 STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR’S OFFICE

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM INSTRUCTIONS

In accordance with the State Measurement for Accountable, Responsive, and Transparent (SMART) Government Act, part 2 of article 7 of title 2 in the Colorado Revised Statutes, Colorado Courts and Probation issues the following Performance Management System instructions for the development of its FY2014-2015 Performance Plan.

During the 2013 legislative session, the SMART Act was revised to focus State departments’ planning efforts around improving services to the people they serve. Specifically, the Act requires that Performance Plans must be structured around two key principles: strategic goals and priorities that are consistent with the statutory charge of the Department; and strategies for enhancing productivity, increasing efficiency, and eliminating waste in the processes used to deliver services to customers of state government.

Colorado Courts and Probation will continue to utilize a strategic planning format for the annual development of a comprehensive, quantifiable plan of action for the present and the future. This plan will remain a fluid document that is modified to address new strategic issues when they arise. Beginning with this next planning cycle, Courts and Probation will incorporate the newest requirements of the SMART Act into the development of its Performance Plan for the coming year. Strategies will be focused around enhancing services provided by Courts and Probation, and increasing efficiencies in the processes used to provide services.

Colorado Courts and Probation currently operates under a Performance Management philosophy in which employees focus on providing operational excellence according to the following Principles:

**PRINCIPLE 1: Provide equal access to the legal system and give all an opportunity to be heard.**

Barriers to access range from difficulties and delays in gaining entry to facilities to problems navigating within the facilities to a lack of information on obtaining accommodations for people with disabilities or limited English proficiency. Such barriers may compromise effective and meaningful access to the court system. To address these barriers, Colorado Courts and Probation works toward identifying and addressing barriers to effective participation, such as utilizing interpreters and making facilities compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. In addition, Courts and Probation remains committed to maintaining safety in all court and probation facilities and assisting self-represented parties.

**PRINCIPLE 2: Treat all with dignity, respect, and concern for their rights and cultural backgrounds, and without bias or appearance of bias.**

As Colorado’s population continues to diversify, so does the population that participates in the court system. It is important that judges and judicial staff be aware of the values of a wide number of cultures, and to make accommodations when appropriate. Courts and Probation is continuously striving to ensure that the courts are free from both bias and the appearance of bias, meeting the needs of increasing numbers of self-represented litigants, remaining receptive to the needs of all constituents, ensuring that court procedures are fair and understandable, and providing culturally responsive programs and services. In order to meet these expectations, Courts and Probation regularly collects feedback from court users, victims of crime, and probation clients regarding their experience with court and probation services. Also, Courts and Probation trains all court and probation employees in communication, cultural competency, and customer service skills.

**PRINCIPLE 3: Promote quality judicial decision-making and judicial leadership.**

Court practices and case management procedures should be as uniform as practicable to avoid confusion and uncertainty. Courts and Probation provides ongoing professional development, education, and training to address many concerns including the increasing complexity of court practices and procedures, the incorporation of evidence based practices, and the importance of procedural fairness in all court operations and interactions with the public. Maintaining professional excellence will promote public trust and confidence in the judicial system as a whole.

**PRINCIPLE 4: Implement quality assessments and community supervision of adult and juvenile probationers to demonstrably enhance public safety and respect for victim rights.**

The Division of Probation Services strives to reduce offender recidivism and promote accountability and responsiveness in its enforcement of the court’s orders while affecting long-term behavior change in offenders. In order to achieve this, Probation Services aims to ensure the accuracy and efficiency of pre- and post-sentence assessments and provide comprehensive assessment information to judicial officers to assist them in making more informed decisions, leading to improved and less costly outcomes. In addition, Probation Services employs evidence-based practices in all applicable areas of probation to help improve outcomes and reduce costs.

**PRINCIPLE 5: Cultivate public trust and confidence through the thoughtful stewardship of public resources.**

In serving the people of Colorado, Courts and Probation must also exercise its constitutional and statutory authority and responsibility to plan for, direct, monitor, and support the business of the system and to account to the public for the system's performance. The fulfillment of this role is only possible when the other branches of government and the public have trust and confidence in the system. In order to retain that trust and confidence, the system must be accountable to the people it serves by providing a fair and open process, communicating clear and consistent expectations for all who participate in that process, and being good stewards of the resources appropriated to it for the fulfillment of its mission. To achieve this, effective and cost-efficient methods to conduct the daily business of courts and probation are utilized, new and enhanced technology solutions are routinely employed, and information is shared with other governmental entities and the public while maintaining privacy and security concerns.

By July 1, 2014, and each July 1st hereafter, Colorado Courts and Probation will provide its Strategic Plan/Performance Plan to the Joint Budget Committee, and post the Plan on the Courts and Probation website. Performance Based Goals and Performance Measures will continue to be developed in accordance with the five Principles cited above.

It is the intention of Colorado Courts and Probation to evaluate progress toward realizing annual performance based goals against performance measures and benchmarks at least twice each year. Performance evaluations are required to be distributed to the Joint Budget Committee and General Assembly.