The Future of Work in the State Courts at the Human-Technology Frontier

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The State Courts

State courts hear over 95% of all U.S. court cases

State courts also serve as conveners in communities

State court workforce:
• Judicial branch staff that are unique to this sector
• Roles that exist in other sectors
The Current Moment

AI and virtual court operations

Pandemic, climate change

Renewed calls for racial justice
The Current Grant

NSF Planning Grant under the FW-HTF program

Gathered researchers, practitioners, and court stakeholders for a year of guided ideation and discussion

Outcome: cross-disciplinary research agenda
Activities

Workgroup meetings
Prototype network model of the court workforce
Environmental scans of court technologies
Literature reviews on AI
Guiding Principles

Holistic systems approach
Participatory research and design
Human-centered design
Standardization across jurisdictions
Equity
Research Questions

Where should the operations of the courts be re-designed to meet the needs of future court workers and court users?

What are the impacts of AI on employee well-being and employment equity?

What are the impacts of AI on case processing and court user experiences?
Research Agenda

Stage I:
• Guidelines for the use of AI in courts
• Court personnel survey
• Interactive network model of the court workforce
• Re-imagined court workflow

Stage II:
• Goals and standards for specific AI technologies
• Feasibility studies of specific AI technologies
• New AI-driven court technologies
Research Agenda

Stage III:
• Pilot-tests in courts
• On-the-job training protocols
• Public education about new technologies

Stage IV:
• Ongoing monitoring and improvement of technologies
Questions?

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