

provides, in cooperation with the AOC, training, support and information on the availability and use of reports generated by the statewide computer system.

How Does the Municipal Division Aid Municipal Court Personnel in Submitting Annual Budgets?

Municipal courts are required to submit their proposed annual budget to the Municipal Division on forms approved by the New Jersey Supreme Court. The Municipal Division on behalf of the Assignment Judge works with the court to ensure that its budget submission conforms to Judiciary standards and properly provides for the needs of the court. Pursuant to Judiciary policy, a municipal court may not submit its proposed budget to the municipality without first receiving Assignment Judge approval.

How Does the Municipal Division Ensure that Judges and Judiciary Employees Comply with the Judiciary's Codes of Conduct?

Judges and court employees must observe high standards of conduct to preserve the integrity and independence of the court. The Supreme Court accordingly has placed limitations on the outside activities of judges and staff in order to avoid impropriety or the appearance of impropriety.

Although all municipal court staff are employees of the municipality, the Assignment Judge has overall administrative responsibility over the municipal courts. All municipal court employees must adhere to the applicable rules, policies and directives of the Supreme Court, the Chief Justice and the Administrative Director of the Courts, including the Code of Conduct for Judiciary Employees. Two Supreme Court advisory committees (one for judges and one for Judiciary staff) provide guidance regarding the application of the Judiciary's Code of Judicial Conduct and Code of Conduct for Judiciary Employees.

In conjunction with the AOC, the Municipal Division provides training and advice to municipal court judges and staff regarding the limitations on their outside activities so that they will understand how to remain in compliance with the Judiciary's Codes of Conduct.

How Does the Municipal Division Help the Municipal Court in Responding to Input and Concerns from the Public?

When people involved in the municipal court process notify the Municipal Division of concerns or complaints about their experiences in the municipal court, the Municipal Division will investigate and address all such matters to the fullest extent possible.

How Does the Municipal Division Aid Municipalities in Complying with the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?

Each municipal court is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to provide reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities to enable them to have access to court programs, services, sessions and activities. The Municipal Division ensures that municipal court staff receives ADA training through the vicinage's ADA coordinator. The Municipal Division, in consultation with the AOC, provides advice on ADA issues. Moreover, the Municipal Division periodically submits to the AOC a compilation of the ADA requests received.

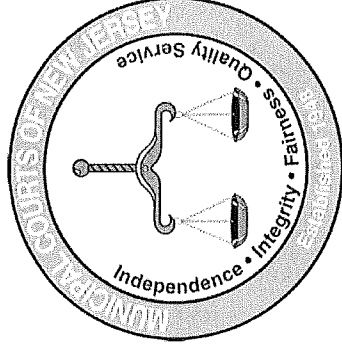
Conclusion

The New Jersey Judiciary hopes that the information in this guide helps municipalities understand the role of the Municipal Division. For further information or assistance, please contact the Municipal Division in your vicinage.

Mission Statement of the New Jersey Court System
We are an independent branch of government constitutionally entrusted with the fair and just resolution of disputes in order to preserve the rule of law and to protect the rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of the United States and this State.

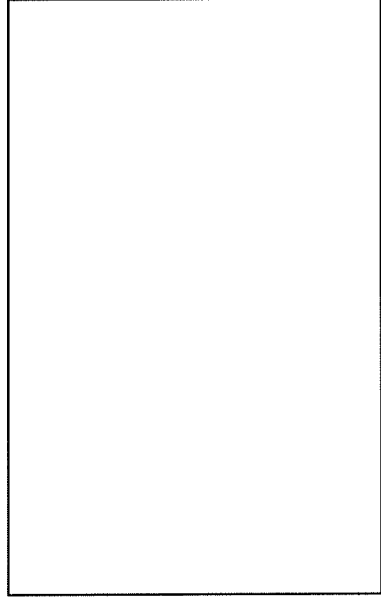
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The Municipal Division of the New Jersey Judiciary



Informational Guide for Municipal Governments

njcourtsonline.com



The municipal court system in New Jersey is composed of more than 530 local municipal courts and handles more than 6 million cases annually.

For most citizens, their only contact with the court system occurs in a municipal court. That experience can shape a lifelong view of the judicial process. Recognizing the joint stake that both local governments and the Judiciary have in the operation of each municipal court, the Supreme Court established a Municipal Division to support the municipal courts. This informational guide is designed to provide municipal governing bodies with a concise overview of the role of the Municipal Division and how the division's oversight and services ensure that each municipality has an efficiently functioning municipal court, staff and court office.

What is the Organization and Role of the Municipal Division?

The Municipal Division is the arm of the state court system that provides support and oversight to the municipal courts. At the local level, the Municipal Division consists of a presiding judge-municipal courts (designated by the Chief Justice), a municipal division manager and support staff for each vicinage. A vicinage is a court region covering one or more counties. The Municipal Division also includes central office staff in the state Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC).

How Does the Municipal Division Provide Oversight of Each Municipal Court?

The Municipal Division conducts an intensive on-site annual review of each municipal court to ensure that the court is adhering to Judiciary policies and running smoothly. As another part of its oversight, the Municipal Division provides ongoing advice and hands-on assistance and training to municipal court judges and staff on a wide range of subjects, including case management and backlog efficiency.

How Does the Municipal Division Help Ensure that the Municipal Courts Have Suitable Facilities?

The vicinage Assignment Judge and the local municipality both have vital roles to play regarding municipal court facilities. The primary responsibility for providing suitable municipal court facilities rests with the municipality. However, pursuant to Court Rule 1:33-4(b), the Assignment Judge, as the chief judge of the vicinage, is ultimately responsible for the operation of all courts within the vicinage, including the municipal courts. Municipal Division staff, under the authority of the Assignment Judge, thus are available to consult with mayors, municipal administrators and other local leaders to discuss recommendations and requirements for new and existing court facilities.

How Does the Municipal Division Provide Service During Emergencies?

It is imperative that a municipal court be able to continue functioning despite damage to the court facility as a result of fire, flood or other catastrophe. It is the responsibility of the Municipal Division to work with the judge, the court staff, and the governing body to help identify the best strategies for continuing court operations. This includes providing general technical assistance and helping to identify temporary facility alternatives.

How Does the Municipal Division Work with Governing Bodies Regarding Security for the Courts?

The Statewide Municipal Court Security Policy adopted by the Supreme Court recognizes the primary responsibility of the municipality for establishing and maintaining security in the municipal courts. The plan requires that each municipal court prepare, adopt and submit to the Assignment Judge a court security plan. A local court security advisory committee must also be established. The Municipal Division, including the central office, is available to provide advice and sample plans to the court and to the governing body regarding court security.

How Does the Municipal Division Ensure that Municipal Court Personnel Are Adequately Trained?

The Municipal Division, in coordination with the AOC, provides both mandatory and elective train-

ing programs for municipal court judges and court personnel. The Municipal Division also ensures that the courts are provided with up-to-date changes concerning statutes, rules of court and policies that affect the operation of the municipal courts. The Municipal Division can arrange and coordinate technical support and training on the statewide automated computer system.

How Does the Municipal Division Help in the Recruitment of New Municipal Court Personnel?

The Municipal Division posts detailed job descriptions on its statewide Judiciary Web site. The Municipal Division manager or designee often participates in and is always available to interview prospective municipal court directors, administrators and deputies. This service is provided to assist the municipality in identifying the most qualified candidates.

How Does the Municipal Division Assist in Training Municipal Court Judges?

All newly appointed municipal court judges are required to attend a five-day Orientation Seminar for Newly Appointed Municipal Court Judges. In addition, by order of the Chief Justice, each presiding judge-municipal courts is responsible for the mentoring of municipal court judges in that vicinage. Presiding judges provide individual and group training sessions at the vicinage and state level, including an intensive orientation program required for all newly appointed municipal court judges. Further, the presiding judge and the municipal division manager conduct visitations while courts are in session as a means to provide advice and constructive feedback to the municipal court judges regarding court operations.

How Does the Municipal Division Aid Municipal Court Personnel in the Use of the Statewide Municipal Court Computer System?

The Municipal Division, in coordination with the AOC, ensures that the computer equipment provided by the state is kept up to date. It also