

UTAH

Racial and Ethnic Fairness, Public Outreach

This state's summary includes reports from the following:

[Utah State Bar](#)

[Utah State Court](#)

The [Utah State Courts](#) are involved in a number of activities concerning justice improvement and strengthening public trust and confidence in the justice system.

The *Public Outreach Committee*, composed of members of the court system and bar, is involved in several activities related to the improvement of justice in the state, including:

- Participation in the re-drafting of a statewide curriculum for 7-12 graders to include civics education. On behalf of the Judicial Council, Justice Christine Durham is leading a coalition that includes the Utah Law-Related Education Program, the Utah State Bar, and members of the Utah judiciary and Administrative Office of the Courts, and the State Board of Education. The course materials will include a program called "Education for Justice." The Coalition will also provide presenters for in-service teacher training and organize a speakers list of lawyers and judges who will support teachers and school administrators.
- Coordinating with community groups to sponsor Public Forums.
- Making public outreach a focus at the statewide annual Bar meeting this year.
- Developing a speakers bureau with the bar and judiciary
- Working with some local schools to hold special programs on the judiciary.

The *Racial and Ethnic Fairness Task Force*, which included members of the non-lawyer community as well as judges and lawyers, completed a three year study last fall and submitted its final report this year. Fifteen hundred Utah residents shared their views and experiences at 27 public hearings across the state. The Task Force debated and unanimously recommended over 75 proposals for changes in law enforcement, courts, and corrections in response to the hearings. The full report is on the court Web site (<http://courtlink.utcourts.gov>). An Implementation Committee, also including non-lawyers, and a staff position were created to carry out the Task Force recommendations. System-wide diversity training is now provided to all judges and court staff.

The *On-line Court Assistance Program* (OCAP), the product of a joint legislative/courts committee, allows landlords, tenants, and divorcing parties to prepare their own documents for filing with the court, using the Internet. Hundreds of people used the new technology in its first dozen weeks of availability. OCAP allows direct access to the courts for remedies to common problems and better documents for the legal process. OCAP is being expanded to include protective orders.

Automation advances, like electronic filing, video arraignment, and telephonic case information and payment systems are making court processes much more accessible and efficient. The latter system allows the public to check the status of cases or pay traffic tickets automatically, using a telephone any time of the day or night. Interactive Voice Response (in English and Spanish) is available in all urban districts. The court Web site is being utilized to disseminate a wide variety of information such as "Your Day in Court" (a publication of the Law-Related Education Project) and volunteer activities available in the courts.

Court administrators and judges are participating in *case management/delay reduction conferences*. Case manager positions have been created in three counties. The manager reviews all divorce filings, meets with the parties, and assesses which track the case should be put on-trial, mediation, or uncontested. This

saves the parties and the court both time and money compared to a traditional process. Mediation programs include those for victim-offender, child welfare, parental visitation, and truancy. The latter programs are being expanded in local schools.

Drug courts in both adult and juvenile settings, truancy mediation programs in local schools, and domestic violence court continue to expand.

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The [Utah State Bar](#) is actively involved in the Utah Supreme Court's Task Force on Race and Ethnicity, following up a bar task force. The Utah Electronic Law Project is a public sector/bar/private sector initiative, housed at the Bar Center, which seeks to provide complete electronic access to governmental, judicial and legal services in Utah. The Bar is staffing *pro bono* volunteers at a domestic violence clinic; endorsing the establishment of drug courts; and organizing a foundation to automate and distribute legal assistance to a consortium of legal partners consisting of Utah Legal Services, Legal Aid Society of Salt Lake City, and the Disability Law Center. The Access to Justice Task Force is a joint effort of state and private interest groups to facilitate services to low income citizens.

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