



Supreme Court of Missouri
Commission on Racial and Ethnic Fairness (CREF)

Report to the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts, 2017

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Missouri is pleased to approach its third year of work as a Commission. We are also excited to host the 2017 National Consortium in St. Louis and hope it is an engaging and fulfilling experience for all who attend.

2016-2017 was a busy year for CREF, with the following key accomplishments:

- Six subcommittees (Civil Justice, Criminal Justice, Juvenile Justice, Judicial, Municipal Courts and Practice of Law) created the first recommendations to the Supreme Court of Missouri. These recommendations are based on a careful review of data, studies, experiential evidence and best practices to determine specific, actionable steps Missouri can take to reduce or eliminate bias in our courts.
- A part-time Executive Director was hired to assist with research, coordination and community engagement for CREF.
- Public Listening Sessions were held to gauge the public's experiences with Missouri courts, as well as their input on suggested recommendations for changes.
- The Municipal Courts Subcommittee delivered 35 recommendations to the Supreme Court of Missouri in March, 2016 which detailed specific actions to streamline efficiencies within municipal courts while eliminating conflicts of interest. These recommendations have already led to the consolidation, transfer or closure of 47 municipal courts.
- Established a Fees, Fines and Bail Practices Task Force for Missouri.
- Amended eyewitness testimony procedures to include potential bias.
- Implemented mandatory implicit bias and/or cultural competency training for all court personnel, judges, attorneys, and individuals affiliated with the juvenile justice system in an effort to ensure bias is an identified concept to be acknowledged and removed as is possible.

Missouri is committed to ensuring racial and ethnic fairness now and into the future. We recognize these steps are the beginning of a dedicated process of upholding fairness for all Missourians. We look forward to a continued dialogue with other state and national partners to identify and replicate best practices for fairness in our courts.

Thank you,

Julie Lawson

Executive Director