



## *Idaho Supreme Court*

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### ***Protocol for Establishing and Maintaining Effective Relationships with Local Officials***

Under the overall direction of Administrative District Judges (ADJs) and Trial Court Administrators (TCAs), and consistent with the *Code of Judicial Conduct (2002)* (for example, *Canons 3.C.1, 4.C.1, and 4.C.2*) district and magistrate judges are encouraged to build effective, working relationships with local officials. This may occur in a number of ways, including the following activities:

1. Participate in judiciary-sponsored dinners, lunches, and other opportunities for judges and local officials to meet informally. At least annually, each judicial district plans an opportunity (i.e. a luncheon or dinner) to meet with local officials in their geographical area.
2. Conduct district visits to new local officials, and participate in judiciary-sponsored orientation sessions for new local officials.
3. The ADJ (or county judge designee) and TCA should be readily available to respond to all administrative issues raised by county commissioners and elected clerks. An “open door” practice will encourage informal visits or phone calls from county commissioners and elected clerks, which helps to build relationships. Best practice is to encourage local county commissioners to designate a liaison commissioner representative to serve as a point of contact and to meet (monthly) with the ADJ (or county judge designee) and TCA. Often this role is routinely performed by the chairman of the commission.
4. ADJs and TCAs should meet quarterly with elected clerks of the district court in their judicial district.
5. Plan a couple of luncheons throughout the year for the trial court administrator, elected clerk, deputy clerks, and judges in that county. Consider inviting other local officials such as county commissioners and having a special topic presentation by a judge.
6. Invite local officials to join individual judges for a “Day in Court” so they have an opportunity to spend time in courtrooms, view court proceedings, and meet with the trial judge who provides additional explanations about the cases on the calendar that day.
7. Extend invitations to attend problem-solving court sessions, including serving as speakers at graduation ceremonies. Encourage questions and offer to be available to commissioners if follow-up is requested.

8. Invite local officials to participate in Law Day, Adoption Day, and other court events.
9. Annually, each ADJ designates a judge or other person to hand-deliver information to local officials. Provide copies of the Supreme Court's annual report, as well as the Court's annual legislative and budget priorities for the coming session to local officials.
10. Encourage county commissioners to formally acknowledge local county court employees at designated years of service (10, 15, 20 years, etc.) with a certificate award ceremony.
11. The ADJ and TCA should establish a formal, ongoing partnership with local officials to address short-term and long-term space and facility planning within the judicial district, and to develop and maintain security plans and procedures.
13. Meet with county commissioners, other county local officials, and judges within the district to acquaint them with budgets and to secure sufficient funding for the operations of the courts (the Counties and the Courts Committee is developing a handbook for this purpose).
14. The ADJ and TCA will meet with local officials to review and discuss various district court personnel agreements. IAC maintains a website of model agreements for your reference.
15. Convene periodic meetings with city and county officials to discuss procedures affecting court business. Consider appointing a local criminal justice commission to meet from time to time to discuss criminal justice issues, as well as to maintain good relationships.

This protocol is intended to outline the many ways in which judges may contribute to building positive relationships with local officials. It is especially intended to acquaint new judges with the basic principles, ethical issues, and practical considerations that guide the Judiciary's interaction with local officials. It is not intended to inhibit any judge, but rather to describe the various activities that may occur from time to time, and to let new judges know that Idaho judges have found it productive to speak with "one voice" regarding legislative and budget priorities of the Courts. We hope you find this outline useful, and invite any comments, criticisms, or suggestions for improvement.