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## **Locating Resources on Drug Courts**

*by Robert Grant, Public Relations Committee  
Northern California Association of Law Librarians (NOCALL)*

**Drug Courts in the Spotlight.** When Noelle Bush, daughter of Florida governor Jeb Bush, was charged with substance abuse last fall, drug courts suddenly received national media attention. What are drug courts, though? Twenty years ago there were none and now there is a growing "drug court system" that, in California, includes Proposition 36 and D.U.I. courts. The system will evolve as legislatures, advocacy groups, social scientists and the public-at-large weigh in on them.

**Drug Courts' Raison d'Être.** Drug courts are becoming something of a "growth industry." According to the November 2002 Office of Justice Programs Drug Court Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project, almost 1,000 are operating now and over 400 more are planned. Not only are they seen to be economical (Washington State Institute for Public Policy, "Can Drug Courts Save Money for Washington State Taxpayers?" at [www.wa.gov/wsipp](http://www.wa.gov/wsipp)), but also, as the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University notes, "drug courts provide more comprehensive and close supervision of the using offender than other forms of community supervision." ([www.ndci.org](http://www.ndci.org)) Santa Clara County Judge Steven Manley concurs, telling NOCALL Update that "treatment alone does not work but the principles of the drug court model do."

**Drug Courts: National Resources.** The Federal Bureau of Justice "Drug Court Discretionary Program" is outlined at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA) and its "Drug Court Planning Initiative" is at <http://dcpl.ncjr.org>. A good synopsis, "Drug Court Resources: Training & Technical Assistance," is at [www.ncjrs.org](http://www.ncjrs.org). The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) held a May 30, 2001 workshop in New Orleans on "Integrating Research into Drug Courts," summarized at [www.drugabuse.gov/MeetSum](http://www.drugabuse.gov/MeetSum).

Outside government, the School of Public Affairs at American University published "Drug Court Management Systems 2000," a "simple, menu-driven system developed primarily for use by small drug courts" at [www.american.edu/justice](http://www.american.edu/justice). Dr. Steven Belenko of the National Center on Addiction & Substance Abuse at Columbia University wrote a seminal and oft-cited work entitled, "Research on Drug Courts: A Critical Review 2001 Update." Judge Jeffrey Tauber has written "DUI/Drug Courts: Defining a National Strategy" and "Drug Courts: A Research Agenda" and "Federal Confidentiality Laws and How They Affect Drug Court Practitioners." Retired Judge Karen Freeman-Wilson drafted "Ethical Considerations for Judges and Attorneys in Drug Court," as well as the "Drug Court Publications Guide," a 100-page document that summarizes virtually every drug court-related reference available up to May 2002. All these documents are available on-line at [www.ndci.org](http://www.ndci.org).

**Drug Courts: California Resources.** The California Department of Alcohol & Drug Programs publishes a number of bulletins, letters and fact sheets at [www.adp.cahwnet.gov](http://www.adp.cahwnet.gov). The CDADP's July 2002 Drug Court Program Fact Sheet distinguishes between pre-plea, post-plea, post-adjudication and civil models. The July 2002 CDADP Fact Sheet on the "Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act of 2000" explains Proposition 36.

There's also a discussion of California drug courts at [www.calcourts.org](http://www.calcourts.org), including Rule 6.56 of the 2003 California Rules of Court. According to its fact sheet, these courts "include drug, domestic violence, mental health, homeless, community and peer/youth courts" and the Committee "develops and promotes consistent and professional standards for these courts." The Committee has digitized an October 2002 Progress Report and the March 2002 Final Report on the Drug Court Partnership Act of 1998. All can be found at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov).

**Drug Courts: Opposing Views.** In researching the topic, attorneys and law librarians soon discover that not everyone is smitten with drug courts. Colorado District Judge Morris B. Hoffman has stimulated a debate by asserting that "drug courts are not satisfying either the legitimate and compassionate interests of the treatment community or the legitimate and rational interests of the law enforcement community." *The Drug Court Scandal*, 7 North Carolina Law Review 1496 (June 2000). The Reconsider Forum on Drug Policy has set forth its concerns about the fairness and effectiveness of drug courts in its fact sheet, "Drug Courts and Treatment as an Alternative to Incarceration," [www.reconsider.org/issues/drug\\_court](http://www.reconsider.org/issues/drug_court).

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