall, 1984.

The implementation, training, and enhancement recommendations for IJS apply equally to the modified traffic and parking systems.

III. WORKLOAD AND WORKFLOW ANALYSIS

The following chapter reviews the workload and workflow of the civil/small claims, criminal, traffic and data entry, accounting, and courtroom clerk departments of the Court. Each section of this chapter is organized according to an overview of the functions assigned to each department, an organization chart, a staffing discussion, and a workload and workflow discussion. All major recommendations relating to staffing, however, have been consolidated in Chapter IV. B. "Staffing."

A. CIVIL/SMALL CLAIMS

1. Overview of Functions Assigned to the Civil/Small Claims Department

A municipal court civil action, can involve a great amount of detail, but for the purposes of this overview the points touched upon will be limited to a general outline of what could be regarded as fairly typical civil case proceedings.

The Municipal Court has jurisdiction of civil cases in which the demand, exclusive of interest, is \$15,000.00 or less, and actions on unlawful detainer (for possession of real property) where the rental value is six hundred dollars or less per month, and the whole amount of damages claimed is \$15,000.00 or less. A civil action is commenced by the filing of a complaint by the plaintiff which is indexed by the clerk, docketed, and put into a case file; paying a filing fee which is recorded by the clerk; and issuance of a summons by the clerk. This is the means by which the Court acquires jurisdiction of the case and is the start of the case file, which in some cases becomes quite voluminous as a

result of the many different types of documents that could be filed through various phases of civil litigation.

All filing fees are collected, reported, closed-out on a daily basis, and transferred to the accounting department.

Upon the filing of the complaint and the issuance of the summons, a copy of each of these documents must be served upon the defendant, giving him or her notice that there is a civil action pending. This is an important factor, because without proper service of the complaint and summons a judgment against the defendant will not be granted by the Court.

The defendant may contest the action by filing an answer in court within the statutory time allowed. The clerk sees many different types of answers ranging from a simple general denial form that can be purchased by the defendant from the Court or in a legal book store, to a complete and comprehensive document drawn up by an attorney.

If a defendant does not answer within the prescribed time, the law provides that the plaintiff may request the entry of default and a default judgment by the Court. Most of the default judgments are processed through the clerks in the civil department and are clerk default judgments; in some cases additional proof and evidence are needed to determine the plaintiff's claims, and these cases are determined by means of short "prove-up" hearings before a judge or commissioner and are default judgments by Court.

When the defendant has contested the action by filing a proper answer and the case is at issue, one of the parties may request a trial by serving and filing a request for trial and a notice of trial. A trial date is set by the clerk on the earliest date

available on the trial calendar. Unlawful detainer cases (generally non-jury) for possession of real property have priority because of the urgency of their subject matter.

When the trial date arrives, one of several things could happen. Both parties may be present and ready to go to trial. If only the plaintiff is present and he or she wishes to proceed, the case may have what is known as a "defendant failing to appear" hearing and it can proceed to judgment based on the proof offered by the plaintiff. If, on the other hand, the defendant is the only party appearing and ready for trial, he or she may have the case dismissed because the plaintiff is not there to proceed. If both parties are present but for any one of many reasons are not ready to proceed, the Court may grant a continuance to a future date. If neither party is present and ready to proceed, the case will be declared "off calendar."

On all judgments except stipulated judgments and default judgments the clerk must send a notice of entry of judgment to all parties who have appeared in the action; the notice contains pertinent information as to case title, case number, prevailing and losing parties, and the amount of judgment. The mailing of this notice constitutes the time from which the appeal period runs.

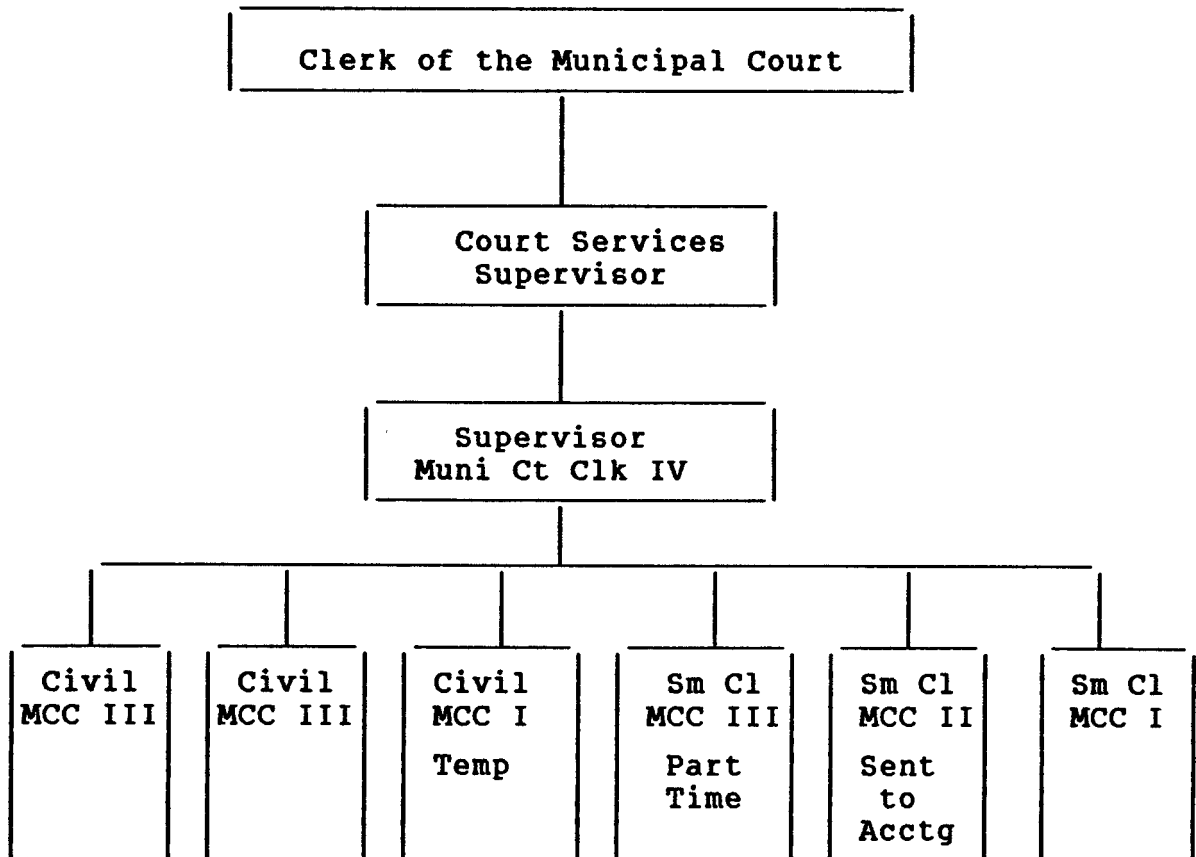
The civil/small claims department's clerical functions also include all processing of cases after judgment. The clerk's office in many cases must issue abstracts of judgments, writs of execution, and satisfaction of judgment. The department also processes civil appeals to the Superior Court.

As previously mentioned, this discussion was intended to be only a broad general outline of Civil Procedure, with some emphasis on the more fundamental aspects of a civil action; consequently, there are some procedures of varying degrees of occurrence that were not discussed.

Small claims cases are processed by clerks using procedures very similar to civil cases. The small claims filings are prepared on forms mandated by the Judicial Council and the workflow is kept totally separate from the civil cases. Therefore, the civil/small claims department has two separate clerical operations.

2. Organization Chart

Civil/ Small Claims Department



3. Staffing

The civil and small claims department of the Municipal Court is staffed by six clerks; a supervising Municipal Court Clerk IV, three Municipal Court Clerk III's, one Municipal Court Clerk II, and one temporary Municipal Court Clerk I. One Municipal Court Clerk III is also the clerk for the Cloverdale Court and spends every Monday and Tuesday and one Wednesday a month in Cloverdale. This clerk also serves as a courtroom clerk in Santa Rosa for small claims cases. Therefore, the time that this clerk spends in Santa Rosa processing paperwork for the civil/small claims department is very limited. The small claims section had an additional Municipal Court Clerk II until September, 1984 when she was transferred to the accounting department. There are no immediate plans to replace her.

The civil/small claims department is not overstaffed.³ At times the demand upon staff to complete large quantities of paperwork compromises the attention that should be paid to the detail of the work. Nevertheless, the civil/small claims department has been able to maintain the pace of the workflow and not suffer from any severe backlog.

3 The Judicial Council of the State of California has assigned non-judicial weighted units to each type of case filed in the municipal courts in California. When the small claims and civil filings are added together and given their appropriate non-judicial weights, the civil/small claims department processes 16.5% of the workload for the Court. The Court, with roughly 66 clerical employees, would have to allocate slightly more than ten FTE's to the civil/small claims department were these sections to get the allocation appropriate under the non-judicial weighted units system, in relationship to staffing for the rest of the Court.

The recent transfer of clerks from department to department within the Court brought two new clerks to the department and saw the departure of two experienced clerks to other departments. These clerks began their work with little formal training. One of the clerks had experience in small claims and was assigned to civil where many of the procedures are similar. Thus the need for training was not so urgent. Nevertheless, a great amount of time was wasted with these two new clerks asking an experienced clerk how to process documents. Each time a clerk was faced with a procedure that was unfamiliar, the clerk would ask another clerk within the section how to perform that procedure. The more experienced clerk spent the better part of his day being interrupted to answer questions.

In civil/small claims the implementation of the IJS will require additional staff time. Nevertheless, if the department does not lose staff from extended illness or leave it should be able to maintain its pace. Considering the backlogs in other departments in the Court, it is appropriate to maintain the civil/small claims department with marginally adequate staffing.

The supervisor of the civil/small claims department has prepared a brief outline of her clerks' duties. This outline reviews the varying tasks assigned to clerks in the civil/small claims department, but does not give time allocations for any task. The supervisor oversees both the civil and small claims operations. She reports directly to the Court Services Supervisor. The only other departments with which the supervisor interacts are the accounting department and the courtroom clerks.

4. Workflow Procedures

As noted in the overview, when a civil case is initiated in the Municipal Court, a file docket and index are created. These tasks are separate functions. The indexing system is a duplication of effort as the same information is entered on the docket and index. The automated index system, scheduled for implementation in September, will replace the manual index system, however, the dockets will continue to be prepared manually until that phase of the IJS is implemented.

Recommendation No. 7

The dockets should be divided into three filing sections.

The docket in the Municipal Court is a chronological listing of the history of the case. (In Superior Court the same information is called the Register of Actions, the name to which it is referred in the IJS.)

The documents used for civil case dockets are standard heavy bond paper. These dockets are stored in tubs in numerical order with the highest number the most recently filed case.

One of the enhancements to the computer system which is expected to be implemented during 1984-85 is an automated docket system. Because of this planned implementation, the project staff has a series of recommendations for improving the present docketing system so that it will not be a burden during the transition stage from the manual dockets to the automated dockets. The court will also be able to monitor its civil caseload with the recommended manual docket system.

The first section would be for all active cases that have not had a Memo to Set filed. This would be the first bin that a case

docket would be placed in after initial filing. The second section would be all active cases that have had a Memo to Set filed. The third set of dockets would be all cases that had reached final disposition. This separation of dockets into three main filing areas provides the court with a number of benefits. First, as the Court makes the transition to automated docketing, it will help the Court to know what cases have passed the disposition stage of processing. For the cases that have had their judgments satisfied or have been closed without action for a period of time, the dockets can be removed to remote storage. Second, to institute this docket system, the clerks will have to review all dockets to determine which cases have reached final disposition; numerous dockets will indicate that no action has taken place on a case for a considerable period of time. The court can notice the litigants that the case will be dismissed unless any action is taken. Finally, as a case reaches disposition, the dockets can be temporarily moved to a subsection of the closed dockets for a period of one month. To tally Judicial Council statistics, the court will simply count the number of dockets in this subsection to determine the number of cases that have reached disposition that month.

Calendaring Procedures

Recommendation No. 8

The civil department should no longer record cases on an active list and should cease entering a control number on cases.

When a Memo to Set is filed with the Court, one of the civil clerks assigns the case a control number, adds the case to an active case list, and places the case on calendar by writing case

information into a bound calendar book. This information is also written on the docket. Although a manual calendar will need to be maintained until calendaring is automated, there appears to be no reason for issuing a control number on these cases.

Placing the case docket itself in an active list section within the dockets will eliminate the need for maintaining a list of active cases and give the court an overview of the number of cases that need to be processed.

Minute Entries

Recommendation No. 9

The court should use letter-size paper for its calendars with four cases on each sheet. When these calendar sheets are returned to the clerk with the minutes on the sheet, the clerk can make photocopies of the calendar and simply circle each case on that calendar to highlight the case. The clerk can then insert this photocopy into the appropriate case file.

The senior clerk in the civil section prepares daily calendars for the civil courtrooms with four to six cases listed on each page of the calendar. In court, minutes are recorded directly on this calendar by the courtroom clerks. When the calendars with the minutes are returned from the courtroom, the clerk prepares a minute sheet for each case by recording the information placed on the calendar to a new minute sheet. The minute sheet is then filed in the case file.

Implementation of this recommendation will eliminate having to re-record the minutes of the case onto a minute sheet and also eliminate whatever slight chance there is for error in transcribing the information from the calendar to the minute sheet.

Tracking Case Files

Recommendation No. 10

When a file is sent to chambers a notation on top of the docket sheet should be used such as a colored plastic sticker to identify those case files that are in chambers for judicial action.

When a document on file with the court requires judicial action, the file is pulled and sent to the judge's chambers. At this time the clerk makes a notation on the docket sheet in pencil that the case has been sent up to chambers. There is no monitoring of how many cases have been sent to chambers and how many have returned.

The court will be able to monitor the number of cases that are pending judicial decision and reduce the possibility of files being lost in chambers.

Civil and Small Claims Court Forms

The civil/small claims department of the Court would benefit greatly from a thorough examination of their forms. For instance, the notice of trial form which is sent to counsel gives a great deal of information to the parties. It is questionable that all the information on this two-page form has to be given to the litigants. It is highly likely that the required information can be contained on a single page form. The small claims section of the court has a variety of forms, some of which are provided by the Judicial Council and others which are developed by the Court. An example of one of these small claims forms, which could be greatly improved if redesigned, is included in the forms design and management section of this report in Chapter VI.

Continuances

The civil clerks are allowed to continue cases upon oral request from counsel. Continuances require considerable clerical work. Clerks must recalendar cases, make docket notations and send confirmation notices to the litigants. The civil section should monitor the number of continuances that are granted to get an idea of the extent to which this complicates calendaring cases and increases clerical workload. If continuances cause an unreasonable burden upon the clerical staff, the bench may wish to adopt a more restrictive continuance policy. The Court's continuance policies should be examined during the upcoming Judicial Council calendar study.

Automation

There are two computer terminals in the civil/small claims department. At this time these terminals have the capacity to perform word processing functions. Two of the clerks in the civil/small claims department were given a basic one-day word processing training course. This course, however, was given a couple of months ago; since the clerks have forgotten how to sign onto the computers the computers rest unused. The civil/small claims staff remains somewhat skeptical about the benefits of the implementation of the computer system. The civil/small claims department may need as many as five computer terminals when the system is fully implemented. Their placement would be two at the counter, two in the main clerical area and one with the department supervisor.

B. CRIMINAL

1. Overview of Functions Assigned to the Criminal Department.

The Municipal Court has jurisdiction of criminal misdemeanors and infractions committed within Sonoma County. The court also has exclusive jurisdiction in cases involving violation of ordinances of cities and towns in Sonoma County. Although felony jurisdiction rests with the Superior Court, defendants are brought to the Municipal Court for arraignment and preliminary hearing.

A case is normally initiated in Municipal Court by the filing of a complaint with the clerk by the prosecuting agency. At that time the clerk creates a case file folder, an index, and a docket for that defendant.⁴

The case file usually includes the complaint; the records of any court proceedings, including copies of minute sheets; copies of pleadings; and an investigation report, including arrest records, citations, and any other private reports. The case files are kept in the custody of the clerk and, according to law, are not to be removed from that custody without a court order.

The criminal department must also keep a docket which contains the title of the action and a chronological listing of all the orders and proceedings relating to the action. The criminal department also has responsibility, among other duties, for issuing and recalling warrants, exonerating bail, and preparing

⁴ Filing of the complaint technically initiates the action, but in Sonoma County a case is often initiated in the Clerk's office by receipt of bail. It sometimes happens that a complaint is not yet received by the clerk even when the defendant goes to court for arraignment. It is not unusual for a deputy district attorney to bring the complaint to court or to file it with the clerk on the way to arraignment.

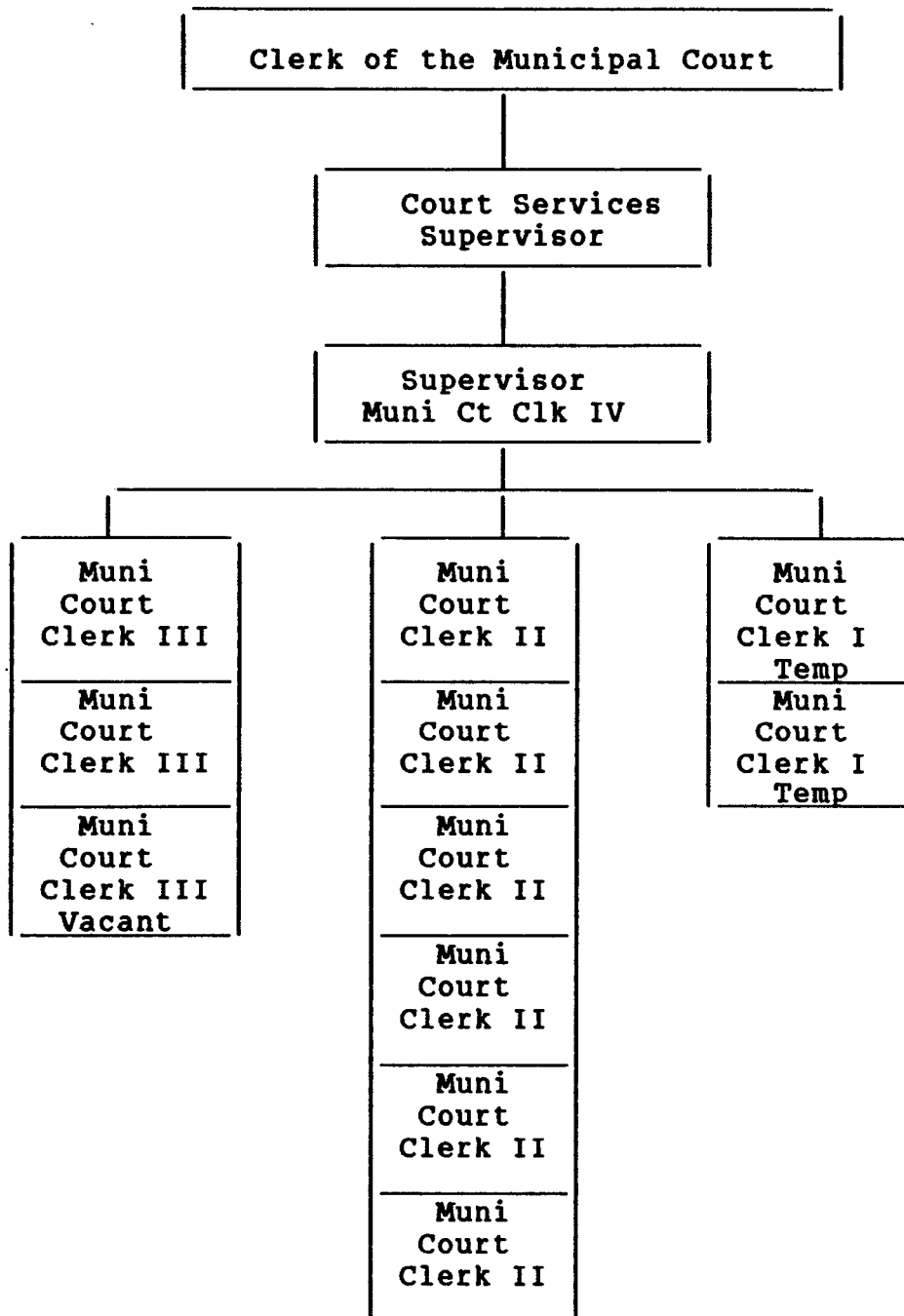
disposition reports to the appropriate agencies including abstracts of judgments to the State Department of Motor Vehicles.

As with the entire Municipal Court clerical operation, the main problem with the criminal department is control of paper generated in the office. Initially the project staff noted an absence of electronic equipment; all criminal procedures appear to be effectuated manually even though efforts have been made to use a Wang word processor for calendaring. Effective use of two word processors presently installed in the criminal department is not being made; the one utilized for calendaring is simply used as a typewriter, the other sits untouched on the front counter.

Excessive paperwork is required for each case. Hundreds of files must be pulled for each day's calendar. Each file requires typing or hand lettering. Entries include an index, a court file, a docket, and other assorted forms depending upon the type of case. The work necessary to create each docket is so time consuming and voluminous that, for example, a five month backlog of minute sheets to be docketed now exists.

2. Organization Chart

Criminal Department



3. Staffing

At present there are 11 clerks in the criminal department, including the supervisor and two temporary employees. Each clerk in the criminal department reports directly to the supervisor who, in turn, reports to the Clerk of the Court through the Court Services Supervisor.

Each clerk is assigned a discrete component of the workflow although the complexity and volume of the work requires that the clerks perform duties in addition to those to which they are assigned. Two clerks are assigned to traffic criminal (TCR) complaints, one to TCR completion; one clerk to penal code (PC) complaints, one to PC completions. One clerk is assigned to the desk for fish and game and local ordinances, both complaint and completion. Two clerks are assigned to calendaring; two are docket clerks. The supervisor performs many clerical functions herself; she also provides back-up support to the clerks within her section and serves as a substitute courtroom clerk (usually at least once each week, often more).

The staffing levels would be adequate⁵ if all the clerks were able to perform their duties without interruption. It is to the criminal department, however, that the courtroom clerks generally turn to substitute for an absent clerk or to fill the need created by an additional calendar. Often the person called

5 There is a docket backlog that will require the services of several temporary employees or work-study interns. This recommendation is discussed later in this section and formally made in the "Staffing" section of this report. The discussion here assumes the removal of that backlog.

upon is the criminal supervisor; when another clerk from the criminal department is called the supervisor must perform her duties as well. Sometimes more than one may be called. This disrupts the operation of the criminal department and aids in the creation of a backlog.

Two docket clerks presently spend a great deal of time entering items on the docket. These duties will be lessened with the advent of the electronic docket. Nevertheless the staffing levels should stay the same with the docket clerk positions assuming functions now performed by the supervisor, functions now overflowing from other desks (e.g., reports to the DMV), responsibility for distribution of documents placed in department "in boxes," and counter and telephone responsibilities. This restructuring will also allow the supervisor more time for training and organization.

Except for one calendar clerk, positions in the criminal department rotate each three months. Clerks are also assigned telephone and counter duties in addition to their desk duties. This gives each clerk experience and cross-training but also results in periods of time when the clerks are new at their desks. Persons wanting to use the services of the clerks may at times be unable to find needed expertise. Although the supervisor and the present incumbents at three desks have created procedural manuals, it will be some time before a procedural manual for each desk is completed. When they are completed these manuals will assist persons who newly rotate into these desks and persons answering questions in an emergency.

Recommendation No. 11

The supervisor should train lower level clerks to do the mail.

The criminal supervisor also distributes the mail for her department. If she is out of the office, mail distribution waits until she returns. This is an ineffective use of her time.

Recommendation No. 12

The supervisor should train lower level clerks to process appeals. Training should include utilization of the Wang word processor for the form letters and for maintaining the files.

The Supervisor of the Criminal Department handles appeals from the criminal department to Superior Court. At present she is establishing certain procedures for the appeals. She has a three ring binder for the notices and other communications and one file drawer for the files.

When the clerk receives the Notice of Appeal she docket the appeal. She walks to the docket bins and searches for the case. When she finds the proper docket, she pulls it out of the bin, turns to the page for entries and handwrites the information regarding the notice of appeal onto the docket. Then she returns the docket to the bin and walks back to her desk. This procedure assumes that the dockets are seasonably filed; as there is still a four-month backlog additional steps are required here including walking to the shelves and searching through the daily folders. She then makes up a folder for the appeal and notifies the parties by form letter, hand typing the pertinent information.

Since the procedures are already established, the transfer of this responsibility to another clerk should take place smoothly after the appropriate training.

Recommendation No. 13

Establish priorities so that counter and telephone are staffed by lowest level personnel and responsibility for back-up duties understood.

Counter and telephone duties are now staggered with three people on duty in the morning and three others in the afternoon. Because back-up responsibilities are not clearly understood or are ignored the public may wait at the counter for a clerk or the telephones may go unanswered for a time. If the main person assigned leaves her desk, confusion is created and the clerks are unsure who should respond. Clerks should be given clear directions as to how many times the telephone may ring, that persons at the counter take priority over those on the telephone, and that both take priority over desk duties. All clerks should be instructed that if the counter/telephone clerks are serving the public, each other clerk must accept the responsibility of either helping a waiting person or acknowledging that the person is waiting.

4. Workflow Procedures

Recommendation No. 14

Relocate daily criminal calendar to the wall facing the counter in order to relieve congestion at the windows.

When persons enter certain doors of the clerk's office, they immediately arrive at the criminal department. There they see two windows with signs overhanging the counter bearing the legend "Criminal." Behind the counter and to the right (as seen by the public) are the desks of the criminal clerks. The daily criminal calendar is located on the wall space between the two counter windows. The installation of this calendar has relieved the clerks from answering a great many questions relating to court

appearances. Prior to the installation, the clerks had to look up all the calendaring information. Public access to the calendar aids efficiency; that efficiency would be even more dramatically increased by the relocation of the calendar.

Calendaring

It should be noted that the project staff was not to specifically address calendaring issues because of the pending calendar study to be conducted by the Judicial Council. Nevertheless it became very clear that the method of calendaring cases in the criminal department had an impact on other procedures in that department. Thus insofar as calendaring affects the other operations of the criminal department those issues are addressed here. Additionally the IJS automation is expected to affect the calendaring procedures.

Calendaring procedures affect the entire department. The manual system of pulling files, entering information into logbooks, and moving files from one place to another requires the services of several clerks. This procedure could be alleviated by a few changes in calendaring and by the utilization of all functions of the word processor. If the calendaring function of the IJS is implemented as scheduled (by November) it may not be advisable to change to the word processing function now. But if the IJS calendaring function is delayed, implementation of the use of the word processing functions will be imperative to relieve the pressures in all areas of the criminal department. Additionally, in order to change over to automated calendaring the calendar clerk should evaluate exactly why certain items are calendared the way they are. The calendar clerk's span of control over

calendaring is somewhat limited as the judges control the content of the calendar and, to some extent, the priorities on the calendar. Nevertheless the clerk should review the requirements and procedures with a representative from the Data Processing department and with administrative personnel from the office of the Public Defender to explore more efficient ways of creating the calendar. One person in the office of the Public Defender would be a very effective resource. The latter understands calendaring, the needs of the Court, and the IJS system. The calendar clerk or the Clerk of the Court, should also review the calendaring requirements with the judges, to see if the requirements of the criminal calendar could be simplified. For example, the size of the paper on which the criminal calendar is printed should be evaluated. Presently it is printed on 8-1/2 x 14" paper. This size requires special ordering for the word processor printer and is more expensive than 8-1/2 x 11" paper.

At present the calendar clerk types the calendar on a word processor. Although her word processor has a sort and other word processing functions she is not using any of those functions of the word processor with the exception of the glossary. The glossary saves the clerk some time in typing but she or another clerk must still sort the files manually, a function that could be automated with minor adjustments to present procedures.

All procedures in connection with calendaring both before and after court are being handled manually. In order to prepare for court the file clerk for the criminal department must obtain the files for that particular day. The clerk goes to the calendar log book (old journal type) and opens to the next day's date. She

then goes down the list and finds the name of each defendant. She pulls the file from the pending file drawer. She then opens the file and reads the minute sheet to determine what time the defendant must appear. She then places the file on a small table in a spot (marked with a "Dymo" label or with a red brick) with the time scheduled for appearance. The calendar clerk then picks up the folders for that day and takes them to her desk. She must open each folder to determine certain other characteristics of the case. From these characteristics she arranges the cases further according to priority. (She is looking for characteristics such as whether the defendant has a private attorney or is represented by the Public Defender and the type of proceeding for which the defendant is scheduled.)

After court, the courtroom clerk (or the courtroom helper) arranges the minute sheets in numerical order according to case number. Then the helper carries the minute sheets down to the criminal department for the entry of continuances and a criminal clerk enters the name, date, and case number from the minute sheet into a calendar log book on the date rescheduled. These calendar log books are the old-style rectangular books with lines for every entry. Since the log books are not divided into hours the time is hand-lettered along with the other entries.

After entry into the calendar log book the docket copy of the minute sheet is put into a daily file. Another copy of the minute sheet is placed in the case file (a manila folder with all the papers relating to the case). If no further action is required the courtroom clerk will file the case in the pending drawer according to case file number. If further action is required by

the criminal clerk (for example, exonerating bail or issuing a bench warrant) the courtroom clerk will bring the file to the appropriate criminal clerk for the necessary action. After the criminal clerk takes the necessary action the criminal clerk will file the case file alphabetically in one of approximately 35 file drawers containing pending criminal files. If a case is scheduled for a continuance within two days the courtroom clerk will bring the file directly to the calendar clerk.

These procedures are expected to change with the implementation of the IJS. Additionally the Clerk of the Court may establish a calendaring section for all cases in the Municipal Court. If so, this procedure will be removed from the criminal department. For these reasons and because of the Judicial Council calendar study, specific calendaring recommendations have not been made.

It should also be noted here that the calendar study to be conducted by the Court Consultative Services of the Judicial Council of California will be of the entire Sonoma County Municipal Court, not just of the criminal department. While this section discusses only criminal calendaring considerable comment was made by clerical staff throughout the Court that the use of add-ons on individual calendars has created significant clerical problems.

Docket

Recommendation No. 15

Priorities must be established to assure the daily updating of dockets. This may not be a problem after the initiation of the IJS but since the dockets will not be automated for several months an interim procedure must be put in place.

Criminal department dockets are kept in tubs for easy access by the clerks; it is the docket to which the clerks refer to obtain information on the current status of the case.

The docket is arranged by file number. Each docket contains a summary of all that happened in a particular case in court and a record of every pleading or other occurrence. It does not, however, contain the actual pleadings; those documents are kept in the case file.

The docket is maintained because, while court case files may be out of the office from time to time, the docket will always remain in the clerk's office. Thus no matter when someone seeks information relating to a case it can always be obtained by referring to the docket. Thus the docket must always be up to date.

Until recently minutes of each court proceeding were typed onto the docket. A new procedure recently instituted by the clerk allows minute sheets to be clipped ("Acco" - fastened) to the docket.

Typing of the minutes allowed the docket to contain a shortened narrative form of the minutes of the court proceedings. In the past, the minutes of a court day's proceedings took the criminal department one-half day to post. Due to the increase in the calendars, typing of one day's minutes required three days of work in the criminal department. This increase resulted in a five-month backlog of dockets to be updated. Part of the backlog to the filing of the dockets was caused because of the typing requirement. Since all the information formerly typed appears on the minute sheets the narrative is not needed.

When additional calendars were established an increase resulted in the workload in the clerical sections. The creation of new calendars meant the creation of additional sessions and thus the need for additional courtroom clerks. The practical result of the need for additional courtroom clerks means that clerks from the other clerical sections are pulled from their desks frequently in order to work in the courtroom. The increase in calendars is perceived by the clerks as one of the reasons for the increase in the time for the typing of the minutes.

At the time of the project team's first site visit the docket was backlogged five months. When someone needed information from the docket the clerk would go to the index to find the person's name in alphabetical order. From the index card the clerk would find the case number. From the case number the clerk would walk over to the docket bins and find the docket in numerical order. The clerk would then remove the docket from the bin, flip through the "Acco"-fastened papers on the docket, locate the appropriate entry, and make the information available to the requestor.

Unfortunately this procedure, as complicated as it was, became further complicated due to the docket backlog. Often the information was not to be found on the docket. The clerk would then have to walk over to a tall bookshelf. On that bookshelf are manila file folders arranged according to date. In each folder are minute sheets of each court action for that day. The clerk would then have to go through each file folder in order to determine whether or not additional proceedings had taken place. This docket backlog still exists even though the typing of minutes onto the docket has ceased.

One preliminary suggestion discussed with the criminal supervisor was whether or not it would be possible to immediately docket the minute sheets from this day forward. Then, as the clerks were able to do so, the past information could be docketed. It was expected that the clerks would try this to see how it worked out. It needs to be understood, however, that particular care must be given when the backlog is finally docketed in order to be certain that the minute sheets are docketed in the proper chronological order. It is further expected that when the index, docket, and calendar functions of IJS are operational this will not be a problem because at that time the docket will become an on-line entry.

Even after that occurs, however, the manual docket must be brought up to date. (A recommendation for accomplishing this is made in the general "Staffing" section of this report.) In the meantime, however, dockets continue to be maintained manually. After all the docket bins are filled to capacity, the docket bins are weeded out and the dockets placed in big black binders. Dockets are lifted from the bins, the heavy (cardboard weight) backing sheet is removed and the dockets are placed in docket books. These are old-fashioned docket books which have two posts to accommodate two-hole punched paper.

C. TRAFFIC AND DATA ENTRY DEPARTMENTS

1. Overview of the Traffic and Data Entry Departments

The Municipal Court has jurisdiction over traffic and parking violations that occur in Sonoma County. Traffic matters are initiated in the traffic department of the Clerk's office. (Traffic violations that are criminal in nature, e.g. drunk driving, are handled in the criminal department.) The clerks in the traffic and data entry departments process the paperwork related to the traffic and parking filings. They also answer questions relating to traffic and parking and provide information on court procedures.

The traffic and data entry departments work hand-in-hand to process traffic cases through the Sonoma County Municipal Court.⁶ The Court's processing of moving traffic citations has been automated since 1976. Currently the traffic citation system is undergoing a modification which will provide expanded capabilities. Completion of the enhancements to the traffic citation system is slated for the end of 1984.

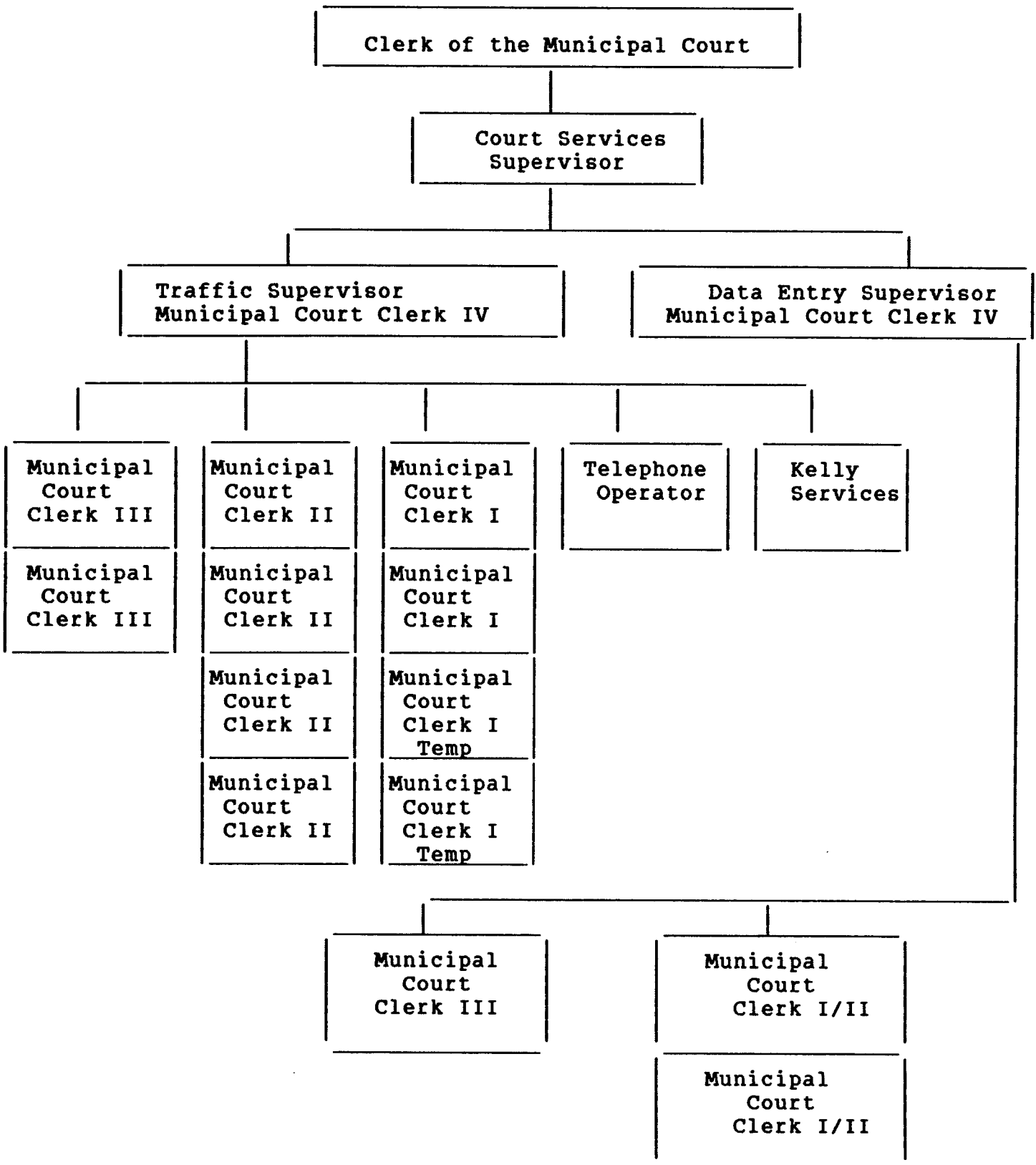
The revised traffic system will significantly alter the clerical workflow of the Court. For example, today, the data entry and traffic and parking departments transfer paperwork back

6 The types of traffic cases processed by the traffic and data entry departments include moving traffic infractions, such as stop light violations and speeding. Although the traffic department also handles parking citations, the majority of the workflow procedures touched upon in this chapter will deal with the Court's handling of moving traffic citations, as the parking system is in the process of being totally automated. Parking procedures will be described briefly in relation to the parking desk functions.

and forth from one department to another. Often one department will perform tasks that duplicate previous efforts of the other department. In many instances, the automated systems will eliminate this duplication of effort and the interrelationships between departments will change significantly. This section reviews the current workflow of traffic and data entry but does not focus on the possible change of functions.

2. Organization Chart

Traffic and Data Entry Departments



3. Staffing

The traffic department has thirteen full-time positions; ten, including a supervisor, are permanent positions; three are "extra help" or temporary positions. Additionally the department has one volunteer who comes in three days a week. The data entry department has a total of four full-time positions, including a supervisor. All four are permanent positions.

Under the current organization of the traffic department, work is assigned to discrete functional areas. That is, individual desks or areas have been created to handle specific procedures that are required for processing files through the various stages. For example, three clerks are assigned to an "alphabet desk." Each alphabet desk handles minute sheets, warrants, cash bail deposits, in-custodies, and all correspondence related to offenders whose last names fall within a particular alphabet group. Two of the clerks at these desks are Municipal Court Clerk III's who also may assume supervisory responsibilities when the traffic supervisor is away from the office; the third is a Municipal Court Clerk II.

A Municipal Court Clerk II is assigned to the calendar desk and is responsible for ordering the court calendars from data entry, pulling files, and matching the courtroom minutes to the files. Another clerk, a Municipal Court Clerk I, works the mail desk and is responsible for opening and ordering the mail in terms of payments, proofs of compliance, traffic school completions, and so forth, and pulls the files on these cases. A second Municipal Court Clerk I works the counter. A cashier, a Municipal Court Clerk II, enters all payments (mail and walk-in) into the cash

register and matches payment receipts with files.

At the parking desk, a Municipal Court Clerk II is responsible for batching the parking citations and sending them to Data Processing, setting up the parking court calendar, and handling all correspondence regarding parking tickets (including correspondence from the City of Santa Rosa).

The traffic department has a permanent telephone operator who handles all telephone traffic inquiries. The Court receives about 200 to 400 traffic inquiries per day. Each call is initially answered by a recorded message. Although instructions from the recording dispose of a good portion of the inquiries, the operator responds to about 75 percent of incoming calls (this figure was estimated by the traffic supervisor).

In addition to these functional areas, the clerks in temporary positions perform a variety of tasks within the department. Two of the clerks (Municipal Court Clerk I's) staff the counter. When time allows, they also go through the files that are pulled by the mail desk clerk and, depending on the type of correspondence, send it to the appropriate person. A third clerk (from Kelly services) is assigned strictly to the task of filing.

Finally, one supervisor (a Municipal Court Clerk IV) oversees the traffic department. This person is responsible for updating and defining traffic procedures; providing staff training within the department, evaluating subordinates in the department, and performing other duties as necessary; acting as liaison to judges, arresting agencies, District Attorney, Probation and other departments; coordinating work assignments and pro-tem judges and working in the courtroom when needed.

Under the current organization of the data entry department, work assignments are also related to functional areas. Two Municipal Court Clerks I/II are assigned to more basic duties, such as batching and entering new citations, pulling files for which warrants are eligible, correlating paperwork to and from Data Processing and the Sheriff's Office, stuffing envelopes returned from Data Processing and abstracting manual warrants. A Municipal Court Clerk III is responsible for correcting the rejected citations, closing cases, and performing other tasks as necessary. This clerk assumes supervisory responsibilities when the data entry supervisor is away from the office. In addition to overseeing the data entry operation, the supervisor evaluates and trains staff, enters court minutes, processes warrants, closes cases, and completes all entry work for the Cloverdale court.

Overall, the number of staff positions currently assigned to the traffic and data entry departments is sufficient to adequately and efficiently process the Court's traffic caseload. A particular problem with the Court's current staffing, however, is the number of vacant staff positions and the transfer of staff to other areas. The traffic department is in the process of filling a Municipal Court Clerk II position and a telephone operator position. The data entry department is lacking a Municipal Court Clerk I/II. Two traffic department clerks have been assigned to the new walk-in arraignment court and therefore are not available

to perform their assigned tasks in the clerk's office. These vacancies and transfers undoubtedly place additional burdens on staff members who have to cover these work areas in addition to their own assignments.

Although each clerk is assigned to a discrete component of the work unit there is considerable overlapping of job functions between staff within each department. Clerks responsible for particular duties often assume other tasks when the need arises, e.g., the traffic clerk at the parking desk may act as backup cashier, the assistant supervisor of data entry may stuff envelopes. To a certain extent this provides cross training and has been valuable in helping to alleviate some of the work pile-up when a staff member is out of the office or when there is a problem with the computer.

Nevertheless, some current Court staffing practices may be having adverse effects on the overall workflow within the traffic and data entry departments. For example, the custom of hiring temporary full-time help has often resulted in these people leaving shortly thereafter to accept permanent outside positions. New people must then be hired. The time that is necessary to learn the procedures involved contributes to work slowdown. Evidently, the rationale behind filling these positions with temporary staff as opposed to permanent employees is because of the work relief anticipated by the upcoming modifications to the current automated traffic system and the implementation of the automated parking system. The Court does not want to hire on permanent employees and then lay them off because of lack of work. The problem here, however, is twofold. First, the new and

revised automated systems are taking longer to implement than anticipated. Given this length of time, the cost of frequent interviewing, hiring, and training of new personnel must be considered in light of the cost of hiring these people on as permanent staff. Second, there currently is considerable overtime work required of the traffic and data entry department staffs. Statistics for the last three months show approximately fifty hours of overtime in the traffic department and thirty-two hours in the data entry department.⁷ While some of the overtime may be eased with future enhancements to the automated system, the existing backlogs will most likely necessitate maintaining present staff levels. (For a further discussion of the use of extra-help personnel, see Chapter IV).

The practice of rotating staff from one department to another has disadvantages that are especially evident in the traffic department. For example, the current traffic supervisor was, up until two months ago, a courtroom clerk and is frequently called to assist in the courtroom. While she is in the courtroom, procedural questions and any pressing supervisory functions have to be routed to someone else. Another example was brought to light during the interviews when it was learned that the parking desk clerk had only been in that position for one day. (Her predecessor had recently been assigned to the accounting department.) Although this clerk has acquired a good working

7 This information was obtained from the Clerk of the Municipal Court. In addition to the traffic and data entry departments, a total of 321 overtime hours was required in the accounting department over the past three months.

overview of the parking desk functions. the practice of rotating clerks may be responsible for some of the current backlog of work.

4. Workflow Procedures

The processing of moving traffic citations begins in the data entry department where citations are received each day in batches from the issuing law enforcement agency. A case number, generated by data processing, is assigned to each citation and information on the new citations is entered into the computer. A formal request is made to data processing to add the citations to the master file and to print envelopes (the case jacket), case dockets, driving records, and courtesy notices. The following day data entry receives the printed matter from Data Processing and proofs it for accuracy and completeness. The envelopes (with original citation, docket and driving record) are sent to the traffic department to be filed on the open case shelves; the courtesy notices are batched and mailed out to the offenders.

Basically, the courtesy notice is an instruction to the offender on how to dispose of the citation. It tells the offender if the matter can be disposed by simply mailing in bail. It gives a court date and time, generally three weeks away, for those offenders who wish to appear and contest their citations before a judge.⁸ Finally, the

8 This practice of setting arraignment dates automatically was recently implemented in the Court. Prior to September 4, 1984, the courtesy notice instructed offenders on whether or not the matter could be handled without going to court but did not set a court date. It was then up to the offender to call or come in person to the Court to arrange an arraignment date. Under this new procedure, the offender is expected to simply "walk-in" at the prearranged time for his or her arraignment.

courtesy notice informs the offender of the consequences if the citation is not disposed of within a certain period of time. When a court appearance is not mandatory and the offender fails to dispose of the citation, a "hold" is automatically placed on the offender's license, which prohibits the offender from renewing his or her license. Once a week the traffic department receives a listing from Data Processing of those cases that are currently in hold status.

The initial processing of traffic cases from the time the Court receives the new citation to the mailing of the courtesy notice usually takes between five to ten days, depending on the backlog of work in data entry. During the interviews data entry was about one week behind in entering new citations. This backlog in work is often attributed to computer program problems which cause frequent down time.⁹

The processing of parking citations will soon be automated in the Municipal Court. Although the City of Santa Rosa has decided to take over its own parking citations, these tickets are processed through the Municipal Court if the offender wishes to either contest the matter or simply appear for arraignment to tell his or her side to the judge. Even in those cases where a parking ticket is dismissed by the City of Santa Rosa, a list is sent to the Court for an authorized signature before the City will officially close the case. The Court then mails this list with the signatures back to the City.

9 Data entry staff is also concerned that the new walk-in arraignment procedures will increase their workload as they will have to complete entries daily. See p. 54

Under the Court's walk-in arraignment procedure, the offender is instructed to report to the clerk's office at a particular time.¹⁰ (The times are set one half hour before the arraignment sessions are scheduled to begin.) When the offender checks in at the counter, his or her file is pulled and the offender is directed to the traffic courtroom. Immediately prior to the arraignment session, the files are alphabetically arranged; case dockets are pulled, put in order, and checked for warrants or holds. The files and paperwork for that session are then sent to the traffic court.

The walk-in arraignment procedure, although still in the experimental stage, seems to be an improvement over the previous procedure where the offender had to call or come in to the Court to schedule an arraignment date. The new procedure should lessen the number of telephone inquiries that the Court receives on traffic matters. Additionally, it may eliminate some work for traffic clerks in that they will now be pulling the files of only those offenders who appear for arraignment. There is one step concerning this procedure, however, that the Court may want to consider changing. This involves the alphabetizing of the arraignment cases by offender's last name. This seems to be an unfair procedure for offenders who may have taken time off from work and even arrived at the court early in anticipation of handling the matter expeditiously. Cases should be filed in a

10 Under the old procedure, arraignments were held one morning and one afternoon a week. Under the current walk-in procedure, arraignment sessions are conducted five afternoons a week.

first come, first served basis, in order that, e.g., offender Smith who arrived at the clerk's office first, does not end up being the last one to be called before the judge. This may be accomplished by assigning persons a number upon arrival at the clerk's office. As the defendants are called before the judge, the judge may simply call defendants by number to come before the bench.

Under the new procedure arraignments are scheduled five days a week as opposed to the old procedure of scheduling them twice a week. Data entry clerks will have to adjust their schedules to enter the docket information from these files into the computer on a daily basis.

When an offender has appeared in court and a fine payment date or a future court date is scheduled by the judge, the courtroom clerk sends the envelope, with the docket sheet, to data entry and the date is entered into the computer. Cases with due dates are placed in a pending status. When due dates become current they are automatically listed on a warrant eligibility list that is generated weekly by Data Processing. The list is sent to data entry where the clerks pull the files on the new cases appearing on the list. After verifying that each case is indeed eligible for a warrant, data entry requests the printed warrants from Data Processing. Upon receipt of the warrants, data entry clerks complete the required paperwork and send the files back to traffic.

To a much lesser extent the data entry department assists in the processing of non-automated traffic warrants. These are warrants issued by one of the Sonoma County Branch Courts or by the accounting department. (The accounting department issues

warrants when a traffic offender fails to make an installment payment on a fine.) data entry receives the manually typed warrants from the issuing departments,¹¹ and using information from the original warrant, data entry clerks manually type an abstract and disburse copies to the appropriate agencies. Data Processing takes its copy and enters the information into the Central Warrants Index.

The administrative procedures involved in disposing of traffic and parking citations vary depending on the method of disposition. The method that involves the least amount of court resources is payment of the required bail amount either by mail or at the counter, on time, with no request for a court date. In these situations, the payment is simply entered into the cash register and the information is later entered into the computer. The case is then closed.¹²

Following a court date, a citation may be disposed of immediately by either a dismissal of the case by the judge or the immediate payment of a fine. On occasion the judge will grant a stay for full payment of the fine. Depending on the offense and the prior

11 In addition to the branch court traffic warrants and the accounting department warrants, data entry also receives manually typed warrants from the criminal departments in Santa Rosa and the four branch courts, the District Attorney's Office, and the Probation Department.

12 When the traffic citation system is modified and the parking system is automated the cash register will be eliminated. Cash drawers will be used to hold payments and payment information will be entered directly into the computer terminal at the counter.

record of the offender, the judge may order that the offender successfully complete traffic school by a certain date.

Considering the financial situation of the offender, hours of volunteer work may be imposed. Upon payment of the fine or completion of traffic school or volunteer work, the traffic department will close the case. In those instances in which the offender is allowed to make installment payments of the fine, the file is transferred to the accounting department for processing. Whenever cases go to a license hold or a warrant, additional staff time and other resources are consumed.

Recommendation No. 16

The Court should change the traffic school procedures to require the defendant to furnish the Court with proof of completion of traffic school. Also, the Court should investigate the possibilities of conducting its own traffic school.

A major concern of the traffic department is the risk of automated traffic warrants being issued in cases where they should not. Under the present system this could happen, particularly in cases where traffic school was imposed. The agency that supervises the traffic school program is understaffed and often does not immediately notify the Court when offenders have completed the program. Thus a warrant could be issued inappropriately. The Clerk was aware of this problem and was in the process of investigating the possibilities of conducting its own traffic school. The Clerk also had begun the process of arranging to require the defendant to furnish proof of completion of the program.

Recommendation No. 17

Traffic clerks should be trained and authorized to enter rescheduled court dates into the computer.

When a court date must be continued (e.g., if the District Attorney's office notifies the court that a police officer will not be available on a scheduled court date), traffic clerks complete a form indicating a request for a continuance and the traffic supervisor, or a substitute in her absence, enters the information into the computer terminal at the traffic counter. This seems to be a duplication of effort. That is, the information is being documented twice, once manually and again into the computer; the supervisor is forced to take time out from her busy schedule to enter the information into the computer, a function that could be handled by a traffic clerk at the counter. At the close of the site visit the project staff was informed that the clerks are being trained to assume this responsibility.

Recommendation No. 18

The Court should arrange a lease agreement for one additional cash register for the traffic department.¹³

The traffic and parking department has one cash register into which all mail-in and counter payments must be receipted. If a clerk is trying to enter a batch of mail-in payments during the normal office hours and someone from the counter wants to make a

13 The project staff recognizes that under the new automated traffic system cash registers will not be used. It is because of the pending implementation of the automated system that a lease agreement is recommended.

payment, the clerk must stop registering the mail-in payments to serve the person at the counter.

Recommendation No. 19

The Court should develop an "in box" for the cash register to keep envelopes in the order of person served.

The cash register used in traffic is adjacent to the traffic windows at the public counter area. When a person comes into the Court to pay a traffic fine, he or she first goes to a traffic window. There the clerk accesses the person's record on the computer, explains the fine status to the person and retrieves the envelope from the case files. The envelope is then placed on top of the cash register and the person is instructed to "pay at the cashier." By placing the envelope on top of the register the envelopes are out of order if more than one person is being helped at the counter.

Recommendation No. 20

The clerks should only record the most necessary information on the cover of the envelope, e.g., fine amount, disposition, etc.

The envelope and its contents constitute the hard copy of the file. About two years ago the Court began using envelopes, which are 8-1/2 x 11" envelopes (with no flap) in which the case paperwork (docket, citation, driving history printout, warrant, proof of compliance, receipt of fine payment) is held. The envelope is generated by Data Processing, which prints out a facsimile of the citation on the outside of the envelope following citation entry.

Traffic clerks have been copying the minutes from the docket sheet onto the cover of the envelope. This practice was intended to make it easier to identify case action without going through the contents

of the file, but this practice is a duplication of effort which seems unnecessary. Project staff understands the Court has already begun limiting entries on the envelope cover.

Recommendation No. 21

The Court should monitor cases in which offenders failed to appear for a court date.

Defendants failing to appear (FTA) is a problem common in lower courts. The unusually high incidence of FTA's for arraignment in Sonoma County warrants a closer look. When an offender fails to appear for a hearing, valuable courtroom and judicial time is wasted and time is spent processing and serving a warrant. By gathering information on FTA cases, the Court may determine if special types of cases are more likely to result in an FTA, the types of offenders who generally fail to appear, and the ability of law enforcement officers to obtain correct addresses for offenders. This kind of analysis may help the Court identify reasons why offenders fail to appear; with this knowledge, the Court may adopt certain procedures which would help reduce the number of FTA's substantially.

Recommendation No. 22

The Court should develop a case numbering system that uses the citation number as the case number. Other courts that use the citation number often use prefixes to identify the branch court or the year of filing. The advantage to this system is that it would eliminate the need for Data Processing to generate case number labels, and data entry clerks would no longer have to enter two identifying numbers for each citation.

Closed traffic files are retained in the Hall of Justice for about a year and are then shipped out to a storage facility. Closed cases are filed by case number. Open cases are located

along the wall in the traffic department and are filed alphabetically by offender's last name.

After a traffic case has been closed for 30 days it is purged from the computer. Information about the case (i.e., case number, offender's name, disposition) is, however, listed in the monthly index.

Hard copies of closed traffic files are retained by the court for a period of four years; parking for two years. Currently, the Court uses storage facilities at Los Guilucos and is in the process of purging old files to make room for files that are not yet old enough to be destroyed. Staff personnel have been driving out to Los Guilucos on a regular basis to purge the files. They are also in the process of designing a diagram of the storage area so that files can be easily retrieved if necessary. While this storage system seems to be working, the Court may want to investigate other methods of storing closed cases.

D. ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT

Overview of Functions Assigned to the Accounting Department

Overall, the functions of the Sonoma County Municipal Court's accounting department fall into two broad areas: the more general procedures associated with preparation of the budget and overseeing expenditures and revenues, and the more specific procedures that are related to the collection of money in the department's accounts receivable cases.

The source of the Court's budget is a combination of state and county funds. The budget is prepared annually and is subdivided into two areas, the judicial budget which is prepared by the Court Administrator and the clerical budget which is prepared by the Clerk of Court with input from the Accountant. (The clerical budget is submitted to the Court Administrator who evaluates it and makes recommendations on any changes.) The Court Administrator submits the entire budget to the board via the County Administrator for budget hearings, where it is either approved or denied. If budgeting in certain areas is denied, the court can protest. A protest document is prepared and presented by the Court Administrator and Clerk of the Court.

As the Municipal Court's caseload has increased over the past years so too has the size of its budget. Since fiscal year 1977-78, the budget amount authorized has increased from \$1,260,872 to \$2,342,880 (fiscal year 1982-83). This is an increase of 86 percent. As indicated in Table 1, costs per case filing seem to have increased from \$18.50 per case in 1977-78 to

\$22.16 per case in 1982-83, an increase of 20 percent.¹⁴ This increase of 20 percent is lower than the rate of inflation during the same time period.

Table 1
Budget Amounts and Cost per Case 1977-1983¹⁵

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Budget Amount</u>	<u>Actual Expenditures</u>	<u>Case Filings</u> ¹⁶ <u>(Cal. yr.)</u>	<u>Cost per Case</u>
1977-78	\$1,260,872	\$1,316,348	71,153	\$18.50
1978-79	1,364,994	1,377,269	66,615	20.68
1979-80	1,431,884	1,560,087	78,272	19.93
1980-81	1,654,765	1,914,547	90,124	21.24
1981-82	1,985,927	2,182,628	97,848	22.31
1982-83	2,342,880	2,456,380	110,870	22.16

Once a month the County Auditor's office prepares an expenditure report, which gives a breakdown of the actual dollars spent within the various expenditure categories. These categories include (1) salaries and benefits (e.g., permanent positions, extra help, overtime); (2) services and supplies (e.g., office supplies, forms, equipment under \$300); (3) fixed assets (equipment, etc., over \$300) and data processing (improvements and equipment). The expenditure report is sent to the Accountant for

14 Parking case filings were excluded in this analysis for two reasons: (1) parking case filings will decrease substantially because the City of Santa Rosa is now handling its own parking cases; and (2) the time and costs associated with handling parking citations are generally less than the handling of other, more serious types of cases.

15 Figures for this table were taken from the Budget Unit Expenditure Detail reports for fiscal years 1977-78 through 1982-1983.

16 Case filings exclude parking cases

her review. As indicated in Table 1, the Court has exceeded its approved budgets over the past six years by five to ten percent.

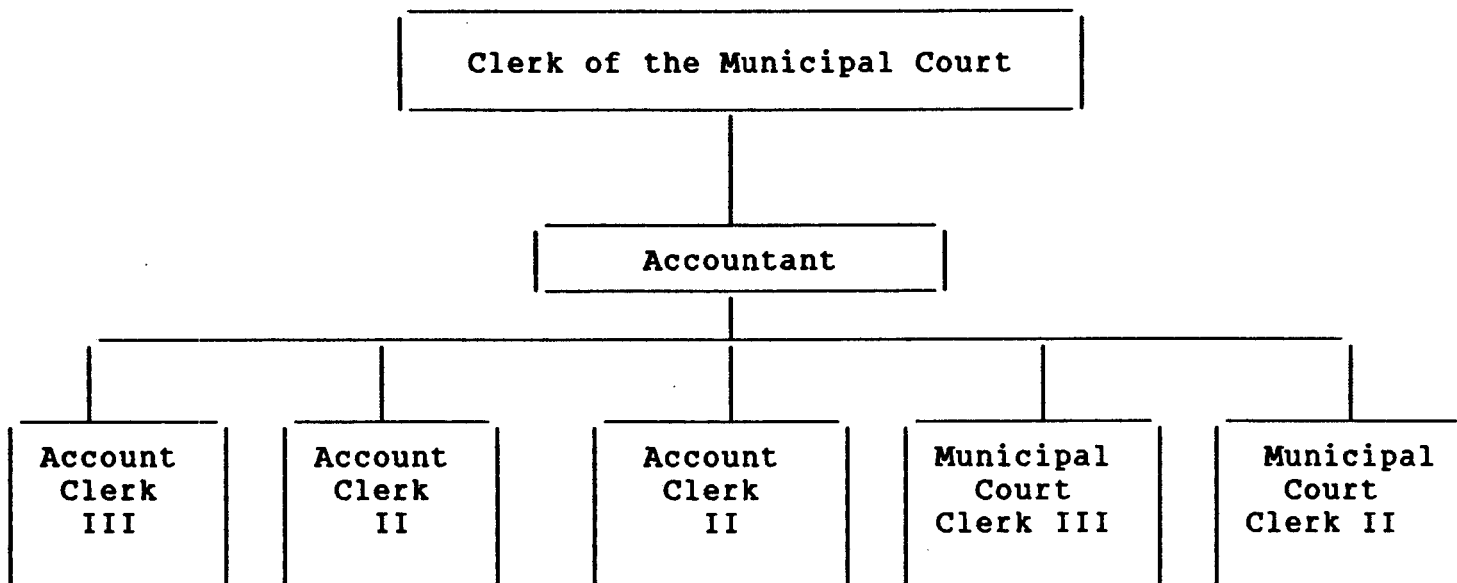
Most of the workflow procedures in the accounting department involve revenue collection within its accounts receivable section. These tasks range from responding to telephone and counter inquiries to maintaining its open accounts.

The accounting department's procedure for setting up and collecting payments on open accounts is initially similar to other courts. That is, an offender who is given time to pay a fine, will go to the accounting department's counter and an account card will be completed with the amount owed and the terms for payment. These cards are arranged in alphabetical order and located on a table near the counter. When an offender comes in to make a payment, the card is pulled and updated.

The accounting department maintains detailed reports on all monies collected by all departments in the Court. Case collection and distribution is recorded on a daily basis and is then transferred to monthly statements. These statements, and a variety of other financial reports, are submitted monthly to the County Auditor's office.

2. Organizational Chart

Accounting Department



3. Staffing

The accounting department consists of the Accountant and five full-time permanent clerks. A volunteer also comes in four hours a week; occasionally a work-study student is available to help out. Although tasks are, for the most part, assigned to various work stations, some of the clerks perform backup duties in the other accounting positions.

The tasks involved in the collection and recording of revenue collected are distributed among the six accounting staff members. Three of the clerks respond to telephone and counter inquiries. Additionally these clerks perform other duties: an Account Clerk II runs the daily mail and civil and small claims receipts through the cash register and keeps track of all the fixed assets of the Court; another Account Clerk II is responsible for setting up fine payment accounts, typing reminder letters and warrants for delinquent fines, updating the criminal accounts, and verifying the cashier's daily deposits; a Municipal Court Clerk II, a cashier, balances the cash register drawer, completes various financial reports, and does other work as necessary, such as filing and typing reminder letters.

Two other clerks may act as backup for the Accountant. One, a Municipal Court Clerk III, maintains the account cards and new accounts list, posts cases of all paid-in-full accounts, posts and sets cash bail and bail bonds, and does the daily deposit. The other, an Account Clerk III, maintains the bail holding trust account, balances the civil claims receipts, orders accounting supplies, closes the cash register, and maintains financial reports.

Finally, the Accountant oversees the accounting department. In addition to supervising, evaluating and training employees, she is responsible for preparing and reviewing accounting reports, assisting in budget preparation, and overall accounting duties.

The personnel in the accounting department are relatively well-trained and work together well. Training is on a more formal basis than what has been observed in other departments. It is conducted and supervised by the Accountant. A procedures manual with detailed descriptions of all the functions within the department is currently under preparation.

Recommendation No. 23

The Court should review its current policy of authorizing overtime work in the accounting department. A cost analysis should be conducted to determine the feasibility of continuing this practice over time.

Presently the accounting staff is handling a tremendous work backlog. As indicated earlier, statistics from the past three months show a total of 321 hours of overtime work in the accounting department alone. The major drawback in the accounting department is that it is yet to be automated. While the department uses a microcomputer that maintains the bail trust account, sets priorities for the warrant tickler list, and generates master copies of reports and electronic spread sheets, virtually all of the accounting functions are performed manually. (The Accountant estimates that transfer for the total accounting operation from a manual to an automated system will take anywhere from two to five years.)

The major portion of overtime hours in Accounting is spent in the processing of bench warrants on offenders with delinquent

accounts. This effort is being taken to remedy the problem of revenues lost to the Court when expired probation periods prohibit the Court from enforcing payments of delinquent fines.

Fortunately, the accounting staff wants the overtime work, so it has not yet been necessary to impose mandatory overtime.

4. Workflow Procedures

Past Due Accounts

Recommendation No. 24

Considering the amount of time that is devoted to the pulling of delinquent accounts and the processing of bench warrants, the Court should monitor this procedure to determine its cost effectiveness. It is important that the Court know the percentage of offenders who come in and make a partial payment or a full payment; the percentage that request and are granted additional time to pay; and the percentage for which a warrant is never served.

Because the accounting department is yet to be automated, one of the drawbacks to the current account card procedure is that the accounting department cannot quickly identify past due accounts. The department's current procedure for selecting out delinquent accounts is to set one day aside each month in which all six staff members manually review about 4,200 account cards and pull those that are eligible for a warrant. In addition to this time-consuming task, warrants must then be manually typed.

This massive effort is costing the County many hours of overtime. Clerks are currently able to process warrants on cases due to expire within three to four months. At the end of a one or two year probation period, there is a good chance that many of

these offenders will have moved to a different address or left the area entirely.¹⁷

Revenue Collection

In addressing the issue of revenue undercollection, the Board, about a year ago, decided to transfer all of the accounts receivable to the Central Collections Office. This was deemed desirable in that Central Collection could provide services such as billing. However, this effort was abandoned, principally because it could not be adapted within the legal confines of the Court. It could not, e.g., maintain a record of every receipt on account, but would only keep the receipt number of the last payment made. The system also failed to keep histories on offenders' past addresses or the results of various court appearances. The Court determined, therefore, that the system did not let the accounting department comply with the law and did not allow the department a system of internal control.

Recommendation No. 25

The Court should begin compiling and utilizing information regarding the collection of monies owed. This includes the collection of traffic fines in addition to accounts receivable. Only through systematic review and monitoring of revenues collected and uncollected will the Court be able to accurately predict revenue trends and identify particular collection problem areas.

17 The Court has recently implemented an additional step in its bench warrant process; accounting clerks now mail out a "warrant letter" at the time the warrant is issued. This letter tells the offender that a warrant has been issued and what he or she can do about it. According to the Accountant, this procedure seems to be effective; many offenders are coming in to make payments after receiving this letter.

Regarding the area of revenue collection, the Court has significantly improved its collection rate over the past few years. Revenue generated by the Court has more than tripled, going from \$489,821 in 1978-79 to \$1,310,544 in 1982-83. This increase is probably attributable to a variety of factors, including increases in cases filed and increases in fine, bail, and fee amounts. Table 2 reflects these increases.

Table 2

Comparison of Court Revenues and Expenditures¹⁸

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Revenues Collected</u>	<u>Actual Expenditures</u>
1978-79	\$ 489,821	\$1,377,269
1979-80	576,205	1,560,087
1980-81	772,011	1,914,547
1981-82	1,064,881	2,182,628
1982-83	1,310,544	2,456,380

Although revenue collected by the Court over the past few years has increased substantially, the current ratio of revenues to expenses is low, with the Court collecting only a little over half of what it spends. The undercollection of revenues has been cited in past audits as being a problem area for the Court. Although it is recognized that some undercollection is beyond the control of the Court (e.g., situations requiring the Court to impose volunteer work as punishment when an offender is indigent or statutory provisions that allow waiver of filing fees), much of this undercollection can be traced to the Court's inability to collect outstanding monies.

¹⁸ Figures for this table were taken from the Budget Unit Expenditure Detail reports for fiscal years 1978-1979 through 1982-1983.

It seems that the Court has never had a notable problem with bad checks. In fact, the problem has even lessened now that the City of Santa Rosa has taken over its own parking citations. The Accountant estimates that the lost revenue due to bad checks equals less than two percent of the total revenue. In addition, she estimates that the department would need a full-time person to handle these checks.

Expenditures

Recommendation No. 26

The Court should systematically monitor and review all Court expenditures. This task could be delegated to the Accountant, who would then submit information to the Clerk of the Court on a regular basis.

As noted, the documenting of expenditures is done externally by the County Auditor's office. Although the Accountant can cross-check the system to determine if, in fact, the correct payments have been made, there is presently no internal systematic review of past expenditures to determine those areas where overruns are occurring and what procedures may be instituted to control expenditures in these areas.

Despite the fact that the Court maintains great amounts of detailed financial information, there seems to be little in the way of financial management analysis. For example, no trend analysis is conducted to determine shifts in revenue sources over time. No aggregate information is maintained on the age of open accounts or the length of time it takes to close out accounts. The information is there, but is not easily accessible in its current form. Because the Sonoma County Municipal Court is a large volume court, handling large amounts of money, and

especially because there is a need to improve the Court's rate of collection, the compilation of relevant data is essential for effective financial management. At a minimum, information should be gathered and reviewed systematically on the following:

1. Total number of open accounts at any time, the age of these accounts and the amounts of these accounts.
2. Number of accounts closed and the amounts collected during that period.
3. Length of time it takes to collect monies owed and to close out accounts.
4. Information on delinquent cases (e.g., offender characteristics, type of case) to assist the Court in identifying problem areas in collection.

Although statistics such as these should be much easier to collect when the system is automated, the Court's current rate of undercollection justifies immediate attention in this area. The project staff realizes that the County has plans to fully automate the Court's accounting system. Because of the volume of cases handled by the Court, and especially considering its current collection problems, the urgency in completing this task cannot be overemphasized.

E. Courtroom Clerks

1. Overview of Functions Assigned to the Courtroom Clerk

Department

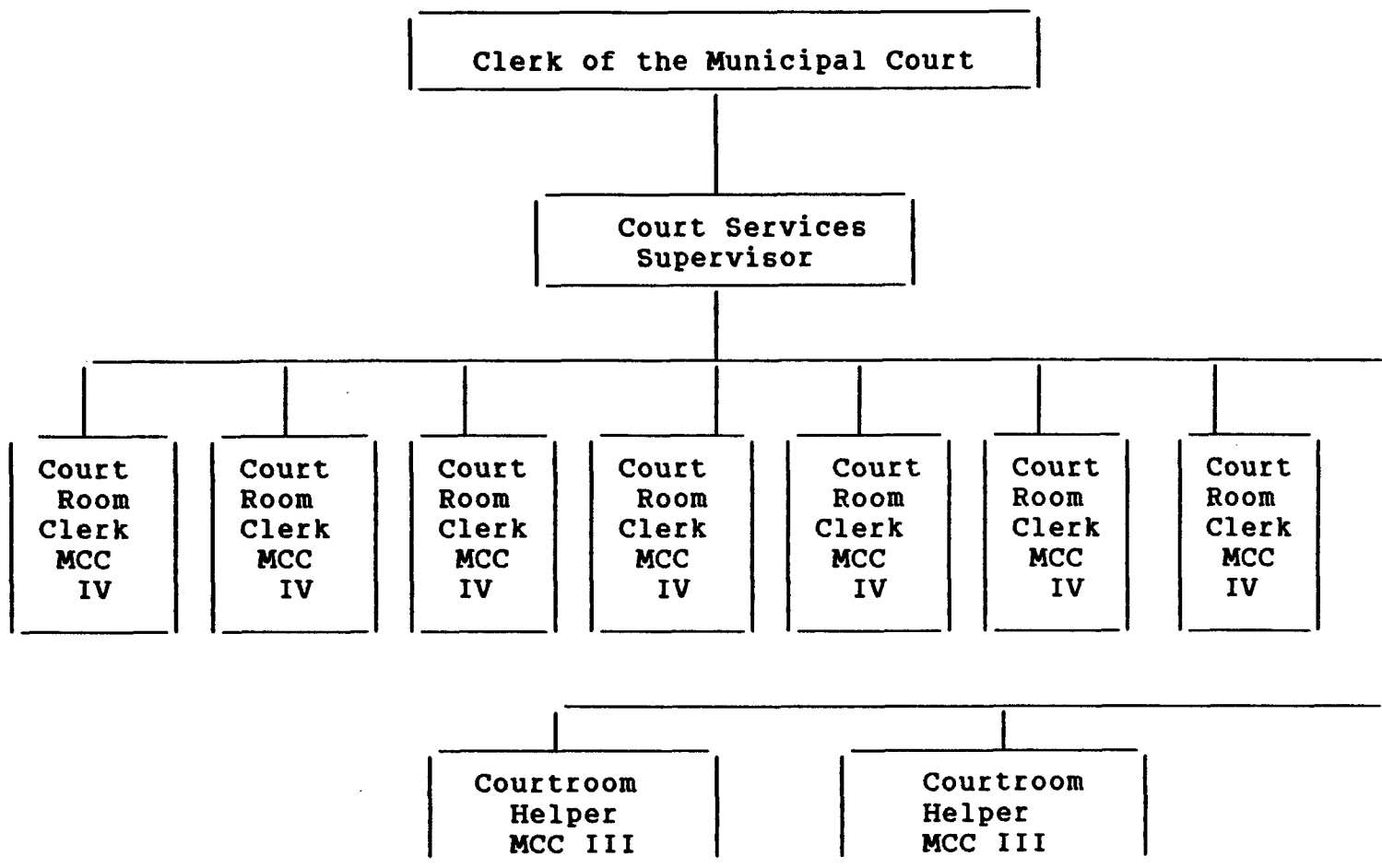
The courtroom clerks are the clerks who serve the judges in the courtroom. They also have desks located in the office of the Clerk of the Court where they do paperwork supporting the operation of their courtrooms and additional work for the department in which they are located. Most of their time is, however, spent in the courtroom.

The basic responsibilities of the courtroom clerk require the recording of minutes of trials and other court appearances. The volume of in-court work varies with the calendar. The variations range from a courtroom clerk serving in a court hearing the criminal calendar who may handle almost a hundred files and be responsible for entering the appropriate minutes of each, to a clerk in a civil courtroom hearing just one case. Duties include assuring that the judge has the appropriate file for the case being heard, listening to the proceedings and recording accurate minutes, and assuring that continuances are properly noted so that they may later be calendared for the correct date. In addition to their in-court responsibilities courtroom clerks also must follow-up those duties with clerical responsibilities, for example, typing minutes and entering the continuances into the appropriate log books. Clerks also must assure the distribution of minute sheets and other related court papers to the appropriate agencies throughout the justice system.

At one time the clerks were selected by judges for a six month period. This period has been extended and each now serves with her judge for a one-year period. According to both the clerks and the judges this arrangement appears to be working well. Each clerk develops a rapport with her individual judge that enables courtroom procedures to move efficiently and effectively. The assignment of a particular courtroom clerk to a particular judge for this length of time does not appear to affect the downstairs clerical operations in any manner.

2. Organization Chart

Courtroom Clerks



3. Staffing and Workflow

The Court Services Supervisor serves as supervisor for the courtroom clerks. Besides this supervisory responsibility she has numerous duties that leave little time for supervision of the courtroom clerks (e.g., she also is the person to whom the supervisors of each department report.)

Due to their positions, the courtroom clerks have split reporting responsibilities. They are members of the staff of the Clerk of the Court and, as such, report to the Clerk, are evaluated by the Clerk, receive promotions and raises from the Clerk. But they also have a reporting responsibility to the particular judge to whom they are assigned.

There are seven courtroom clerks and two courtroom helpers. At certain times due to the various calendars the requirement exists for more than seven clerks and two helpers in the courtroom. This requirement is particularly acute when all judges, the commissioner, and the pro tem are sitting at the same time. During this time as many as 10 clerks may be needed. (See sample summary of weekly calendar at Appendix B.) When this occurs experienced clerks are "borrowed" from other departments of the Clerk's office.

Generally, the persons borrowed are the supervisors of the other departments. The supervisors are required to fill-in when extra clerks are needed or for an absent clerk. Sometimes even the Court Services Supervisor is required to act as a courtroom clerk.

The span of control of the courtroom clerk is limited. Although the Court Services Supervisor may assign and substitute courtroom clerks to fill immediate needs, it is the judges who have the ultimate control. Addition of calendars or rescheduling of calendars by the judges causes changes to the schedules which must then be conformed to by the courtroom clerks.

Initial interviews with the courtroom clerk department indicated one method to improve the system as it now exists. The courtroom clerks perceive that there is sometimes a lack of communication between the secretaries to the judges and the courtroom clerks. Because of their physical position in the office, the secretaries often obtain information regarding schedules which, if imparted to the courtroom clerks seasonably, would enable them to perform their duties more effectively. For example, the secretaries might hear that the judges will be adding another calendar or that a particular judge will be assuming the calendar of a vacationing judge. Sometimes the information is obtained as the result of a last minute change in plans. At other times, when it is known in advance, if a secretary communicated that information as soon as possible to the courtroom clerks, the clerks could arrange immediately for the appropriate persons to cover the courtroom. The clerks could then prepare in advance for all the other ministerial duties that accompany the changes in scheduling. The courtroom clerks believe that improved communication between the positions would greatly facilitate their work.

The courtroom clerks also believe that the judges may not fully understand the increased workload that results in the clerk's office whenever the judges add calendars or otherwise revise their procedures. Although the Clerk of the Court does attend the judges' meetings there is a perception that an improvement in communication could easily be made were the courtroom clerks allowed to attend a judges meeting on occasion. The courtroom clerks believe that their occasional attendance at a judge's meeting would allow beneficial interaction and provide a means to alert the judges to the problems confronted in the Clerk's office by certain procedures.

IV. PERSONNEL

A. Management Structure

The National Center proposal to conduct an organization and clerical workflow analysis of the Sonoma County Municipal Court indicated that the management structure of the Court would be reviewed. The purpose of this analysis was stated as a

- 1) review and evaluation of the existing management structure;
- 2) identification of opportunities for improvement in the current structure;
- 3) determination whether any identified problems were attributable to structure or gaps in communication; and
- 4) the development of a basis for any recommendations concerning changes in the management structure or communication patterns.

Management Staff

California Government Code § 74708 authorizes Sonoma County Judicial District personnel. See organizational chart, page 6. This code section lists the Sonoma County Municipal Court personnel in two categories, those employees appointed by the Municipal Court judges and those employees appointed by the Court Administrative Officer/Jury Commissioner. (Administrative Officer/Jury Commissioner is referred to throughout this report as Court Administrator.) The two key management employees at the Sonoma County Municipal Court are both judicial appointees. One is a Court Administrator, the other is the Clerk of the Court. In the second group of employees, there are three court employees authorized to be appointed by the Court Administrator who should be considered management personnel. They are an Administrative Assistant who serves directly under the Court Administrator and a

Court Services Supervisor and an Accountant who both serve under the Clerk of the Municipal Court.

In general terms, the Court Administrator, at the direction of the Municipal Court judges, establishes policy, oversees, and represents the Municipal Court as a whole. He is also responsible for the management of the jury selection process for all Sonoma County courts and provides administrative support to the Superior Court, the Grand Jury, and the Public Defender's Office. As authorized by California Government Code § 74708 the Court Administrator is the appointing authority for all of the staff of the Municipal Court with the exception of the Clerk of the Court, the Court Commissioner, one court reporter, and two Municipal Court secretaries.

The Clerk of the Municipal Court is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Municipal Court clerical functions.

The Administrative Assistant to the Court Administrator provides support to that office's tasks which include budget preparation, financial reports, staff reports, coordination of Hall of Justice physical plant maintenance, court purchases coordination, special project development and review, budget transfers, and program and personnel development.

The Accountant and Court Services Supervisor report to the Clerk of the Court and assist in the development of court policy and program implementation. The Court Services Supervisor oversees the operation of the branch courts, the courtroom clerks, the civil/small claims, criminal, traffic, parking, data entry, and filing sections of the Municipal Court. The Court Services Supervisor does not have direct supervision over the traffic and

parking, data entry, criminal and civil/small claims departments, but relies upon those department supervisors to oversee their daily operations. As can be seen by a review of the organization charts in chapter III, direct reporting exists within each department as all clerks report to their supervisor. Very little structure exists within departments assigning reporting responsibilities to clerks according to their classifications. Presently, the Court Services Supervisor also manages the courtroom clerks' assignments. At times this is purely a ministerial function, at times it involves moving line staff into the courtrooms to provide courtroom services.

The Accountant oversees the recordation of all revenue and expenditures of the Municipal Court. The Accountant's staff of six employees performs all accounting functions for the Court. The accounting department interacts with all other departments in the Court. Because of the system-wide function of the accounting department and the abilities of the incumbent, the supervisor of the department has become an active participant in development and implementation of court policy.

The basis for this management structure dates back to the appointment of the incumbent Court Administrator in 1971. At that time it was felt that the Sonoma County courts, with an elected County Clerk for the Superior Court and an appointed Clerk overseeing clerical operations in the Municipal Court, would best be served by one administrative officer providing administrative support to both courts. With the growth of the County and the courts since 1971 these administrative duties have become increasingly more complex. As the office has evolved the Court

Administrator has had to remove himself more and more from the daily operation of the courts. The most obvious indicator of this evolution is that the Clerk of the Municipal Court hires, promotes, demotes, and dismisses her staff, even though the appointing authority for Municipal Court clerical staff lies with the Court Administrator.

Traditionally the Court Administrator has prepared the budgets for the Municipal Court, the Superior Court, and the Jury Commissioner's Office and has assisted the Public Defender's Office with final preparation of its budget. As this process has increased in complexity over the years the Court Administrator has had to rely on others to prepare draft budgets. His role now involves more of the final compilation and presentation of the budgets than their complete analysis and preparation.

Administrative Environment of the Sonoma County Courts

Within the Municipal Court operation, the positions of the Court Administrator and the Clerk of the Court have evolved compatibly. Their functions, however, have increasingly overlapped and the separate responsibilities of each office have not been well defined. There is clarity in some areas, however. In fact, there are relatively few who see the overlapping of functions between the Court Administrator and the Clerk of the Court as a significant problem. The clerical staff of the Municipal Court sees the Clerk of the Court as the administrator of all clerical activities of the Court. The absence of any physical presence on the part of the Court Administrator in the Clerk's Office gives members of the staff the impression that the Court Administrator has nothing to do with their operation. The

judges and judicial staff of the Municipal Court see the Court Administrator as the administrator for judicially related matters and the Clerk as administrator for clerical matters. The Court Administrator has traditionally been seen as overall manager of the facilities occupied by the Superior Court, Municipal Court, Jury Commissioner's Office, and Public Defender's Office.

The Court Administrator serves as the Court's department head for the Criminal Justice Council and as a representative to the Board of Supervisors and other outside agencies. As the Clerk of the Court has assumed more administrative duties for the Court and acted as the Court's representative to outside agencies, there has been some confusion over who is directing the operation of the Court. Because the Court Administrator has many responsibilities beyond the Municipal Court, representatives from outside agencies have found it more productive to interact with the Clerk of the Court than with the Court Administrator. They have also been able to conduct business with the Clerk as if she were the administrator of the Court. This perspective was voiced in all interviews conducted by project staff with outside agency representatives.

Were it not for the cooperation of the incumbents, the singular fact that the Court Administrator has appointing authority over the staff of the Municipal Court and the Clerk actually performs this function could be extraordinarily disruptive. The incumbents should be commended for sharing the common purpose of public service and putting the Municipal Court operation above differences and jealousies that could easily exist in this sort of a management structure. The Court Administrator

and the Clerk of the Court spend a significant amount of time and considerable effort in keeping each other informed of their activities. Although these persons should be commended for this cooperation, it is a waste of their talents and resources.

Recommendation No. 27

Administration of the Courts of Sonoma County can best be achieved by statutorily restructuring the administrative duties of the Court Administrator and the Clerk of the Municipal Court.

The Court Administrator position should be changed to Executive Officer of the Superior Court/Jury Commissioner; the Clerk of the Municipal Court position should be changed to Clerk/Administrator of the Municipal Court. (See Appendix C for Proposed Organization Chart.)

Although a comprehensive review of the administration of the Superior Court was not within the scope of this project, the Court Administrator provides administrative support to the Superior Court and therefore to assess his position in the Municipal Court, it was necessary to review what support he provides the Superior Court, how the Superior Court is otherwise administered, and the interrelationship between the Municipal Court management and the Superior Court management. Thus, the project staff reviewed the relationship between the Municipal Court and the Superior Court both in its day-to-day procedural workflow and at the management level.

The Superior Court clerical office is managed by the elected County Clerk. The Superior Court Judiciary is managed by the Presiding Judge who also performs administrative functions. The Superior Court judges depend to a certain degree upon their secretaries to provide administrative support for each of their courtrooms. The Court Administrator supplies the Superior Court

with assistance in budget preparation and in facilities management along with other special projects.

The future for the Sonoma County courts is one of increasing volume and complexity. The Superior Court and the Municipal Court are adding one judge each this year. The inefficiencies of overlapping administrative roles in the Municipal Court and administrative services performed individually by Judiciary staff in the Superior Court should be eliminated. There are 18 superior courts in California equal in size or larger than the Sonoma County Superior Court. All but two of these courts have executive officers. Those two without separate executive officers have County Clerks who are the named executive or administrative officer for the court. There are also several courts smaller than Sonoma County Superior Court with an Executive Officer and County Clerk.

Appendix B to this report includes the current job descriptions of the Court Administrator and of the Clerk of the Court with a discussion of their relevance to the status of the positions today and suggestions for clarification of overlapping functions.

Recommendation No. 28

The Administrative Assistant position to the Court Administrator should be transferred to the Clerk of the Municipal Court.

The Executive Officer of the Superior Court would receive clerical support from the Presiding Judge's secretarial staff and would work in conjunction with the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court on administrative matters. The legislative analysis performed by the Court Administrator would continue to be a

function of the Superior Court Executive. The Superior Court Executive should see that information is appropriately funneled to the Municipal Court when legislative changes affect the Municipal Court. The Administrative Assistant would serve the Clerk of the Municipal Court as a special projects officer. This person would oversee such areas as staff training, implementation of automated data processing systems, forms design, records management, and facilities maintenance.

Additional Management Issues

Recommendation No. 29

The Clerk of the Court should delegate more administrative duties to her support staff and concentrate her efforts on development of her supervisory staff through the training efforts discussed in the training section of this chapter.

The Clerk of the Court has assumed a much greater administrative role as the Court and the position have evolved. The Clerk is no longer in a position where she should participate to any great degree in the actual clerical functions of the Court. While the project staff was observing the implementation of a new calendaring program in the Municipal Court, the Clerk and the Court Services Supervisor were performing ministerial duties for this new program which should have been performed by staff. The implementation of this program was due in major part to the efforts of the Clerk of the Court and the Court Services Supervisor. Nevertheless, their time would be more effectively used training staff to perform new or revised clerical functions even though the training may initially require more time than it would take for the Clerk of the Court and Court Services Supervisor to do it themselves. The project staff believes that

these actions were representative of a desire on the part of the Clerk's office to maintain close contact with the day-to-day operation of the clerical staff. This is to be commended, however, efficient management demands greater delegation of duties.

Recommendation No. 30

The Clerk of the Court should have her calls answered by her administrative staff rather than answering her telephone herself.

The Clerk of the Court presently answers her own telephone. While this procedure assures her immediate availability should someone such as a judge wish to reach her, it also results in inefficient use of her time due to calls that may not require her response. Answering and screening of her calls by staff would result in her increased efficiency and effectiveness. The Clerk of the Court should review the tasks assigned to her administrative support staff to assure that they are performing tasks appropriate to their classifications and to ascertain whether further duties presently performed by the Clerk of the Court can be delegated to these assistants.

B. Staffing

The Sonoma County Municipal Court Organization Chart included in the Introduction of this report graphically displays the staff of the Court. Chapter III on Workload and Workflow Analysis describes the staffing of each clerical department and makes staffing recommendations that do not require additional personnel resources or reclassifications. This section of the report will review the total staffing picture and make recommendations regarding the addition, reduction, and reclassification of staff.

By classification the Court had the following staff in September, 1984.

5 Municipal Court Judges
1 Commissioner
6 Judicial Positions

1 Court Administrator*
1 Clerk of the Municipal Court*
1 Law Clerk*
1 Court Reporter (vacant)*
2 Secretaries*
1 Administrative Assistant
1 Court Services Supervisor
1 Accountant
1 Account Clerk III
2 Account Clerk II's
13 Municipal Court Clerk IV's
17 Municipal Court Clerk III's (1 vacant)
20 Municipal Court Clerk II's (1 vacant)
2 Municipal Court Clerk I's (1 vacant)
7 Municipal Court Clerk I's (Temporary)
1 Telephone Operator
1 Clerk/Typist I, II
73

In previous chapters of this report references have been made to 66 clerical employees in the Court. This figure was arrived at by taking the total number of non-judicial positions (73) and reducing it by 7 (6 judicial appointees indicated with an asterisk

who are either management personnel or directly support judicial functions and the Administrative Assistant to the Court Administrator). For purposes of calculating the total number of clerks assigned to the departments discussed in Chapter III, it also should be noted that one is the Court Services Supervisor, nine positions are assigned to the Branch Courts, one to the new filing system, and two to administrative support to the Clerk leaving a total of 53 clerks in the departments discussed in Chapter III.

The County of Sonoma in its "Municipal Court Workload and Staffing Projections" predicted that the clerical and administrative staff for the Santa Rosa and Petaluma courts would total 73 employees in 1985, the exact number of positions currently authorized.

The National Center project staff makes the following staffing recommendations.

Recommendation No. 31

All extra help positions, seven at the present time, should be made permanent Municipal Court positions.

Recommendation No. 32

Temporary personnel should be hired to update the docket backlog in the criminal department. These temporary personnel may be law-students or students from the junior college who could be hired as interns for a work-study experience. They should be hired only for a short-term and only until the docket backlog is removed.

Recommendation No. 33

An additional Account Clerk II position should be authorized.

Recommendation No. 34

The accounting department should be staffed entirely with clerks from the account clerk classifications and the data entry staff should be classified as data entry operators or similar keypunch operator classification.

Recommendation No. 35

An additional courtroom clerk should be hired for the new judge being appointed to the Municipal Court.

Recommendation No. 36

A supervisor should be appointed for the courtroom clerks.

Recommendation No. 37

A staff requirements analysis of the Municipal Court should be conducted in early 1986 to assess the impact of the automated systems.

Extra-Help Personnel

The Court has used temporary personnel for a significant period of time in hopes that automated systems would reduce the demand for clerical personnel and the additional temporary personnel could be laid off without the trauma of laying off permanent employees. As a general personnel practice the use of temporary or extra-help personnel should be discouraged. Temporary staff may not be fully committed to their employment and are unlikely to seek adequate training. Since there is no incentive to be well-trained, the likelihood is that the temporary clerk will learn just enough to get by, which is often a negative influence on staff morale. Also, supervisors are reluctant to want to expend the time and energy to train a temporary person. These extra-help personnel thus wind up becoming a drain on the rest of the staff.

Other factors support this recommendation. The automated data processing system is at least two years from full implementation. Theoretically, the data processing system will reduce the workload of the clerical employees. The full impact of automated systems will not be felt for at least a year and the implementation stages

will require increased staff resources. The Court experiences a natural turnover of employees. As positions become vacant, the Court will be able to leave them vacant temporarily or delete them altogether from the payroll. It should be noted that from January 1982 to the present time, 14 employees left the Court. It can be expected that a natural attrition of employees will continue and the Court will not experience overstaffing even if the automated systems provide substantial improvements sooner than expected. Presently 10% of the clerical workforce is temporary. If all temporary positions are not made permanent, cutting this figure in half would provide greater stability to the workforce and increase productivity.

In addition, there are presently four vacancies on the Municipal Court staff; the Court should make every attempt to fill all the positions. This is especially important during implementation of the IJS and when there are existing clerical backlogs.

Criminal Docket Workforce

The project staff makes one exception to the recommendation that all extra-help personnel should be permanent positions. The criminal department section of Chapter III discusses the severe backlog in docketing criminal cases. This is a drain on staff time and morale. At this time when successful implementation of the IJS hangs in the balance it is critical that a viable alternative be developed to work through the docketing backlog while allowing the full-time clerks to concentrate on current case processing. It is for these reasons that the project team

recommends hiring a temporary workforce to eliminate the backlog as quickly as possible.

Accountant Clerk

As discussed in Chapter III the accounting department has a severe backlog of accounts receivable whose delinquency has not been acted upon. There is also a paucity of expenditure and revenue analysis. The addition of a full-time permanent position should help alleviate this situation.

Reclassifications in Accounting and Data Entry

Although the project team recommends a generic court clerk classification such as the Municipal Court Clerk series in Sonoma County, there are specific clerical functions which more appropriately lie outside of the court clerk classification. Both the data entry and the accounting function are clerical functions that require people to perform specific detail work. Municipal Court clerks, on the other hand, often are interested in a career that involves the criminal justice system, the civil and small claims function of the court, and particularly the public service function of the Court.

Courtroom Clerks

The courtroom clerk staff is presently having difficulty covering all the calendars. There are instances where as many as ten courtroom clerks or helpers are needed, yet there are only nine available staff. An additional courtroom clerk is therefore necessary. It should be noted that it is not always necessary to hire clerks on a per judge ratio as the staff can be pooled to cover the courtrooms. In this instance it will be necessary to

hire an additional courtroom clerk for the newly appointed judge. Future appointments may not require additional clerical support.

Courtroom Clerk Supervisor

The courtroom clerks' supervisor should hold a job classification level between the courtroom clerks and the Court Services Supervisor. One problem with this recommendation results from the current classification system. Courtroom clerks are presently classified as Municipal Court Clerk IV (MCIV); the only other job responsibility for MCIV is as supervisor. Thus, in the current classification system the supervisor would be placed in the same position classification as the persons she would be supervising.

The staff supporting the judges of the Municipal Court, including the courtroom clerk staff and the secretarial and law clerk staff, should be evaluated. It was beyond the scope of the National Center's study to do a time analysis of the courtroom clerks. The Court should undertake such an analysis to determine the appropriate staffing for the Municipal Court divisions. The use of staff from the clerical departments of the Municipal Court to fill in as courtroom clerks is a drain on the available resources for processing the paper flow of the Court. Without adequate courtroom clerk staffing this drain is a persistent problem.

The Municipal Court judges are presently provided with secretarial support by two legal secretaries. The ability of these legal secretaries to provide additional support to the courtroom clerks is a subject which should be investigated. The courtroom clerks and the secretaries need to remain an integral

part of the overall clerical operation. Modifications in procedure within the Court have a direct impact on the operation of the clerks in the departments on the first floor. The court should assure, by keeping staff well informed, that the judges' staff does not become isolated from the clerical functions in the Clerk's staff.

Future Staffing Requirements

Implementation of the IJS and the modified automated processing of traffic and parking citations may decrease some work levels, but the efforts required to implement the automated systems and the work needed to reduce the current backlog will justify the continuation of the current staff for an extended period of time. The project staff believes that a staffing analysis of the full Court should be conducted in the Spring of 1986. At this time proper staffing adjustment realized by the automated system should be well in place.

C. Staff Training

The training of clerical personnel in the Sonoma County Municipal Court is a critical issue for the Court both now and in the future. This issue is addressed separately in Chapter II as it relates to the new and modified automated data processing systems. Training has improved in recent years in the Sonoma County Municipal Court through the use of weekly staff meetings and monthly supervisors' meetings. Nevertheless, staff training remains at a low level. For those departments with exceptionally conscientious supervisors, the supervisors are able to conduct some formal training. Generally, however, clerks are trained on the job. The lack of training is neither unnoticed nor unremarked upon by the interacting agencies within the County justice system. Virtually every agency representative interviewed commented that the clerks appear not to have any guidelines for procedures.

Recommendation No. 38

Training objectives should be set for all staff requiring a minimum number of hours with concentration in procedures, time management, and working with the public.

Recommendation No. 39

The Court should create department procedural manuals with chapters for each desk and for counter and telephone duties.

There is presently an attempt by the Court to develop desk manuals for all clerical personnel. These manuals will assist greatly in the training and education of the Municipal Court clerks. These manuals should be designed so that they can incorporate changes in procedures brought on by the new automated systems.

Training will not improve, though, if the manuals are not used. For example, in the criminal department three desks have procedural manuals, one is for half of that desk's operations, two are out of date, and none exists for the counter or the remaining desks. The Municipal Court Clerks Association in California has prepared manuals for a variety of clerical functions within a Municipal Court structure. These manuals describe in a generic sense the steps which should be followed for each given procedure. The clerks in some instances were not familiar with these manuals. Instead of referring to the manual for an explanation of a given procedure, they would refer to someone more senior in their department. This lack of training not only makes it more difficult for the performance of the clerk's job, but causes a more senior clerk to interrupt his or her own work to answer questions. In addition, simply asking for instruction is in many cases not a learning process; the junior clerk is told what to do, but not why or how the procedure fits into the overall process. Often a senior clerk will decide to do it himself or herself because it is felt that explaining procedures to a junior clerk takes more time than it would to just do the task. This is particularly true of interactions with extra-help personnel.

Training in clerical procedures is only part of an overall training program. There are two additional areas where clerks could use training. First, the clerks within the Municipal Court do not organize their workday by priorities. They do what they can when they can get to it. This is often necessitated by the flow of the public to the counters and the need to respond to emergency situations. Nevertheless, greater organization of the

clerks' workday would increase productivity. Lack of planning causes confusion within a department; clerks are often uncertain who is doing what and when it is being done. Secondly, the clerks could use additional training in how to handle the public at the counter. The vast majority of the clerks do an excellent job at the counters working with the public but some show their distaste at being interrupted from their desk tasks to go to the counter. Training in this function would be beneficial.

The County of Sonoma allocates a certain amount of training funds for each employee during the year; the Municipal Court clerks are encouraged to use this money for training that is relevant to the clerical operation. A number of clerks have registered for a two-day general seminar on computers and are using this money for tuition. On-site training in specific working procedures should be added to this off-site training and supervisors should be required to assure that their staffs are trained.

D. General Personnel Issues

1. Staff Morale

Although staff morale within the Sonoma County Municipal Court is not extraordinarily low, there were indications from a significant number of staff members that there was not a high degree of enthusiasm for the Court and its operations. There are a variety of reasons for low morale. The Sonoma County Municipal Court had its origin as a small, rural court where people knew each other, things were run relatively informally, and the Clerk of the Court was able to personally oversee and assist in all operations. Today, the Court has to serve a more mobile, urban population. The pressures concomitant with such a change in the social fabric in the County have made the job of the Municipal Court clerks a high pressure task. In this environment it is easy for the Court staff to lose its sense of public service. Although the handbook, Policy Information, contains a letter to the clerical staff from the Clerk of the Court, the Court has no policy manuals which otherwise address this issue or give an overall policy for uniform treatment of the public. Furthermore, there is a fine line regarding whether or not the information the clerks give is legal advice. These factors erode the staff's sense of purpose. The Court should make efforts to foster a public service attitude and familiarize its staff with the extent to which they can help people coming into the Court.

Recommendation No. 40

Except for selected cross-training the Court should refrain from switching staff from position to position and concentrate its efforts on development of staff purpose and unity.

The Municipal Court recently rotated 11 clerks from one position to another. Many of these clerks were switched from jobs requiring a relatively high degree of discretion and knowledge to ones in a different department that required little or no clerical expertise. It was suggested that the purpose of this change was to cross-train people in different sections, give the clerks greater experience and knowledge, assign people to the most appropriate positions, and to even out the workflow within the entire Court. Such a major reshuffling of clerical staff requires significant retraining. The department supervisors have little time to do this. Therefore, the clerks are assigned to the lowest level tasks within the section and are trained in an on-the-job, through-experience fashion. There were also suggestions that the changes were made by the administrative staff without consultation with the department supervisors.

2. Communications

Recommendation No. 41

The Court should make efforts to increase intra-departmental communication. The Clerk of the Court's assistants should review staff meeting minutes for their thoroughness and accuracy, add Court news not discussed at the staff meeting, and assure distribution to all staff members.

The Municipal Court holds weekly staff meetings; minutes are distributed to the staff. Although this procedure should keep the staff relatively well-informed, there was a seeming lack of knowledge of court developments demonstrated by the staff. The department supervisors work relatively independently of each other and meet only on a monthly basis. These meetings deal mostly with changes in law and procedures. Project staff was told that the

Court plans to increase these supervisors' meetings from a monthly basis to a weekly basis and that more personnel issues will be covered during these weekly meetings. Also, the different departments of the Court hold staff meetings and during these meetings new procedures and developments are shared. At these meetings, however, minutes are not recorded and what goes on in one department is not shared with another. Minutes should be taken of department meetings and given to the Clerk's administrative staff for incorporation in the full staff meeting minutes.

3. Staff Evaluations

Each member of the clerical staff of the Municipal Court presently receives a written evaluation after the first six months of employment. This is the end of the probationary period for Municipal Clerk of the Court I's and the normal time when a promotion to the Municipal Court Clerk II position is made. In the past, the evaluation procedure was not written or formal; now the evaluations are perceived as thorough and objective. They have been used to determine promotions, dismissals, and voluntary and involuntary demotions. The project team commends the Court for its use of formal evaluation procedures.

V. SPACE PLANNING

The Sonoma County Municipal Court occupies approximately 7,500 sq. ft. of space on the first floor of the Sonoma County Hall of Justice. When the space occupied by the file area, exhibit room, staff lounge, Clerk of the Court, Court Services Supervisor, and additional storage rooms is deducted from the overall space, the area occupied by the court clerks is slightly more than 5,000 sq. ft. This averages approximately a nine foot square area for each clerical employee in the Sonoma County Municipal Court.

Recommendation No. 42

The departments within the Court clerical area should be rearranged.

The office space in general is too noisy for quiet, efficient work. There is an appearance of inefficiency even though there is a relatively normal workflow. There are a number of improvements which can be made to the work space which will significantly alter this situation.

The traffic and parking, data entry, and accounting functions are all integrally related. The civil and small claims operation is a separate clerical function. As presently laid out the civil and small claims section occupies a space between accounting, data entry, and traffic and parking.

The civil/small claims department should be moved into the room occupied by the data entry clerks; a civil/small claims counter should be constructed at the door leading into the hallway on the west side of the Municipal Court clerical area. Data entry should be moved into the middle of the main clerical area. The other departments, criminal, accounting, and traffic would

remain where they are. The courtroom clerks should have their desks located along the rear of the central part of the clerk's office, adjacent to the administrative staff of the Clerk of the Court. See proposed floor plan, page 102.

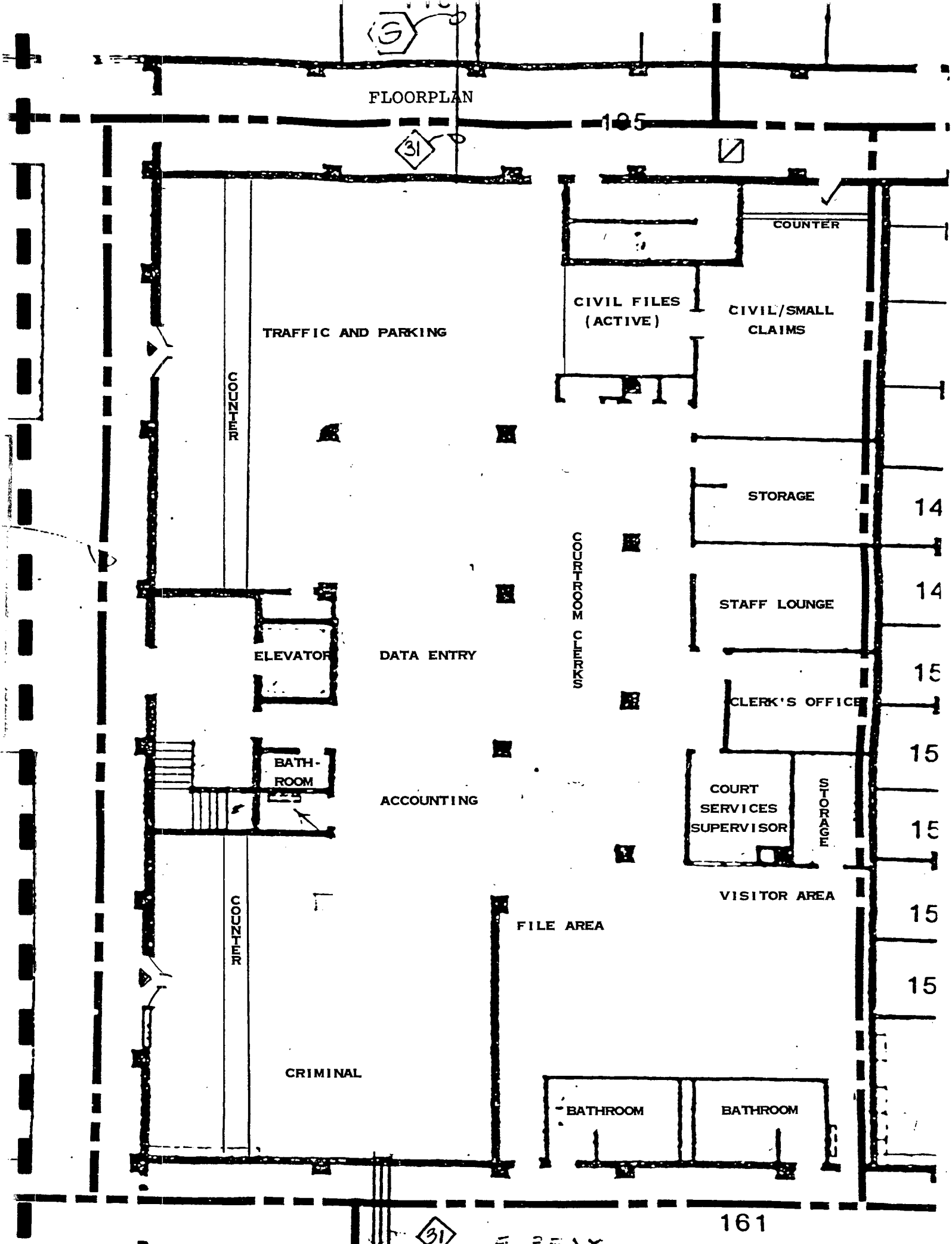
The Court clerical area can be improved through better use of temporary filing spaces. There are numerous areas where space is poorly used. For example, in the civil/small claims department a table is set up where filings from collections agencies are placed for processing by a volunteer from a collections agency. This volunteer comes into the court only part-time, yet the files remain on top of this desk the entire work week. This space is underutilized. Similarly, there are many areas where court records are stored inefficiently. The addition of more efficient and orderly temporary filing areas would increase the space available to the clerks.

Recommendation No. 43

The counter area occupied presently by civil/small claims and accounting should be moved and the court should maintain two main entrances, one for traffic and parking, a second for criminal and accounting.

Each doorway should be clearly marked and the counters should parallel the front facade of the Clerk of the Court's Office. This rearrangement will increase significantly the available floor space to the clerks. This would also be an appropriate time for the Court to review the efficiency of its desk and temporary filing space, to arrange things in an orderly pattern, and to assess the workflow from department to department. See photographs, page 103.

FLOORPLAN



SONOMA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COURT



Public Area Civil/ Small Claims & Accounting



General Clerical Area Civil Department

There are other office environment issues which the Municipal Court should correct.

Recommendation No. 44

The Court should request the purchase of partitions for a limited number of desk areas.

Recommendation No. 45

Use of temporary signs should be kept to a minimum.

Recommendation No. 46

In the criminal department the chain should be replaced with a swinging door to control entry.

Recommendation No. 47

The Court should maintain a separate visitor's area adjacent to the main file area where outside visitors can sit to review files.

There is a problem with the openness of the clerk's office. There are virtually no private work areas for line staff even though much of the work within the clerk's office demands quiet concentration. Supervisors, in particular, should be given some separation from the rest of the workflow so that they may hold semi-private conversations with their staff. See photographs, page 105. Low partitions between departments would also help separate work functions.

When one walks into the Municipal Court, one is inundated with signs. This inundation tends to make a visitor ignore them and, therefore, the signs do not serve their purpose. The court uses many temporary signs indicating changes in procedures or in office layout. When temporary signs must be used, they should be designed in as professional a manner as possible.

SONOMA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COURT



Traffic and Parking Department



Criminal Department

The criminal department is accessed by the removal of a chain. Personnel from other agencies constantly wander in and out. Additionally the chain is often left unhooked so members of the public could enter unknowingly or purposely without authorization.

There are numerous visitors from outside agencies to the Municipal Court who are allowed access to the clerical areas. If these visitors wish to review court files, they should be allowed entry to a controlled area; if it is occupied, no new people should be allowed to come into the court to access the files. The visitors should be separated from the clerical workflow so as not to disturb the clerks in their daily business. The visitor's area should be located to allow clerks to monitor those persons so misuse or theft of the files does not occur.

As the Court continues to grow the issue of space will become more and more critical. The offices adjacent to the Municipal Court are now occupied by the Public Defender's Office. Long-range planning should include discussions with the Public Defender's office regarding their possible relocation and expansion of the Municipal Court into the Public Defender's space.

VI. OTHER MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Forms Design and Management

Forms design and management should address the following concerns:

- Combination or elimination of duplicate or redundant forms.
- Design of needed forms to promote maximum clerical efficiency.
- Design of forms to adhere to statute, court rules, and case law
- Promotion of availability of required forms through appropriate cataloging and distributing guidelines.
- Design of forms to allow for electronic word processing.

Although the project team was unable to perform a comprehensive review of all the forms in use in the Sonoma County Municipal Court, it was suggested that there is room for vast improvement. Those forms that were reviewed by project staff revealed many of the problems common to court forms that have not been designed according to modern forms techniques.

Recommendation No. 48

As a result of the National Center's review, project staff recommend that the following guidelines be followed for court-generated forms:

Guideline 1:

Form content should be reviewed for the purpose of eliminating or combining forms.

Forms sometimes include information already available in the applicable rules of court or in the case file, making them excessively long and cumbersome. All but the most necessary duplicative information should be eliminated from all present forms.

Guideline 2.

Forms should be reviewed for the purpose of eliminating wordiness and archaic language that obscures essential information.

Courts should make an effort to eliminate "legalese" from their forms. Unnecessary wordiness has the effect of making forms intimidating and incomprehensible.

The following words should be avoided:

aforegranted	hereof	to wit
aforementioned	hereto	undersigned
aforesaid	heretofore	wheresoever
and/or	hereunder	wherewith
beforementioned	hereunto	whilst
foregoing	herewith	whomsoever
forthwith	thenceforth	whosoever
henceforth	thereby	whatsoever
hereafter	therein	whensoever
herein	thereof	whereas
hereinabove	thereto	whereby
hereinafter	thereunto	whereof
hereinbefore	therewith	

Elimination of "legalese" is particularly important for forms that are to be signed by a defendant, such as a guilty plea or waiver of a constitutional right.

Guideline 3:

Forms should be generally uniform in appearance and structured to emphasize essential information.

Forms that have been standardized into an efficient design will permit those working with the forms to do better work with less effort, in less time, and at a lower cost. The following are suggested conventions for the body of forms to be followed for all form drafting:

a. Typeface. One typeface and heading style should be adopted for all forms.

b. Form Title. Each form title should be concise yet specific enough to identify the subject area covered by the form. The form title should appear at the bottom of each form as well as at the top.

c. Box design. The box design style of form design should be used. The examples of box and open designs on page 110 illustrate the advantages of the box design. While the box design may not be appropriate for all court judicial forms, it is appropriate for many of the Court's more administrative forms. The box design with upper left hand captions makes forms self-instructing; it facilitates completion and review.

d. Predrawn lines. Many court forms in the Sonoma County Municipal Court use predrawn lines. Predrawn lines should generally be avoided unless the blank is to be filled in by handwriting or unless data entries would then be overlooked. (See the sample form now in use in small claims, page 113.)

e. Check boxes. Check boxes should be used wherever identifiable alternatives exist. Where check boxes are used there is no need to number the choices as well.

f. Emphasis of important directions. The following terms and other similar directives should be printed in all capitals or otherwise emphasized whenever they appear on a court form:

YOU ARE SUMMONED

YOU ARE COMMANDED

IT IS ORDERED

FAILURE TO APPEAR WILL RESULT IN A WARRANT BEING ISSUED FOR
YOUR ARREST

FAILURE TO APPEAR AND DEFEND WILL RESULT IN JUDGMENT BEING
RENDERED AGAINST YOU ACCORDING TO THE DEMAND OF THE COMPLAINT

BOX AND OPEN DESIGNS¹⁹

BOX DESIGN

REQUEST FOR PERSONNEL DATA			
Name	Serial No.		
Address (city and state)	Telephone No.		
Age	Sex	Weight	Height

RECOMMENDED:

- . Saves space
- . Avoids wasted motions
- . Aligns tab stops
- . Aids reading, writing, and interpretation
- . Streamlines appearance

.vs.

OPEN DESIGNS

REQUEST FOR PERSONNEL DATA			
Name.....	Grade.....		
Address.....			
City.....	State.....		
Telephone Number	Age.....		
Height	Weight	Sex .. interpretation	
..... (Captions on the line)			

REQUEST FOR PERSONNEL DATA		
(Name)	(Grade)	
(Address)		
(City)	(State)	
(Serial No.)	(Age)	(Sex)
(Captions under the line)		

NOT RECOMMENDED:

- . Robs space
- . Wastes motions
- . Defeats use of tab stops
- . Impedes reading, writing, and interpretation
- . Gives a ragged appearance

NOT RECOMMENDED:

- . Same as above

PLUS

- . Hides captions from typist

¹⁹ This information appears in the Paperwork Management Handbook: Forms Management Guide of the State of Washington.

g. Designation of multi-part forms. Wherever possible, routing information should appear, bearing in mind that if a multi-part form also is multi-colored, the white copy should be routed to the court file, since it has the best contrast for photocopying and microfilming. If not well planned, however, routing information can cause confusion. For example, Sonoma County Municipal Court criminal minute sheets contain routing designations on the bottom of the sheet. Forms designate Public Defender, Accounts, etc. The courtroom clerks often cross out the name designated on the sheet and send the clearest copy to the agency having the greatest need. This sometimes causes the agency to believe it has the wrong copy. When there is not a consistent routing of multi-part forms, preprinted routing information should not be used.

h. Organization of form content. Sonoma County Municipal Court forms should be organized to emphasize the most essential information. Some forms are written in narrative format with little attempt to organize the material into related separately numbered subsections for easier reading and ready identification of the most pertinent information.

Guideline 4.

Forms should be inventoried chronologically by subject area, grouping similar forms together.

A general "housecleaning" should be conducted to eliminate forms from the current inventory that are no longer in use and reduce the possibility that an out-of-date form will be used inadvertently.

The following two pages illustrate how a small claims form currently in use by the Court can be redesigned to allow ease of entry of variable information. The triangle marks at the top of the page of the new form are tab stops aligned with the boxes to be filled in.

SMALL CLAIMS COURT
COUNTY OF SONOMA
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

DECLARATION OF CONTEMPT IN REFUSING
TO OBEY THE ORDER OF THE COURT

PLAINTIFF

VS.

DEFENDANT

CASE NUMBER

DECLARANT, IF OTHER THAN
PLAINTIFF

PERSON SERVED

DATE OF ORDER

APPEARANCE DATE

JUDGE

The above named plaintiff declares that the person indicated above as "person served" was ordered in this case by the judge and on the date indicated above to appear before this judge on the appearance date indicated above.

The party served was supposed to submit himself/herself for examination in this action.

A true copy of this Order was served upon the party served on the date and place indicated below. The party served refused to obey this Order and refused to appear before the Court. The Court continued the examination to the indicated continuance date below and the person served refused to appear before the Court on that date.

DATE OF SERVICE

PLACE OF SERVICE

CONTINUANCE DATE

Declarant asks that the person served be arrested and punished as for a contempt of this Court.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the above is true and correct.

DATE OF DECLARATION

DECLARANT'S SIGNATURE

PLACE OF DECLARATION

CALIFORNIA

DECLARATION OF CONTEMPT IN REFUSING
TO OBEY THE ORDER OF THE COURT

Branch Courts

The branch courts of the Sonoma County Municipal Court in Petaluma, Sonoma, Sebastopol and Cloverdale cost the County very little in terms of physical plant operations. The 1983-84 budget for these courts totalled \$12,215. (See Table 3) In terms of personnel the full service branches in Petaluma and Sonoma have five and three clerical personnel, respectively. The partial service branches in Sebastopol and Cloverdale have one part-time clerk each.

Recommendation No. 49

The Sebastopol and Cloverdale branch courts should be closed.

Branch courts normally exist as a convenience to the population served where there are concentrations of population in distant areas within a County. The Sebastopol court is within 10 miles of the Sonoma County Municipal Court in Santa Rosa. The Cloverdale Court, although a greater distance from Santa Rosa, has a very small filing figure.

The clerks who are assigned to Sebastopol and Cloverdale are in a branch court part-time each week and bring some of their Santa Rosa court work with them to the branch court so they will have something to do. They also bring some of their branch court work back to Santa Rosa for follow-up. When they return to Santa Rosa the clerks are assigned duties that they do not have to attend to every day as they are only there part-time.

The partial service courts in Sebastopol and Cloverdale are more dependent on operations in Santa Rosa than are the Petaluma and Sonoma courts. When, for example, a civil case is filed in one of the branch courts the clerk calls to Santa Rosa to learn

the next file number for civil cases.

The clerical systems in Sebastopol and Cloverdale are manual record keeping systems. As the Sonoma County Municipal Court automates its clerical functions, combining the manual systems in Sebastopol and Cloverdale with Santa Rosa's automated operations may cause further complications. Automation in the Sebastopol and Cloverdale branch courts would significantly increase their operating costs.

The Municipal Court should work with the County's planning department to analyze long-range demographic patterns in the County to anticipate where additional or supplemental branch court services will be required in the future.

TABLE 3
REVENUE AND COST ANALYSIS BY BRANCH
1983-1984

	<u>Revenue</u> <u>\$</u>	<u>% of</u> <u>Revenue</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>% of</u> <u>Cost</u>
<u>Petaluma</u>	\$543,975.71	54.45	\$5,070	41.51
Phone	\$3100			
Burg.Alarm	170			
Copier	<u>1800</u>			
	\$5070			
<u>Sonoma</u>	\$295,899.50	29.62	\$2,100	17.19
Phone	\$1900			
Copies	<u>200</u>			
	\$2100			
<u>Sebastopol</u>	\$98,372.96	9.85	\$240	1.96
<u>Cloverdale</u>	\$60,775.50	6.08	\$4,805	29.34
Phone	\$470			
Rent	3825			
Water	140			
Utilities	<u>370</u>			
	\$4805			
 Totals	 \$999,023.67	 100.00	 \$12,215	 \$139.34
<u>Summary</u>				
Petaluma yields	54% of Branch Revenue with 42% Branch Cost			
Sonoma yields	30% of Branch Revenue with 17% Branch Cost			
Sebastopol	10% of Branch Revenue with 2% Branch Cost			
Cloverdale	6% of Branch Revenue with 39% Branch Cost			

COURT HOURS

The Sonoma County Municipal Court is presently open to the public for business from 8:30 to 5:00 p.m. Most staff arrive at 8 a.m. and use the 8:00 to 8:30 a.m. period to catch up on paperwork and prepare for the day's activities. Some staff come in earlier than 8 a.m. on a flex-time schedule.

Recommendation No. 50

The Court should adopt a policy of being open to the public from 8:30 a.m. until 4 p.m. The court should then use the period from 4 to 5 p.m. for training sessions, staff meetings, and to organize its workflow.

The period from 4 to 5 p.m. will be a particularly important work period during the next year as computer systems are implemented. One year from now, if this recommendation is adopted, the court should review again the possibility of extending hours provided the clerical workflow has improved.

The project staff understands that the Court is reviewing the possibility of instituting a four/10 work schedule consisting of a four-day work week with employees working 10-hour days or a nine/80 work schedule with employees working 80 hours in nine days. The project staff has highlighted the need for the Municipal Court to undergo training especially in the new computer systems, the need to improve communication intra-departmentally, and the need for catching up on backlogs of court paperwork. Therefore the project staff at this time is not in favor of either the 4/10 or the 9/80 work schedule.

Statutorily the Sonoma County Municipal Court is required to hold night court at least one night a week. Litigants in small claims actions are told about the possibility of attending night court. However, this has not been a popular session. The Court should consider other options; the public has probably not used this night court option because the Hall of Justice and County complex is not in an area that the public frequents in the evening. The Court should consider the possibility of using some other public facility such as a public library or public school that might be in an area of Santa Rosa that is accessible, secure, and frequented in the evening.

APPENDIX A

Statistical Review of the Sonoma County Municipal Court

At the time this study began, among California's 86 municipal courts, 57, including Sonoma County, had 5 or fewer authorized judgeships.¹ The Sonoma County Municipal Court's total filings are somewhat higher than those of comparable courts, however, as 65 of the 86 courts have fewer total filings than the Sonoma County Municipal Court.² The relatively heavy caseload in Sonoma is more apparent when one examines filings per judgeship.³ Only 16 of the 86 municipal courts in the state have a higher number of filings per judgeship than the Sonoma County Municipal Court.⁴ The Court ranks 23rd in the number of contested nonparking cases disposed of in 1982, although it ranks 64th in the number of jury trials held in that year.⁵ The pace of civil case processing in the Sonoma County Municipal Court also is quite good. The median time from Memo to Set to a trial for the general civil calendar is sixth best in the state. Only five municipal courts in the state are faster in scheduling and holding nonjury trials for general civil cases.

The level of productivity of judges in courts of limited jurisdiction is related to staff support; that is, the more productive the staff the more dispositions the court is able to achieve. It is worth noting, therefore, that the court has performed at the levels indicated above with six judicial

1 Judicial Council of California, 1984 Annual Report, Table A-27.

2 Ibid.

3 This comparison is based on authorized judgeships only and does not include commissioner or referee positions.

4 1984 Annual Report.

5 Data supplied by the Judicial Council of California.

positions (five judges and one commissioner) while its weighted caseload would indicate that eight or nine judicial positions would be more appropriate. The weighted caseload numbers for clerical staff also indicate that the court does not have the clerical staff its workload would justify, although the discrepancy is much smaller at the clerical level than at the judicial level. (The clerical caseload for fiscal year 1983-1984 suggests the need for 65 positions, while the court has 56 permanent clerical personnel and 7 extra-help personnel presently employed).

The good news in these numbers is tempered by other numbers. For instance, only once in the last five years has the Court been able to dispose of as much as 90 percent of the cases filed in that year. In 1983 the Court disposed of only 83 percent of the cases filed and only 71 percent of the cases that require the most judicial time. (See Table 1.) The Court suggested to the National Center that one of its problems is that the "selected" portion of its caseload, that which requires the most judicial time⁶, is increasing as a percentage of the total caseload. The number of selected cases is increasing, but not their share of the total caseload. In 1978, the weighted value of the selected cases represented 66.9 percent of the Court's total weighted filings. This percentage decreased in the next two years, increased to 67.9 percent in 1981, decreased for the next two years and was

6 Selected cases are felonies, state Penal Code misdemeanors, state Vehicle Code misdemeanors involving driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and state Vehicle Code felonies filed as misdemeanors pursuant to an applicable Penal Code section.

TABLE 1
DISPOSITIONS AS A PERCENT OF FILINGS
1979-1983

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Dispositions as % of Total Filings</u>	<u>Selected Dispositions as % of Selected Filings*</u>
1979	88%	79%
1980	91%	69%
1981	85%	71%
1982	80%	72%
1983	83%	71%

* Selected cases are felonies, and Class A and Class C misdemeanors.

Source: Data supplied by Judicial Council of California.

estimated by the Judicial Council to continue decreasing in 1984 and 1985. (See Table 2.)

The clerical weighted caseload has proceeded similarly. In 1978, the weighted value of the selected cases represented 35.9 percent of the total weighted filings for clerks. As with the judicial weighted caseload, selected cases fell as a percentage of total weighted filings for the next two years, jumped to 36.9 percent in 1981, then fell in 1982, continued to fall in 1983, and was estimated by the Judicial Council to continue falling in 1984 and 1985 to a level of under 30 percent. (See Table 3.)

The importance of tracking selected cases as a percentage of total weighted filings is that these cases represent the most difficult cases for both judges and clerks. Filings in the court have increased since 1978, but if the percentage of selected cases falls as the total caseload rises, the relative impact of the selected cases either rises at a slower rate than total cases, does not rise at all, or may even fall.

The percentage of bail forfeitures was less in 1983 than in 1979 (63.1 % compared to 65.3%); the total number of bail forfeiture dispositions increased by almost 21,000 during this period, but on a relative basis a smaller percentage of dispositions were achieved solely through clerical procedures than in 1979. (See Table 4.) Dismissals (usually initiated by a civil plaintiff and the prosecutor) represented a greater proportion of total dispositions in 1983 than in 1979 (21.1% versus 20.5%). Pleas also increased as a percentage of total dispositions (12.2% versus 10.2%). These numbers certainly cannot be interpreted to suggest that the clerical staff is not working as hard in 1983 as

they were in 1979, but they suggest that it may be possible to help the clerks use the time they spend more effectively.

TABLE 2
JUDICIAL WEIGHTED FILINGS: TOTAL AND SELECTED
1978-1985

<u>Year</u>	<u>Weighted Filings</u>		
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Selected*</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
1978	475,018	317,627	66.9%
1979	452,667	284,804	62.9%
1980	521,784	324,322	62.2%
1981	618,174	419,971	67.9%
1982	618,151	405,370	65.6%
1983	631,814	404,820	64.1%
1984 (est.)	633,705	396,172	62.6%
1985 (est.)	635,829	387,513	61.0%

* Selected cases are felonies, and Class A and Class C misdemeanors.

Source: Data supplied by Judicial Council of California.

TABLE 3
NONJUDICIAL WEIGHTED FILINGS:
TOTAL AND SELECTED
1978-1985

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Weighted Filings</u>	
		<u>Selected*</u>	
		<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
1978	4,364,405	1,567,679	35.9%
1979	4,318,221	1,387,540	32.1%
1980	5,010,506	1,589,144	31.7%
1981	5,643,484	2,081,024	36.9%
1982	5,819,784	2,003,743	34.4%
1983	6,266,375	2,029,384	32.4%
1984 (est.)	6,452,706	1,998,440	31.0%
1985 (est.)	6,700,909	1,970,776	29.4%

* Selected cases are felonies, and Class A and Class C misdemeanors.

Source: Data supplied by Judicial Council of California.

TABLE 4
DISPOSITION RATES BY TYPE OF DISPOSITION
1979-1983

<u>Year</u>	<u>Bail Forfeitures</u>		<u>Dismissals/Transfers</u>		<u>Pleas</u>		<u>After Trial</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>of Total</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
1979	88,966	65.3%	27,886	20.5%	13,818	10.2%	5,528	4.1%
1980	93,658	62.2%	34,407	22.9%	16,985	11.3%	5,553	3.7%
1981	98,792	62.1%	37,047	23.3%	18,247	11.5%	5,044	3.2%
1982	97,216	61.5%	34,897	22.1%	19,253	12.2%	6,698	4.2%
1983	109,690	63.1%	36,731	21.1%	21,215	12.2%	6,143	3.5%

Source: Data supplied by Judicial Council of California.

APPENDIX B

Sonoma County Municipal Court Calendar

PRO-TEM

COMMISSIONER

DEPT 5

DEPT 3

DEPT 2

DEPT. 1

Fill in Traffic when Comm. is called to other court

9:00 Traffic All Day
10:00 (Clerk & Helper)
11:00 Just Clerk
1:30 Clerk & Helper
2:30 & 3:30

9:00 Criminal
10:00 Traffic
11:00 Traffic
1:30 " (Clerk & Helper)
2:30 " all day
3:30 :

Fill in Traffic when Comm is called to other court
Just Clerk 3:30 Clerk
3:30 Clerk

Outlying Courts

Criminal Matters

8:45 Criminal
9:30 Criminal
1:30 In Custody
Clerk & Helper

Criminal Matters

Civil

Just Clerk

Just Clerk

Just Clerk

Just Clerk

Just Clerk

Just Clerk

Just Clerk

Just Clerk

Just Clerk

Just Clerk

Just Clerk

Just Clerk

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Just Clerk

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

Note: Calendar Changes are suppose to be made effecting the Commissioner and Dept III. Dept III will be taking Prelims on Mon & Thursdays and the Commissioner will handle the regular criminal and in custody calendars.

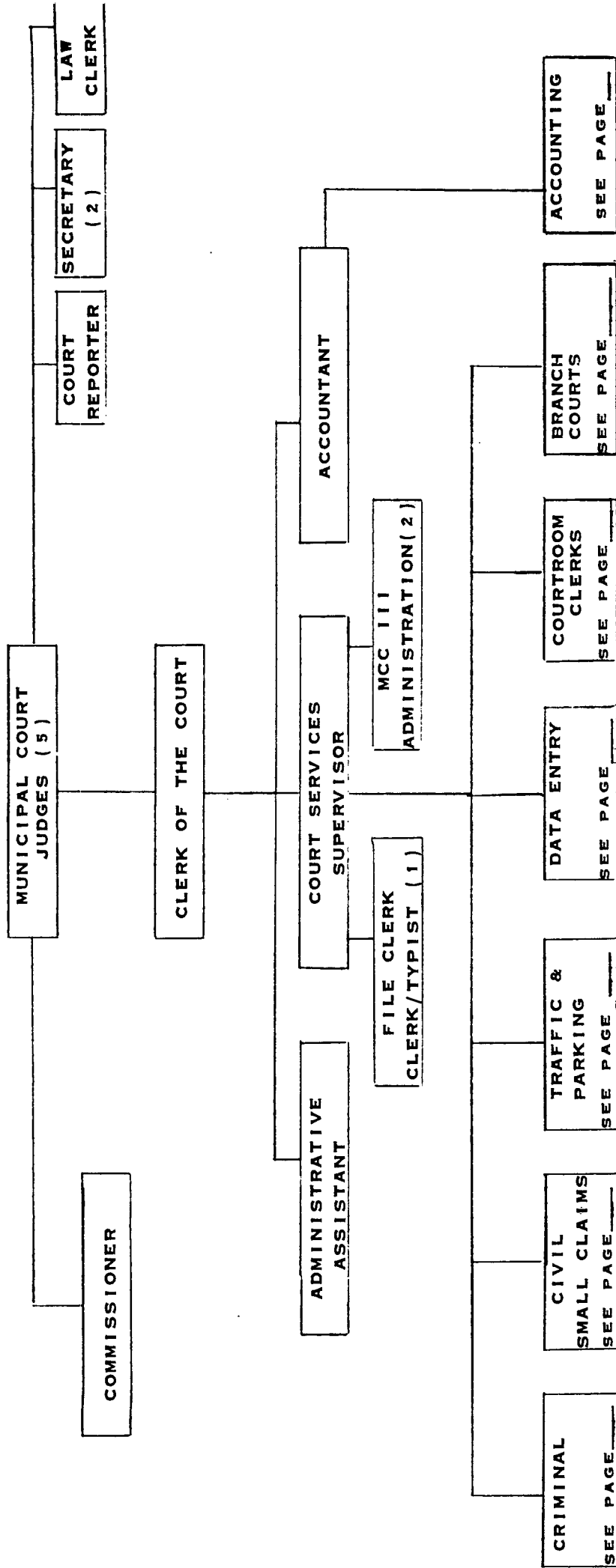
Judges also set matters for themselves everyday of the week. This chart does not necessarily reflect the only matters that would be heard on any one calendar (i.e. modifications, motions, court trials etc.)

Portions of the Criminal Calendar are often split between two or more judges, when this happens each judge needs a clerk and helper

APPENDIX C

Proposed Organization Chart

SONOMA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COURT
PROPOSED ORGANIZATION CHART



APPENDIX D

Management Job Description Analysis

The National Center's project staff recognizes that the recommended restructuring of the management of the courts of Sonoma County may not be feasible for a variety of reasons. If this recommendation is not accepted, the project staff advises that at a minimum the roles of the Court Administrator and Clerk of the Municipal Court be more clearly defined to avoid further problems.

As noted, there are few who believe that the management structure is particularly problematical. Those who do, often do not have a clear understanding of the functions of each person or believe that there is an unnecessary layer of administrative authority. The project staff's recommendation would eliminate the double-layered management structure. Clarification of the roles of the Court Administrator and Clerk of the Court is not as ambitious an alternative as that recommended in Chapter IV.

The job descriptions of the Court Administrator and Clerk (included at pages D-4 - D-7 of this Appendix) define the positions, their distinguishing characteristics and typical duties. According to these descriptions, the Court Administrator gives policy guidance to the Clerk of the Court who, under the administrative direction of the Court Administrator, has full program administrative and supervisory responsibility for all branches and divisions of Municipal Court Operations.

The problem area with these broad distinguishing characteristics is that policy guidance by a Court Administrator can range from a monthly meeting to discuss court programs to close daily supervision. On the other hand, a clerk's full

program administrative and supervisory responsibility, when exercised without direction, can give the appearance to all concerned that the Clerk of the Court manages the Court unassisted.

As the Sonoma County Court Administrator's position has become more complex, his ability to communicate policy guidance and direction has diminished. Consequently, the Clerk of the Court has broadened her administrative role.

The duties listed for each position distinguish the two positions. Here, too, there are gray areas. The Court Administrator "serves as appointing authority and oversees the awarding of merit step increases and the assignment of court personnel." The Clerk of the Court "participates in employee selection." In reality the Clerk of the Court does her own hiring, promoting, demoting, and firing. Both the Court Administrator's and the Clerk of the Court's duties include representing the Court before agencies and organizations. The Court Administrator ensures that the necessary furnishings, equipment and supplies are available for court use. Project staff observed the Clerk of the Court undertaking this task, and except in the planning phases of this duty, it is an operational task and one which appropriately should be the Clerk of the Court's.

There is no doubt that the Court would benefit if the Court Administrator and Clerk of the Court would jointly revise their job descriptions for approval by the judges and the personnel department. The new job descriptions should specifically address duties that have been assumed by the Clerk of the Court and realign responsibilities to recognize that the Court Administrator has responsibilities to other agencies and is unable to maintain

close contact with daily operation of the Court. For example, the Court Administrator should delegate his appointing authority to the Clerk of the Court in recognition of the fact that she already performs these duties.

New job descriptions should also address the need for the Court Administrator and Clerk of the Court to keep each other informed. Reporting requirements should be written into new job descriptions.

The most important aspect of officially developing job descriptions for the Court Administrator and for the Clerk of the Court is the dissemination of those job descriptions to those persons and agencies that regularly interact with the Municipal Court.

room facility and its related equipment and supplies.

Prepares monthly judicial statistics reports and annual reports; conducts management studies and surveys with recommendations to assist the judges in establishing court policy.

Directs the juror selection, qualification and utilization operations of both Superior and Municipal Courts; establishes guidelines, within legal parameters, for the excusing or deferring of potential jurors.

Knowledge and Abilities

Considerable knowledge of legislation, laws and the various codes affecting Municipal Court operations.

Considerable knowledge of the operation and function of the judicial processing system as it relates to Municipal Court operations and juror selection processes.

Considerable knowledge of principles and practices relating to modern budget, programs and systems management.

Considerable knowledge of the operations and functions of county government.

Considerable knowledge of research methodology, report writing and basic statistics and their application.

Considerable knowledge of written and oral communications, including language mechanics, syntax and English composition.

Working knowledge of group dynamics as it relates to public organizations.

Working knowledge of modern office methods and procedures.

Ability to understand and interpret legislation, laws and codes affecting Municipal Court operations and juror selection processes.

Ability to plan and organize research and statistical work relating to the various aspects of administration, budget and general management matters.

Ability to effectively communicate orally and in writing, and present conclusions before advisory and policy bodies.

Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with county management personnel, employees, and the public in carrying out sound management policies.

Ability to perform data collection, interpretation and evaluations pertaining to administrative, fiscal and management matters.

Ability to use principles of inductive and deductive reasoning to validate conclusions and recommendations.

Ability to persuade, rationalize and project consequences of decisions and/or recommendations.

Ability to analyze administrative problems, budget requests, and a variety of programs, systems and procedures.

Minimum Qualifications

Education: Academic course work which directly relates to the above knowledge and abilities.

Experience: Considerable administrative work experience within the court system, or other comparable administrative experience which directly relates to the required knowledge and abilities.

County of Sonoma

Revised April 1979

CLERK OF THE MUNICIPAL COURT

Definition

Under the administrative direction of the Municipal Court Administrator/Jury Commissioner plans, coordinates and directs the day-to-day operations of Municipal Court related to the filing, processing and issuance of legal documents; and performs related duties as required.

Distinguishing Characteristics

This is a single position department head class. This class is distinguished from the Municipal Court Services Supervisor in that it has full program administrative and supervisory responsibility for all branches and divisions of Municipal Court operations, subject to the policy determinations of the Municipal Court Administrator and the Judges.

Typical Duties

Assists the Municipal Court Administrator in preparing the annual budget for the Municipal Court clerical functions; monitors and controls the budget expenditures of the Court.

Supervises the accounting unit within the Municipal Court; monitors the intake and disbursement of revenues collected by court staff; approves all supply requisitions and orders all fixed assets.

Organizes, plans and directs through the Court Services Supervisor and subordinate supervisors, the various divisions and branches of Municipal Court.

Formulates and implements new programs, policies and procedures in consultation with the Municipal Court Administrator; participates in the development and design of new forms for Municipal Court processing.

Participates in employee selection and dismissal procedures; conducts staff meetings and staff development training activities; performs other personnel management duties as required.

Prepares trial calendar reports, summary reports and other reports related to the activities of Municipal Court; prepares traffic bail schedule annually for judges' review, and other administrative or analytical reports as required.

Reviews the assignments of Municipal Courtroom Clerks to insure their conformance trial calendars; oversees the maintenance of court records; minutes and proceedings in accordance with legal requirements.

Processes extradition papers and documents for criminal defendants; certifies all documents requiring the Municipal Court Clerk's certification.

Confers with Judges, Municipal Court Administrator, District Attorney, Sheriff, the Public Defender, and other criminal justice agencies and officials regarding procedural and legal requirements and/or

legislative changes affecting court operations.

Serves as a representative of the Sonoma County Municipal Court to the California Association of Municipal Court Clerks and other related agencies.

Knowledge and Abilities

Thorough knowledge of the legislation and laws which regulate the operations of a Municipal Court.

Thorough knowledge of the modern principles and practice of Municipal Court Administration including organizational, budgetary and personnel management.

Considerable knowledge of the functional operations of each of the divisions and branches of the court regarding the filing, processing, and issuance of legal documents.

Considerable knowledge of the collateral county criminal justice agencies and their relationship to the operations of Municipal Court.

Considerable knowledge of the principles of effective supervision; personnel management; and employee training and development.

Ability to plan, organize and direct a complex operation related to the Municipal Court and its components.

Ability to analyze, comprehend and apply the legislation, regulations and ordinances which govern the operations of Municipal Court.

Ability to supervise employees with varying levels of responsibility, and to conduct training and staff development workshops and seminars.

Ability to coordinate the efforts of a large staff.

Ability to analyze situations and adopt effective courses of action.

Ability to speak and write effectively and conduct conferences.

Ability to develop and maintain harmonious relations with collateral criminal justice agencies and the general public.

Minimum Qualification

Education: Academic coursework which directly relates to the required knowledge and abilities.

Experience: Considerable administrative or executive experience in a court environment requiring the development and planning of court related programs and the administrative coordination of various divisions of the court; emphasis is placed on budget control and the monitoring of revenues and expenditures in court operations.

MUNICIPAL COURT SERVICES SUPERVISOR

Definition

Under the administrative direction of the Clerk of the Municipal Court; assists in the planning, administration, supervision and direction of all branches and divisions of Municipal Court; serves as department head in the absence of the Clerk; performs other work as required.

Distinguishing Characteristics

This is a single position class in the Municipal Court Management series. The incumbent serves as assistant department head of the Municipal Court clerical operations; is responsible for the day-to-day supervision of division and branch supervisors; and assists the Clerk of the Municipal Court in various assignments related to administration and planning, and the development and implementation of programs, policies and procedures related to Municipal Court operations.

Typical Duties

Supervises by direct observation as well as through subordinate supervisors, the filing, processing and issuance of Municipal Court documents in the various divisions and branches of the court; conducts routine on-site evaluations of branch and division operations.

Interprets and explains provisions of laws and regulations pertaining to the operations of the court; assists in the analysis of new legislation regarding its impact on the functioning of the court.

Participates in the selection of new employees; assists in the planning and conducting of employee development and training programs; and aids the Municipal Clerk in all phases of personnel management as required.

Answers complex and difficult legal or procedural questions related to department operations; advises counsel and the general public of court procedures and policies.

Analyzes departmental procedures and devises new methods, new procedures and new forms for review by the Clerk of the Municipal Court; assists in the implementation of new systems, programs and procedures.

Briefs staff on new legislative acts and establishes office procedures relative to the new legislation; assists in the preparation of forms and notices of compliance with new laws.

Prepares statistical summaries and reports of departmental workloads.

Advises the public on departmental procedures and represents the Municipal Court Clerk at meetings and public gatherings.

Knowledges and Abilities

Thorough knowledge of the legislation, regulations, ordinances and procedures which govern the operation of Municipal Court.

Thorough knowledge of the functional operations and concomitant legal requirements of each of the Municipal Court branches and divisions.

Thorough knowledge of the organization, functions and procedures of the California court system, with emphasis on the Municipal Courts.

Considerable knowledge of modern principles, practices and methods of effective office management and supervision.

Considerable knowledge of applicable provisions of the civil, government and penal codes, and related laws and ordinances which apply to the Municipal Court.

Considerable knowledge of legal terminology, legal forms and related documents.

Working knowledge of public personnel management.

Ability to plan, organize, direct, and supervise the work of technical and clerical employees.

Ability to develop and maintain harmonious relations with judges, attorneys, litigants, employees, other agencies, and the general public.

Ability to prepare written reports and summaries, and to speak effectively before groups and organizations while representing the Municipal Court.

Ability to direct the maintenance of complex court and other legal records and documents.

Ability to comprehend and analyze legislation and legal codes pertaining to the operation of the Municipal Court.

Ability to understand and interpret written materials and oral directions and arrive at logical conclusions.

Minimum Qualifications

Education: Any combination of education and training which directly relates to the above knowledges and abilities. Academic course work at an accredited college or vocational institution relating to such areas as law, legal documents, administrative management, supervision, or other court related training would provide the opportunity to acquire these knowledges and abilities.

Experience: This position requires demonstrated effective work performance as a supervisor within the Municipal Court environment. Normally, one year in a position as a Municipal Court Clerk IV, or two years as a Municipal Court Clerk III would provide this opportunity.