

Gary J. Wait
Division Director
Juvenile & Adult Court Programs
Administrative Office of the Courts
2112 Industrial Drive
Jefferson City, MO 65110

**MISSOURI STANDARDS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF
JUVENILE JUSTICE: IDENTIFYING BARRIERS AND INCENTIVES
FOR THEIR USE IN JUVENILE DELINQUENCY CASES**

On April 24, 2001, the Missouri Supreme Court issued an Order that approved the Standards for the Administration of Juvenile Justice for distribution. The standards were distributed to Missouri's Presiding Judges and Juvenile Officers. The purpose of this evaluation is to determine for juvenile delinquency cases how many circuit juvenile officers have implemented any one of the standards, and determine what are the incentives to implement the standards and what are the barriers.

The measurable goals of this project include: whether or not juvenile officers are resistant to the standards, are juvenile officers using the standards, what are the barriers to implement the standards, and what do juvenile officers identify as incentives to using the performance standards?

Although much has been written about the *Trial Court Performance Standards*, there is a paucity of information regarding juvenile justice performance standards and their application in administrative case processing

from intake to case disposition in delinquency cases. Missouri's juvenile courts receive nearly 86,000 referrals each year; nearly 70% are handled administratively. The standards to set a framework into place how referrals are informally processed, what occurs, when it occurs, and when is done.

The research methodology used for the project included an electronic survey that was mailed to all 45 juvenile officers in the state. Respondents were given one week to respond and return the survey. The surveys provided information about how many juvenile officers implemented one or more of the eight standards, and what standards were implemented, the barriers for implementation and identify incentives that encouraged implementation. Additional telephone interviews were held with thirteen juvenile officers to determine more detail on how they were using each of the standards.

The conclusions drawn from this project are that the standards have received a positive acceptance from the juvenile officers: fifteen circuits or 39% have implemented two or more of the standards. The most significant barriers are the lack of adequate staff, and an omission of training. The most significant incentives include certification by the Supreme Court that a circuit is in compliance with a standard, training, and funds to evaluate standard compliance.

This [research paper](#) is available in its entirety in portable document format. To access, you must first obtain and install the Adobe Acrobat Reader



To obtain a copy of this research paper, please contact:

Knowledge Information Services
National Center for State Courts
300 Newport Avenue
Williamsburg, VA 23185
Phone: (800) 616-6164