



# **2010 – 2015 Strategic Plan**

## **Executive Summary**

**(November 2009)**



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Finally, the Court recognizes the hard work and dedication of the members of the Strategic Planning Committee who vigorously and thoughtfully engaged in the planning process to ensure its success.

All of the above named entities and individuals were instrumental in helping the Court develop a long-term strategic direction and establish priorities to better serve the residents of San Luis Obispo County.



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Dear Friends of the San Luis Obispo Superior Court,

We are pleased to present our 2010-2015 Strategic Plan. This Strategic Plan will guide us in upcoming years as we strive to address the challenges that lie ahead while continuing to provide the highest quality of service to our community.

Included in this Strategic Plan are the Court’s vision of the future, significant long-term issues that must be addressed, long-range goals, and strategies for meeting the current and evolving challenges of delivering quality justice in a new era marked with fiscal constraints. Guided by the Court’s mission to “*Uphold the Law and Provide Equal Justice for All*”, the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan affirms our pledge to deliver superior and meaningful services to our community, our commitment to collaborate with justice partners, and our assurance to support a dedicated workforce.

We look forward to partnering with you as we work on achieving our ultimate goal of excellence in the administration of justice in a democracy.

Sincerely,

Hon. Martin J. Tangeman  
Presiding Judge

Hon. Charles S. Crandall  
Assistant Presiding Judge

Susan Matherly  
Court Executive Officer

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## Introduction

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The San Luis Obispo (SLO) County Superior Court embarked on a strategic planning process in May 2009 with grant assistance from the State Justice Institute. The purpose of the planning process was to develop a strategic direction – a roadmap and priorities – for the Court in the upcoming years. The Court’s judicial and executive leadership believes the strategic plan, which is presented below, will help the Court stay focused on its highest priorities in the years ahead allowing the Court to continue to provide the highest quality of judicial and court services to the SLO community as well as meet the changing needs, demands, opportunities, and challenges ahead.

## Mission, Vision, and Values of the San Luis Obispo Superior Court

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The mission, vision, and core values of the Court are as follows.

Mission:	Uphold the law and provide equal justice for all.
Vision:	The Court will resolve disputes fairly, in a manner that promotes public trust and confidence. We will be innovative, efficient, and provide equal and meaningful access to justice. Judicial officers and employees will stand together with a united court culture, where all are able to achieve their very best to serve the needs of the Court and the community
Core Values:	We will accomplish our mission and vision with <b><i>PRIDE!</i></b> <b><i>P</i></b> rofessionalism <b><i>R</i></b> esponsibility <b><i>I</i></b> ntegrity <b><i>D</i></b> edication <b><i>E</i></b> fficiency

## Strategic Issues, Goals, and Objectives

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Following a comprehensive trends analysis and organizational assessment, the Court’s Strategic Planning Team identified six strategic areas that the Court must focus on in the years ahead to be able to fulfill its mission and pursue its vision of the future. The six strategic areas are:

1. Facilities
2. Access to Justice
3. Case Management & Workflow Efficiencies
4. Governance
5. United and Effective Workforce
6. Collaborative External Relationships

Below is a brief description of each strategic area as well as the Court’s long-range goals and objectives – strategies – for the next five years. Refer to the Court’s comprehensive 2010-2015 Strategic Plan for complete descriptions and details. Finally, the Court’s shorter-term strategic projects/initiatives that will move the Court forward in each of these areas are presented in a separate, companion document.

**Strategic Issue #1: Facilities**

*Overview:* Safe court facilities with sufficient and functional work space are essential to providing the highest quality of justice and enhancing trust and confidence in the Court. Inasmuch as the San Luis Obispo County Superior Court’s existing facilities are outdated and undersized to meet the current and future needs of court users, the Court is committed to improving its facilities in the years ahead. Additionally, the Court must now make critical and strategic decisions about its need for and location of new facilities to serve the growing population across the county.

*Goals and Objectives*

<b>Strategic Issue #1: Facilities</b>	
Goal 1.1: The Court will have and be implementing a long-term plan for a new courthouse in SLO County (by 2015).	
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Build support in the community for a new courthouse.</li> <li>2. Build support among key state and local entities for building a new courthouse.</li> <li>3. Develop strategies to fund a new courthouse.</li> <li>4. Select a site/location to build a new courthouse.</li> </ol>
Goal 1.2: The Court’s existing facilities will meet the current and future needs of court users and the workforce.	
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve physical access to existing facilities.</li> <li>2. Improve, modernize, and expand space including courtrooms, chambers, jury areas, meeting rooms, waiting areas, staff offices/work areas, self-help, etc.</li> <li>3. Build support in the community for improving existing facilities.</li> <li>4. Build support among key state and local entities for improving existing facilities.</li> <li>5. Improve the safety and security of all court facilities.</li> </ol>
Goal 1.3: The Court’s facilities will be equipped with state-of-the art technology that supports the work of the Court and meets the future needs of court users and the workforce.	
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Update and expand the technology infrastructure in all court facilities.</li> <li>2. Continually update the Court’s technology to meet future needs.</li> <li>3. Pursue alternative funding sources to support technological innovations.</li> </ol>

## Strategic Issue #2: Access to Justice

*Overview:* The Court is committed to providing equal and meaningful access to justice. This includes making the Court more accessible, understandable and user-friendly, and providing the highest quality of services to all people. Indeed, the Court sees many opportunities to continue to enhance access and the quality of services in the years ahead especially in response to the changing demands and needs of court users.

### *Goals and Objectives*

<b>Strategic Issue #2: Access to Justice</b>	
<b>Goal 2.1: The Court will provide improved and expanded services to self-represented litigants.</b>	
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Expand self-represented services to additional case types.</li> <li>2. Expand self-represented services to additional branch courts/court locations.</li> <li>3. Collaborate with justice and community partners to provide assistance and information to self-represented litigants.</li> <li>4. Improve and expand resources and information available to self-represented litigants.</li> </ol>
<b>Goal 2.2: The Court will be understandable and user-friendly to all court customers.</b>	
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use technology to improve access to information and court services.</li> <li>2. Expand language and interpreter services.</li> <li>3. Make court processes and information more understandable to all court customers.</li> <li>4. Make the Court more accessible, open, and helpful to all court customers.</li> </ol>

## Strategic Issue #3: Case Management & Workload Efficiencies

*Overview:* Effective case management practices and efficient work processes are at the heart of resolving cases fairly and expeditiously, ultimately providing equal justice for all. In response to the current and likely future caseload of the Court and its limited resources, in the future, the San Luis Obispo County Superior Court sees the need to: (1) manage its cases more effectively and efficiently; (2) streamline, standardize, and simplify case processing and workflow procedures; and (3) more effectively use its limited resources (e.g., judicial officers, staff, technology, space/courtrooms).

### *Goals and Objectives*

<b>Strategic Issue #3: Case Management &amp; Workload Efficiencies</b>	
<b>Goal 3.1: The Court's caseload management practices will be effective and consistent.</b>	
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve calendaring and scheduling practices throughout the Court.</li> <li>2. Use technology to improve case management.</li> <li>3. Track, measure, and monitor the court's performance to ensure timely resolution of disputes.</li> <li>4. Balance caseloads and workloads across the Court.</li> </ol>
<b>Goal 3.2: The Court's processes and procedures will be efficient, streamlined, and simplified.</b>	



**Strategic Issue #3: Case Management & Workload Efficiencies**

Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collaborate with justice partners to make court processes and practices more efficient and effective.</li> <li>2. Eliminate redundancies, and streamline and simplify internal work processes and practices.</li> <li>3. Use technology to streamline and standardize work processes, procedures, and practices.</li> </ol>
Goal 3.3: The Court will be prepared for and aligned with the State’s CCMS.	
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collaborate with partners to enable exchanges of appropriate case data.</li> <li>2. Change work processes and practices to be compatible with CCMS.</li> <li>3. Educate court staff, judicial officers, and partners about the anticipated changes to case processing.</li> <li>4. Collaborate with other courts to develop efficient and effective case management practices.</li> </ol>

**Strategic Issue #4: Governance**

*Overview:* The San Luis Obispo County Superior Court is transitioning from a relatively small court to a medium-sized court with 15 judicial officers and approximately 160 court employees (in 2009). With this growth come challenges and necessary changes. In the years ahead, the Court sees the need to clarify and strengthen its governance – policy and decision-making – and administrative structures including leadership and management practices to continue to improve court performance.

*Goals and Objectives*

**Strategic Issue #4: Governance**

Goal 4.1: The Court’s judicial and administrative governance structures will be clear and effective.	
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clearly define, clarify, and agree on the policy-making and decision-making roles, responsibilities, and authority of the Court’s judicial leadership (e.g., PJ, APJ, team leaders, and judge committees).</li> <li>2. Clearly define, clarify, and agree on the roles, responsibilities, and authority including the decision-making parameters and processes of the Court’s CEO, ACEO, and other directors/managers.</li> <li>3. Improve and formalize policy-making and decision-making policies and practices.</li> <li>4. Communicate the governance responsibilities and authority to all judicial officers and court staff.</li> </ol>
Goal 4.2: The Court’s judicial leadership and the executive management team will lead and manage the Court effectively.	
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve and expand communication and information sharing processes and forums.</li> <li>2. Build mutual commitment to and remain focused on the priorities of the Court.</li> <li>3. Strengthen relationships between judicial leadership and Court management.</li> </ol>
Goal 4.3: The management team will manage court operations and services in a cohesive and united manner.	

**Strategic Issue #4: Governance**

Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Foster open communication, strengthen relationships, and build trust among team members.</li> <li>2. Develop a unified and consistent approach to managing and communicating with judicial officers and court staff.</li> <li>3. Improve decision-making practices.</li> <li>4. Enhance leadership and management skills of team members.</li> <li>5. Identify innovations and changes to improve court operations and services, and to make the Court a more satisfying place to work.</li> </ol>
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**Strategic Issue #5: Unified and Effective Workforce**

*Overview:* The future success of the Court depends in part on a unified and effective workforce. That is, the Court cannot improve its overall performance, provide the highest quality of services to the SLO community, use its limited resources efficiently and effectively, and respond proactively to changing demands unless judicial officers, managers, and staff alike: (1) are committed to the same goals; (2) work together effectively; (3) are receptive to needed changes; and (4) have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to do their respective jobs/responsibilities well. In addition, the Court must continue to foster a positive and innovative work environment and prepare now for future staffing shortages and resource challenges.

*Goals and Objectives*

**Strategic Issue #5: Unified & Effective Workforce**

Goal 5.1: The Court’s workforce will be skilled and motivated.	
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve and expand the training and cross-training provided to court staff.</li> <li>2. Provide court staff with up-to-date resources and equipment.</li> <li>3. Promote a satisfying and rewarding work environment.</li> <li>4. Improve and strengthen the skills of the Court’s executive team, managers, and supervisors.</li> <li>5. Provide development and advancement opportunities for court staff.</li> </ol>
Goal 5.2: Judicial officers and court staff will foster an organizational culture that embraces innovation.	
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage teamwork, and enhance coordination and communication, among departments.</li> <li>2. Clearly communicate and build support for common goals.</li> <li>3. Strengthen collegiality among all levels of the workforce.</li> <li>4. Seek input from and involve all levels of the workforce in making changes and identifying and implementing innovations.</li> <li>5. Supervise/manage effectively and consistently across the Court.</li> </ol>

## Strategic Issue #6: Collaborative External Relationships

*Overview:* Developing and maintaining positive and collaborative external relations is critically important to the Court’s future. Specifically, collaborative external relations with many state and local partners and stakeholders are needed to ensure that the Court’s short and long-term needs are met and that the Court is able to provide the highest quality of services to court users and the SLO community. It also is critically important in the future for the Court to: (1) educate the public and community about the judicial branch; (2) stay connected to and involved with SLO local and community leaders; and (3) be environmentally proactive to safeguard the environment for future generations. Increasingly it is important for the Court to reach out to, be involved with, and inform local leaders and the public about the Court’s purpose, goals, priorities, needs, services, and to discuss other areas of mutual concern.

### *Goals and Objectives*

<b>Strategic Issue #6: Collaborative External Relationships</b>	
<b>Goal 6.1: The Court will be respected and supported by the SLO community.</b>	
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reach out, listen, and be responsive to the needs of the community.</li> <li>2. Educate the community about the Court and the judicial branch.</li> <li>3. Build and maintain positive relationships with the government agencies, local bar, and community leaders.</li> <li>4. Improve media relations.</li> </ol>
<b>Goal 6.2: The Court will develop and maintain collaborative relationships with state and local partners and stakeholders to enhance services and performance.</b>	
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communicate the Court’s needs, goals, priorities, and accomplishments to state and local leaders/partners.</li> <li>2. Promote effective, ongoing dialogue with community partners to identify and eliminate problems and improve efficiency.</li> <li>3. Interact with state and local leaders/partners to advocate for needed resources and assistance.</li> </ol>
<b>Goal 6.3: The Court will be environmentally sensitive.</b>	
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use technology to eliminate the use of paper.</li> <li>2. Implement programs that encourage judicial officers and staff to be environmentally sensitive.</li> <li>3. Educate judicial officers, court staff, and court users on being “green.”</li> </ol>