

VAN BUREN COUNTY - ALL COURT POLICY

SUBJECT: Community Outreach Programs and Efforts	SECTION: ADMINISTRATIVE	DATE: 7/5/18
REVISIONS PREPARED BY: Lynn Bullard, Frank Hardester, Ariel Schwemer, Angie Straley and Alice Yonkman	NUMBER: VBC-0103	SUPERSEDES: n/a

Renumbered to "Policy 2.003" on 9/16/20

REFERENCES:

Court Website and Social Media Policy
Employee Social Networking Policy
Community Outreach Brochure

BACKGROUND: In the fall of 2017, the court began the process to review and improve community outreach efforts. By the beginning of 2018, Van Buren County Courts made community outreach a priority. Goals of the outreach include the following:

- Improve transparency
- Increase public awareness
- Enhance public communication
- Provide education

Van Buren County Court outreach efforts and programs assist in building public trust in the judicial system. These collaborations seek to promote the goals of the court and address broader social issues such as those addressed within the courts and dockets. These may be one-time events, community events, or those within our agency. Judges and court employees must follow certain rules to comply with funding, grant and other requirements. Therefore, proposed court programs must be reviewed by the Chief Judge or his/her designee.

POLICY STATEMENT:

A. Efforts:

1. Van Buren County Courts will ensure that the community receives positive encounters from the courts through social media, local government events, and newsletters.
2. Community outreach efforts from the courts will be documented through a central source by the Trial Court Administrator or his/her designee.
3. The court will authorize various efforts to increase community outreach which includes, but is not limited to:
 - Court newsletters
 - Social media
 - Judicial township tours
 - School events
 - State of the court presentation
 - Press releases
4. A schedule of community events, local government meetings, and various court activities will be kept for reference. Participation by the Judiciary and court staff will take place on a regular basis to maintain transparency and consistency.
5. To ensure community outreach is a priority, outreach efforts will be a regular agenda item discussed at Management Team monthly meetings as well as the Judicial Council bi-weekly meetings. The courts to community endeavor will be reviewed on a regular basis based upon communications and feedback from stakeholders and the community.

6. Judges will make ongoing efforts to engage in community outreach and communicate the same within the courts.
7. Community outreach topics may include, but not limited to, the following but is not limited to:
 - Information about court programs and services
 - General information about the law and court processes
 - Provide clarity regarding court policy and procedure
 - Gather concerns and feedback within the community
 - Educational programs for court-involved individuals

B. Programs:

1. The Chief Judge or their designee must approve all new significant and substantive outreach programs:
 - The program supports or promotes the responsibilities and goals of the court.
 - Legal issues that may arise are promptly identified and resolved prior to execution of any program
 - Needed documents are properly administered
 - Court resources are appropriately used. Without the approval to use court resources, there should be no use of the court's name, logo, or property within projects
2. Program proposals should include goals of the program, the intended audience, duration of the program, venue, plans of advertisement, funding, use of court resources, and intended roles of other agencies.
3. All approved Van Buren County Court outreach programs must be in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines.

FORMS:

- VBC-1807, Yearly Township Meeting Schedule Sign-Up Sheet
- VBC-1870, Van Buren County Court Program Request

APPROVAL:

Effective Date: 8/2/18

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Kathleen M. Brickley – Chief Judge