FW-HTF-P 2128981: Impacts of Artificial Intelligence and Remote Conferencing on Work Practices and Equity in State Courts

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The Problem

Accelerating technological developments are causing **rapid shifts** in the operations of the state courts, a group of **decentralized and loosely interconnected institutions**.

Why Now?

External forces affecting the state courts include renewed calls for **racial justice**, the **pandemic**, and **climate change**. These forces necessitate and complicate new technological solutions.

Research Questions

Which **human tasks** in the courts can (and should) be **replaced or enhanced by technology**?

What are the impacts of new technologies on employee **wellbeing** and court workforce **equity**?

What are the **impacts of new technologies on the experiences of court users**, the quality and equity of case outcomes, and **public trust** in the courts?

Workgroup meetings

51 **diverse and cross-disciplinary** participants

- Industrial-Organizational Psychology
- Social Psychology
- Public Health
- Law
- Computer science and AI ethics
- Court practitioners (administration, IT, HR)
- Tech industry representatives

Environmental scans

- **What is the court workforce**? What roles exist and how are they interconnected?
- **How are AI and other technologies already being integrated into court operations**? What can we learn from pretrial risk/need algorithms, court navigation bots, court kiosks, and remote hearings?

Literature reviews

- AI Ethics and Fair AI
- Transparent AI, Human-in-the-loop machine learning
- Participatory Action Research and participatory design
- Employee well-being & workforce equity

Insights So Far

In the future, the courts will be a **Service, not a Place**

Court processes and procedures need to be re-designed with **unrepresented litigants at the center**

Understaffing presents a challenge, but also an opportunity to **redesign court roles holistically**

Need to **approach automation holistically**, not task-by-task

Need to **approach automation with participatory research & design** (with well-being & equity at the center)

Future technologies have **many more downstream impacts** than we initially imagined

Next Steps

Build a **network model** of the court workforce

Compile insights and findings into a **comprehensive research agenda**