

## **SOUTH CAROLINA**

### **ADR, Citizens' Summits Follow-Up**

This state's summary includes reports from the following:

[South Carolina Bar](#)

[South Carolina Judicial Department](#)

The [South Carolina Judicial Department](#) continues to conduct a public project on alternative dispute resolution in six counties. Several counties now operate adult and juvenile Drug Treatment Court programs on a local basis, and the Supreme Court has requested funding from the Governor and the Legislature to expand Drug Treatment Court programs throughout the state.

The South Carolina Judicial Department has embarked upon a multi-year plan to modernize the court operations of the state. The Judicial Automation Project will migrate technology into all levels of court from municipal court to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court Chief Justice has directed the formation of a committee to study the current method of docketing and disposing of criminal cases. The committee is co-chaired by an association justice and former solicitor. The committee is composed of judges, solicitors, defense attorneys, and clerks of court from throughout the state.

The SC Supreme Court and Court of Appeals went "on the road" in 2001 to help celebrate the bicentennial of the University of South Carolina by holding special terms of court at the University's Aiken, Beaufort, Columbia, Spartanburg and Sumter campuses.

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The [South Carolina Bar](#) is continuing an ambitious range of justice improvement initiatives. The Bar conducted ten regional Citizens' Summits on justice involving 650 SC residents, culminating in a statewide conference in 1998. (See the 1999 Summary report for details.) Among the top priorities identified by the community through that collaborative process were:

1. "Improve Magistrates Court." The Magistrates Court Reform Committee presented to the Court rules and forms for making the system more streamlined and user-friendly. The Court has submitted the Rules to the Legislature for approval.

2. "Offer more public education on the legal system." Through the Ask a Lawyer program, lawyers field questions from the public for free. This service is now operational five days a week. During special weeks, lawyers answer questions on specific topics such as children's issues, labor law and disaster-related legal questions.. The Bar's *Pro bono* Program has expanded its legal education seminars. The PBP has partnered with local paralegal associations, churches, senior centers, and libraries to present a variety of seminars and a chance to meet with attorneys privately.

3. "Require sensitivity training for judges, court personnel, lawyers and law enforcement officers." A 2000 Model/Demonstration grant from the ABA Coalition for Justice and Committee on State Justice Initiatives has been awarded to the South Carolina Bar to increase the number of lawyers who are trained in presenting seminars on bias and sensitivity. This training was held in June 2001. Various legal groups, including law firms, legal aid offices and court, can take advantage of their free services.

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