



News Release

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Hackathon Event to Address Access to Court Issues

The Judiciary and the New Jersey State Bar Association (NJSBA) have joined with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to host a hackathon to aid the administration of justice and help improve access to the courts. CourtHack 2017 will bring together court and legal experts with computer programmers to develop technological solutions to address challenges court users face today.

The event will be held on April 22-23 at the New Jersey Law Center, 1 Constitution Square, New Brunswick. Reporters and photographers are welcome to cover the event.

The event will begin at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday with a kick-off presentation about the challenges litigants confront. Contestants will have 30 hours to develop project prototypes. The event will conclude at 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 23 with demonstrations of the technology solutions and the awarding of prizes. State court judges and court executives along with current and past NJSBA officers will serve as judges for the competition.

“Our organization, like Judiciaries across the country, must expand its use of technology in order to expand the technological bridges between our own system and court users,” said Judge Glenn A. Grant, acting administrative director of the courts. “Events such as CourtHack bring fresh skills and new ideas to long-standing problems, and we are happy to be a part of this effort involving the NCSC and the NJSBA.”

Among the challenges that contestants are being asked to consider are:

- a way for traffic and parking offenders to ask courts to adjust court fines and fees based on their ability to pay;
- online dispute resolution solutions;
- mobile-friendly courthouse check-in apps;
- ways to analyze litigant data to improve customer service;
- mobile apps that explain legal terms or show graphic displays of how the courts work;

- solutions that match litigants in family court with services provided by the courts, social services, or nonprofit agencies; or
- any other innovation that improves services for court users.

NJSBA President Thomas H. Prol said, “A critical element of the NJSBA's mission is to keep the doors of the courthouse open for all. We are thrilled to host and to help sponsor this cutting-edge event and excited to be part of the solution in providing smart and ethical legal solutions in a technologically forward way. We also see this as a great opportunity to expose a new generation of thinkers to the legal profession.”

In addition to cash prizes and a trip to San Francisco to work on their project with a technology company, winners will have the opportunity to meet with Chief Justice Stuart Rabner, Judge Grant, and Chief Information Officer Jack McCarthy, and to demonstrate their product at the 2017 NCSC Court Technology Conference in Salt Lake City in September.

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