



## A National Campaign to Ensure the Racial and Ethnic Fairness of America's State Courts

Race & Ethnic Fairness in the Courts

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### Happy Holidays!

In this second issue of the *Race and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts e-Newsletter*, we report on a summit held in Delaware and highlight state court efforts across the country to address the racial and ethnic diversity of state judicial workforces.

We also extend best wishes for the holiday season and thank you for your help this year with the [National Campaign to Ensure the Racial and Ethnic Fairness of America's State Courts](#). We look forward to our continued work in 2008.

If you are a primary contact for the National Campaign, please share the newsletter with others in your state working to ensure racial and ethnic fairness in the courts.

### Delaware Summit on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Criminal Justice System

The Supreme Court of Delaware and the Delaware Criminal Justice Council cosponsored a Summit on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Criminal Justice System, September 17-18, 2007. The summit brought state government and law-enforcement officials together to discuss strategies to improve racial and ethnic fairness in the criminal and juvenile justice system. Chief Justice Myron T. Steele and Lt. Governor John Carney opened the conference. Speakers included Joe Hynes, District Attorney of Kings County (Brooklyn), New York; Marc Mauer, Executive Director of The Sentencing Project; Madelynn Herman of the National Center for State Courts; the Honorable David B. Mitchell, Secretary of Delaware's Department of Public Safety and Homeland Security; and Wayne McKenzie, Chairman of

the American Bar Association's Criminal Justice Section Committee on Race and Racism. In addition, Dr. Pamela Casey provided an overview of the [National Campaign to Ensure Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts](#) and state programs and activities to address fairness available on the campaign's Web site.

## **Promising Programs**

The [campaign's database](#) includes promising programs and practices to achieve racial and ethnic fairness in the following key areas:

- diverse and representative state judicial workforces;
- fair and unbiased behaviors on the part of judges, court staff, attorneys, and others subject to court authority in the courthouse;
- comprehensive, system-wide improvements to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in criminal, domestic violence, juvenile, and abuse and neglect cases;
- the availability of timely and high-quality services to improve access to the courts for limited-English-proficient persons; and
- diverse and representative juries.

This issue spotlights an internship and fellowship program in New York and a supreme court employment subcommittee in Rhode Island.

### ***New York's Internship and Fellowship Program***

New York has both an Internship and a Fellowship Program. The Student Ambassador Program is a unique internship, offering students opportunities for personal and professional growth. Student ambassadors work closely with court personnel, including judges, to learn about court operations and court initiatives. They then present information to their peers and the community about the role of courts. Students in the program are from high school, college, graduate school,

and law school.

The Legal Fellows Program is a one-year fellowship for recent law-school graduates interested in pursuing a legal career in public service. Fellows are assigned to work in judicial offices statewide, assisting with legal research and writing. The fellowship provides valuable legal experience for new attorneys while also exposing them to judicial decision making and court operations. In addition to their work assignment, fellows attend forums with judges, elected officials, and public policy makers to learn more about public service work and gain greater insights into professional opportunities in the legal system.

### ***Rhode Island's Supreme Court Employment in the Courts Subcommittee***

The Employment in the Courts Subcommittee is part of the Supreme Court Permanent Advisory Committee on Women and Minorities in the Courts. The subcommittee was established to review the makeup of the judiciary's workforce, examine hiring practices in the state court system, and make recommendations that will maintain and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the courts through a workforce that more accurately reflects the diverse racial and ethnic makeup of the state. Several recommendations made by the subcommittee to improve minority hiring have been implemented. Minorities in the judiciary's workforce, excluding judges appointed by the governor and magistrates appointed by chief judges, have increased from 6 percent of the workforce in 2002 to 10.5 percent of the workforce in 2006. The subcommittee continues to monitor diversity hiring in the courts and to present updates to the Supreme Court Permanent Advisory Committee, the chief justice, the state court administrator, and chief judge, and court administrator of each state court.

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