

NJC Courses

Rural Courts: A Web-Based Course

Why should I take this course?

Judges in rural courts throughout our nation share a unique circumstance marked by isolation, under-funding, lack of collateral social services in the community, and a high public profile. This course shares techniques and experience from rural judges in meeting these challenges, and provides tools and suggestions to the participants which can be adapted in their courts as circumstances warrant. The participant will gain a broad perspective on successful approaches to ethical relations with residents and attorneys; the role of tribal judges and part-time judges; security; emergency management; alternative sentencing options; effective internal relations; meeting organized challenges to judicial authority; and accessing services through technology to meet a range of needs, including foreign interpreters and legal research. Participants will enjoy a safe and confidential environment for the exchange of ideas among colleagues who face the similar unique issues.

What will I learn?

After this course, participants will be able to:

- Analyze the role of judge as an agent of change;
- Develop at least five strategies for mitigating the effects of isolation;
- Draw upon technological resources and provide a sensitive environment for provision of interpreter services;
- Approach disruptive pro se litigants with planned responses;
- Identify and access non-traditional resources in the community to expand sentencing and treatment options;
- Plan security practices and responses to emergency situations which could befall the court;
- Identify the rural judge's unique ethical challenges, and develop practices to avoid ethics pitfalls;
- Identify current types of crimes found in the rural environment, and how other courts have responded to them; and
- Recognize ethical conduct issues in situations which are peculiar to part-time and tribal judges.

Who should attend?

The course is designed for judges who sit in rural courts.

Who are the members of the faculty?

The course is presented by a team of three experienced judges from rural court jurisdictions, who have over thirty-six years of experience teaching in judicial education.

How is this course taught?

This course is presented in a collegial atmosphere utilizing both individual and interactive distance learning modalities, including live on-line discussions, CD ROM reference materials and film, discussion bulletin boards, quizzes, self-testing, research assignments, and links to web-site resources. Participants will have weekly assignments, online group discussions and six live Web conferences with the faculty. It is anticipated that judges will spend between four and five hours on lessons per week.

Does this course qualify for credits in the Judicial Studies degree program?

This course qualifies does not qualify for credit in the Judicial Studies program, It does, however, qualify as an elective in the Certificate in Judicial Development, General Jurisdiction Trial Skills and Special Court Trial Skills programs.



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What should I tell my presiding judge or funding agency so that my attendance will be approved?

Presentation of interactive distance-learning for these rural judge issues accomplishes a unique opportunity for judges from throughout the nation to jointly explore practical and tested approaches to challenges for rural court judges. The cost saving to courts, having no travel expenses and their bench officers taking the course while continuing calendar obligations, is secondary to the value of judges participating in a learning-oriented network presenting an invaluable resource in the future.

Whom should I contact for more information?

For more information, please contact the registrar's office at (800) 255-8343 or registrar@judges.org.



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