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**2011 BIENNIUM JUDICIAL BRANCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS**  
**A Report to the Law and Justice Interim Committee**

**Prepared by Office of Court Administrator**  
**June 2011**

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***Court Help Program***

This program, initially funded by the 2007 Legislature, provides tools and information to help people without attorneys navigate their way through the legal process in civil matters. The program also works to increase the pool of attorneys willing to provide free (pro bono) legal services to low-income Montanans.

- Over 12,500 people served by full-time self-help law centers in Billings and Kalispell
- Over 4,000 people served by part-time self-help law centers in Bozeman, Great Falls, Helena, and Missoula
- Over 380 people served by AmeriCorps volunteers in 16 rural counties
- Pro bono program developed to assist veterans with disability benefit claims
- User-friendly, plain language user forms and instructions created to assist self-represented litigants
- Local pro bono programs developed or expanded in 10 judicial districts
- Training provided to public libraries on assisting library users who have legal needs
- Legal education to attorneys who may not routinely practice in areas most often targeted for free legal help

***Drug Treatment Courts***

These programs are court dockets within district courts or courts of limited jurisdiction that specialize in adult criminal, juvenile, or child abuse and neglect cases involving participants who are alcohol or other drug addicted. The purpose of these programs is to reduce recidivism and increase offenders' successful habilitation through treatment, case management, mandatory frequent drug testing, use of sanctions and incentives, and continuous judicial oversight.

- Recent study of drug court participants during a 30-month period (May 2008 – November 2010) showed:

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- For participants discharged for two years or longer, the recidivism rate was 11.7%, substantially lower than the 45-60% recidivism rate for drug offenders two years after adjudication under traditional criminal justice system
  - Employment among adult drug court graduates increased by 17.6% from admission to graduation.
  - Percentage of adult drug court participants getting a high school education, GED, or attending a technical school or college increased 21.4%
  - Children in family drug courts spend between 40 to 50% less time reaching permanency thus saving a variety of costs including time in foster care
  - Of the 14 babies born during the 30-month period, 12 were born drug free – an immense saving of taxpayer dollars.
- Performance measures adopted for each court type

### ***Court Performance Measures***

Since 2008, the Supreme Court has implemented a set of measures to gauge its performance. These measures were adapted from a performance measurement system developed by the National Center for State Courts. Measures implemented by the Court include:

- Bench and bar survey – conducted every other year
- Employee survey – conducted annually
- Case processing measures – applied quarterly (see attached)
  - Case clearance and productivity
  - Age of pending caseload
  - On-time case processing

A parallel project, approved by the District Court Council, is underway for the district courts across the state.