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The Resource Page



EMERGENCY PLANNING

Lawrence Siegel, Caroline S. Cooper & Allison L. Hastings, *Planning for Emergencies: Immediate Events and Their Aftermath—A Guideline for Local Courts* <http://spa.american.edu/justice/csdp.php>

Technical assistance work with more than 20 state trial courts led to the development of this 35-page “how to” guide for preparing a local court for various types of emergencies—fires, hurricanes, tornadoes, terrorists—and their aftermath. American University’s Justice Programs Office provides technical assistance to local courts through the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Criminal Courts Technical Assistance Project. That work, plus a State Justice Institute grant to compile the experience into a useful manual for other courts, led to this publication.

To be sure, no two “emergencies” (or courts, for that matter) will be identical. The authors contend, however, that the keys to successful responses are a plan that can be activated to deal with issues that could be anticipated and ongoing communication among various agencies to make the plan work. *Planning for Emergencies* provides an excellent start for any local court to use in the process. It provides step-by-step planning guides for dealing with various emergency situations, along with hypothetical scenarios to work through, a self-assessment planning guide, and sample plans and orders from other courts.

Limited technical assistance is available, free of charge, to courts interesting in adapting *Planning for Emergencies* to their locales from the BJA Criminal Courts Technical Assistance Project at American University. For further information, contact Caroline S. Cooper or Allison Hastings at American University, (202) 885-2875, or justice@american.edu.



BOOKS OF NOTE

GOOD COURTS: THE CASE FOR PROBLEM-SOLVING JUSTICE. Greg Berman & John Feinblatt. The New Press, 2005 (\$24.95). 218 pp.

A PROBLEM-SOLVING REVOLUTION: MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN IN STATE COURTS. Greg Berman, Aubrey Fox & Robert V. Wolf, eds. Center for Court Innovation, 2004 (no charge). 300 pp.

Two new books from New York’s Center for Court Innovation make the case for problem-solving courts. While the authors—at least in their latest work, *Good Courts*—concede that questions of effectiveness remain to be further explored, they make a strong case for further application of the concepts behind problem-solving courts (also known in some states as collaborative-justice courts).

Good Courts is written by Greg Berman, director of the Center for Court Innovation, and John Feinblatt, New York City’s criminal justice coordinator. Both were involved in setting up New York’s Midtown Community Court and the Red Hook Community Justice Center in Brooklyn. Each of those programs has been recognized for successfully applying problem-solving justice in handling misdemeanor criminal cases.

Courts like these, along with drug courts and domestic-violence courts, form the bulk of the established problem-solving courts that Berman and Feinblatt review. They also note developing application of these concepts to mental-health courts, reentry courts, DWI courts, family courts, and housing courts. To these authors, the essence of a problem-solving approach is “to ensure not just that the punishment fits the crime . . . but that the process fits the problem.” Thus, judicial resources are matched to the needs of each case and partnerships with new players (like

community groups, treatment providers, or job-training programs) are encouraged.

The authors include serious discussion of the limits to evidence that these courts work and criticisms of them in terms of fairness to individual defendants. *Good Courts* is an excellent, up-to-date introduction to the possibilities of problem-solving justice.

A Problem-Solving Revolution, a collection of ten essays and discussion transcripts, presents an excellent companion volume. It focuses primarily on how problem-solving-court concepts can be taken from individual experiments to wide-scale implementation. As Berman says in the introduction, “Going to scale with an innovative idea or practice in any field is difficult.” The essays and group discussions in this volume no doubt will help in that process.

LOOKING FOR LOST EAGLES

Florida Circuit Court Judge Richard Howard is looking for former Eagle Scouts, who are invited to join the National Eagle Scout Association (NESA). The NESA is an alumni organization for



Eagle Scouts of all ages, created in 1972 by the National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America. NESA seeks to identify, locate, and mobilize the talents and resources of Eagle Scouts.

Anyone who has ever attained the rank of Eagle Scout is eligible for membership. Current registration in the Boy Scouts of America is not required; NESA members receive the “Eagle Letter,” the official publication of NESA.

As Judge Howard puts it, “Remember, there are no ‘former Eagles.’ Once an Eagle, always an Eagle!” For more information or to join NESA, contact Hon. Richard A. Howard, Circuit Judge, Fifth Judicial Circuit, 110 North Apopka Ave., Inverness, Florida 34450.