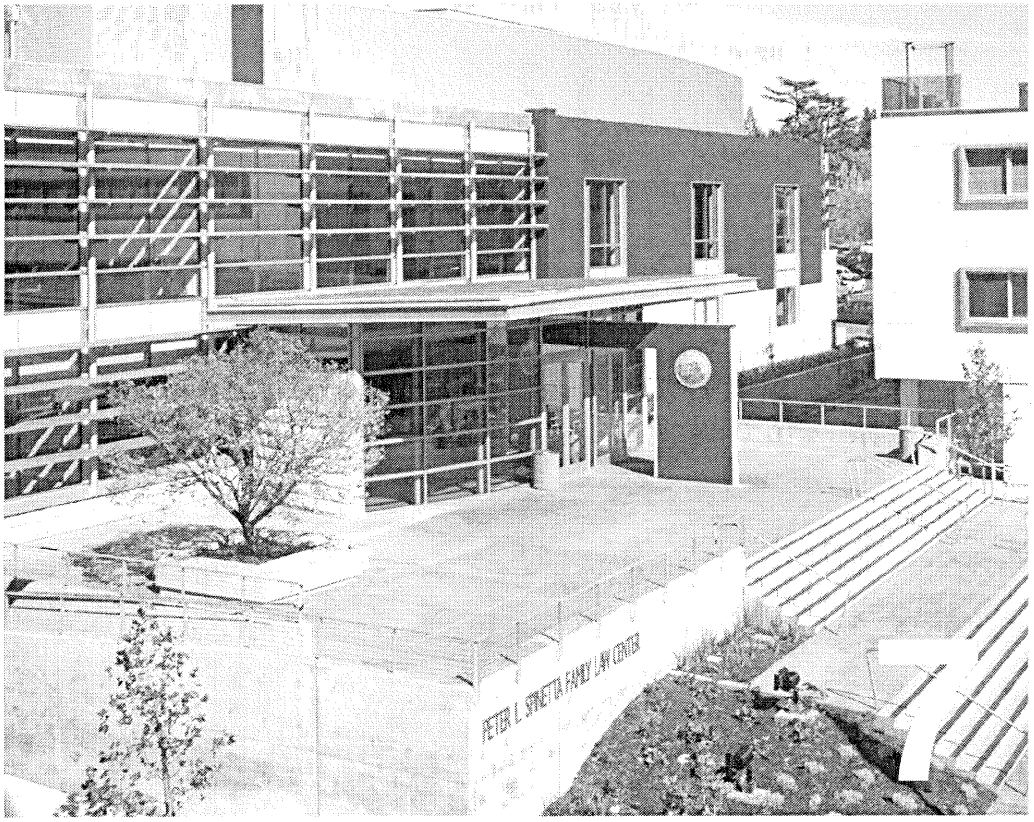

7

SPECIAL SERVICES

Family law facilitators, self-help centers, family court services (FCS), juvenile dependency mediation, child waiting, and alternate dispute resolution (ADR) programs increase the efficiency of certain types of court cases. The litigant has better information, issues are settled more frequently, court appearances are minimized, and using these services reduces paperwork. Related justice agencies (i.e. District Attorney, Public Defender, Probation, Child Protective Services) have significant business each day within the Trial Court, therefore accommodations for the agencies shall be determined during the programming phase. Spaces for related justice agencies may be multipurpose rooms for brief use, or larger suites serving as the primary office for multiple staff and with public service function.

7.1 OBJECTIVES

The following group of spaces must be convenient to the public and must be located off the public corridor or public waiting. These areas must also have access to private circulation systems.

Since many family court services and ADR services are conducted after regular court hours, access to these offices and restroom facilities during noncourt hours must be available without compromising the security of the remainder of the courthouse.

Provide safety and security in the event of physical confrontation by means of duress alarms and sidelights at doors. Provide future flexibility by providing these features in all spaces. Duress alarms shall be inconspicuous but convenient to the user.

7.2 FAMILY LAW FACILITATORS AND SERVICES FOR SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS

Family Law Facilitators

Family law facilitator programs are a mandated ser-

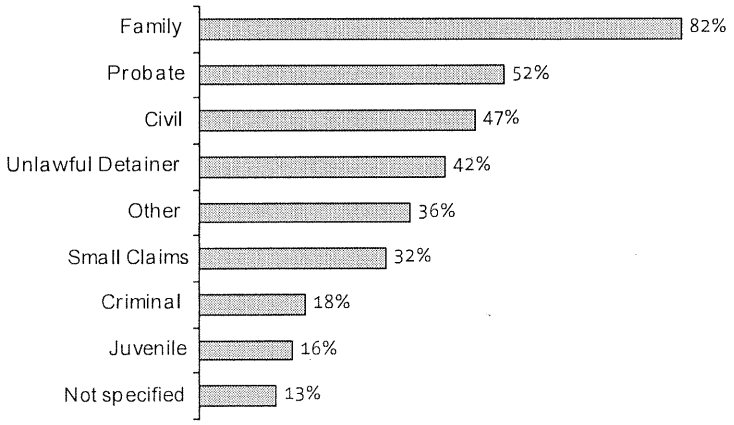

Table 7.1 Self-Represented Litigants' Needs (by Case Type) (From *Highlights from the report of the Task Force on Self-Represented Litigants*)

vice. Supervised by experienced family law attorneys, they provide self-help assistance to litigants with child support issues.

The following description indicates the role of the facilitators in the litigation process.

> *Family Law facilitators guide litigants through the forms and procedures related to child support, spousal support, and maintenance of health insurance. They assist with cases involving the local child support agency, many of which are cases requiring reimbursement for public assistance. Many facilitators are involved in community outreach programs. Facilitators provide mediation services, in which they meet with both parents and help work out child support issues. Some courts have enlisted volunteer attorneys or provided additional funding that enables facilitators to assist self-represented litigants in other family law areas, including divorce, custody and visitation.*
>
> *Task Force on Self-Represented Litigants, highlights from report*

Table 7.1 shows a breakdown of self-represented litigants by case type.

Most courts have expanded their family law facilitator's activities to provide other self-help assistance in family law, and a growing number of courts provide self-help in other areas. In the *Statewide Action Plan for Serving Self-Represented Litigants,* approved by the Judicial Council in 2004, attorney-supervised, staffed self-help centers are recommended for every court.

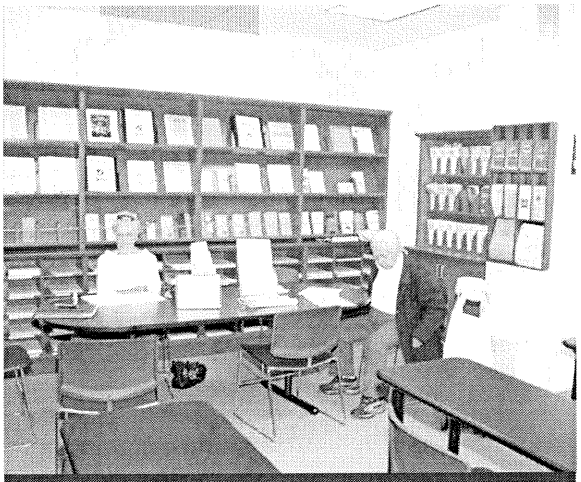

Figure 7.1 Self-Help Center, San Francisco

Family law facilitators and self-help centers provide assistance and practical information about court procedures for pro per litigants (representing themselves in litigation) visiting or using the court. Locate self-help centers near the clerks' offices, off a public corridor. See Figure 7.1.

Reception, Waiting, and Triage Areas

- Provide public waiting for users and children, with child waiting, reception counter, and triage area. The volume for these services is extremely high. In large courts, seating should be available for 40 to 50 people.
- Furnishing and equipment needs include: small tables for filling out forms or conferencing that can be reconfigured for classes, computer terminals located against the wall, brochure racks, shelving, storage, video monitors, and a coin-operated photo copier.
- Provide staff workspace with file storage, work counters, and equipment. Public counters and reception areas may be integrated into the work areas.
- Provide a duress alarm at counters.

Workshop Rooms

In jurisdictions with more than one family law facilitator, provide a workshop room. The room must accommodate reference materials, audiovisual equipment for workshops, and computers to allow litigants to complete typewritten forms. See Chapter 16 (Lighting Criteria) and Chapter 17 (Telecommunications and Audiovisual Criteria) for technical requirements.

- In jurisdictions with at least one full-time facilitator, provide two small conference rooms for services to be provided by volunteer attorneys, paralegal, and other staff supervised by the attorney facilitator/self-help center attorney's office.
- Provide one private office per facilitator and staff attorney. The office shall accommodate up to five people to allow for mediation.
- Provide a duress alarm in offices and at counters.

Small Courthouse Model

Provide one room designed so one staff member can provide supervision and control.

Impact on Courtroom

Provide brochure rack and video outside the pro per courtroom to instruct users on courtroom procedures.

7.3 FAMILY COURT SERVICES

Courts are required to set contested child custody and visitation issues for mediation. Family court services (FCS) provides mediation, which must include mandatory orientation as well as a mandatory intake process that screens for, and informs staff about, any restraining orders, dependency petitions under Welfare and Institutions Code section 300, and other safety-related issues affecting any party or child named in the proceedings. Rule 5.215 of the California Rule of Court requires FCS to conduct differential domestic violence assessments; make reasonable efforts to ensure the safety of victims, children, and other parties when they are participating in services provided by family court services; and, consistent with Family Code sections 3113 and 3181, offer separate mediation sessions at separate times when there is a history of domestic violence, or when a protective order as defined in Family Code section 6218 is in effect, or if domestic violence is discovered while mediation or evaluation services are in process. A domestic violence support person may accompany a party protected by a restraining order to mediation and orientation. In child custody and visitation cases, FCS may also offer appropriate services as available, such as child custody evaluation, parent education, relevant education programs for children, booklets, videotapes, or referrals to community resources. FCS offices also commonly offer such services as stepparent adoption, conservatorship, and guardianship investigations.

The family court services mediation area can generate considerable traffic flow. Locate FCS on a lower floor close to the main lobby, or near elevators on an upper floor. Other civil mediation and arbitration services do not generate the same traffic load as FCS and may be located away from the main lobby. Parties using FCS often also use family law facilitator/self-help services; locating these services nearby would be helpful to the public. If possible, provide more than one exit from FCS, to provide alternate access for domestic violence victims who are participating in mediation.

The family court services consists of the following areas; for sizes refer to Table 2.2 in Chapter 2:

- Public counter and workstation space
- Mediator and evaluator offices
- Reception and waiting areas
- Orientation room
- Mediation room
- Conference and training room
- Children's waiting area
- Security station
- Equipment storage

Mediator's Office

Provide a private office for each mediator. The office shall accommodate up to six people.

- Provide sidelights at office doors.
- Provide acoustical treatment of office walls and doors.
- Provide a duress alarm in each office, because of the potential for physical confrontation.

Reception and Waiting Areas

Provide reception and waiting areas with seating sized for the court's needs.

Figure 7.2 Child Waiting Room, San Francisco

- Provide a vision panel at the suite entry door
- In large jurisdictions, provide a reception counter and sign-in area, with a counter position.
- Provide duress alarms in support staff areas and at counters.
- Provide an area for copy and fax machines adjacent to clerical staff and mediators.
- Provide space for FCS files and records adjacent to clerical staff.
- Reception area shall provide sufficient space to accommodate mandatory screening, intake, and differential assessment. Private space should be available to safely consult with vulnerable parties, such as victims of violence.
- If possible, provide separate waiting areas for different parties in mediation. One or two reception and waiting areas will serve several mediation offices. Separate FCS waiting areas should be available for domestic violence victims, so that they do not have to be in the same area as the alleged perpetrators.

Orientation Room

Provide an orientation room with seating for four to six people, for orientation sessions before participation in mediation or other ADR services.

In large facilities provide larger areas, with a television monitor for video orientation at one session, and seating for 30 people.

Mediation Room

Provide a mediation room. In some jurisdictions, a combination of large and small mediation rooms will accommodate large family groups and allow involvement of social workers and other staff.

- Provide acoustical treatment of office walls and doors, because of the confidential and sometimes vocal exchanges associated with these discussions.
- Provide a duress alarm.
- Provide video cameras to allow remote observation of proceedings.

Conference and Training Room

In jurisdictions with more than eight FCS mediators, provide a conference and training room of 200 NSF, and increase size proportionate to the number of mediators. The room must accommodate reference books and related materials needed by mediators to conduct their business. See Chapter 16 (Lighting Criteria) and Chapter 17 (Telecommunication and

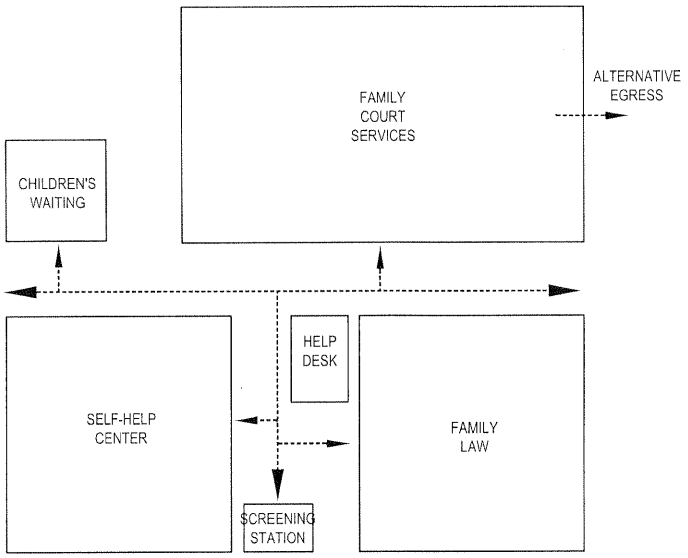

Figure 7.3 Special Services Adjacency Diagram

Audiovisual Criteria) for audiovisual requirements.

- One room may be used for mediation, orientation, conference, and training.
- Provide a duress alarm.
- Room also may be used for case conferencing and staff meetings.
- Provide access to the public corridor to allow non-court users to use the space for multidisciplinary training without incurring security risks.

Children's Waiting Area

If no other children's waiting area is available or convenient, provide a separate children's waiting area near FCS to be used when children or their parents or guardians are involved in court proceedings. See Figure 7.3 and refer to section 7.4 for standards for this area..

Security Station

Security provisions for the FCS area vary based on the size and location of the function. If remote from the court security staff, the FCS area may require a separate security post. If security staff is stationed at FCS, provide a post with workstation and security equipment. If the FCS area is not within the secure perimeter, a separate security screening station may be required.

Equipment Storage

Provide an area near the mediation rooms for storage of equipment and furnishings, such as video monitors, used in mediation.

7.4 CHILD WAITING

Standards of Judicial Administration recommended by the Judicial Council require provision of a safe place for children to play while their parents conduct their court business. Provide a child waiting room in all court facilities. These spaces are required under the rules of court listed below:

> *Each court should endeavor to provide a children's waiting room located in the courthouse for the use of minors under the age of 16 who are present on court premises as participants or who accompany persons who are participants in court proceedings. The waiting room should be supervised and open during normal court hours. If a court does not have sufficient space in the courthouse for a children's waiting room, the court should create the necessary space when court facilities are reorganized or remodeled or when new facilities are constructed.*
>
> *California Rules of Court Section 1.3, Children's waiting room*

- Provide an area of 120 NSF for two to three children, increasing in area by 15 NSF per child. The waiting area must be located near the security station but in a semiprivate corridor. Space needs will vary with court caseloads. Consider providing separate areas for adolescents.
- Provide a check-in workstation with a duress alarm, and view of entire room, to allow supervision by one staff person; design must facilitate safe check-in and check-out of children. Provide file storage for administrative records, forms, and brochures.
- Do not allow outside visual access or windows; the public shall not be able to look into the room. The children must be in a controlled situation. Access doors shall be locked with a remote buzzer operated from the check-in workstation.
- Provide one or two restrooms, one with child-sized fixtures and a changing table.
- Provide a second door into a secure corridor. Small facilities can use a multipurpose room.
- Provide space for child-sized tables, chairs, couch, and floor games.
- Provide storage space for toys and games.
- Provide space for information racks about community resources for service referrals and community resources (housing, health care, child care, literacy, and education).
- Provide a quiet room with glass walls, sink, locking cupboards, a refrigerator, and a microwave.

7.5 ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) services are an increasingly important part of the judicial process. In the civil case context, ADR includes the traditional civil case settlement process involving a judicial officer, attorneys, and the litigants; mediation, involving a facilitator and the parties, sometimes without

attorneys; and arbitration, involving an arbitrator, attorneys, and the litigants.

In family court, ADR commonly takes the form of court-mandated mediation provided by family court services (FCS) involving a mediator, family members including children and occasionally others, such as social workers. Family court services mediation generally occurs in court facilities.

Civil case mediation and arbitration services may be provided privately and occur outside the court facility. Civil case settlement conferences often take place in a courtroom or conference area. Court-sponsored mediation and arbitration services may increasingly be provided in court facilities.

Provide space for civil case settlement conferences and mediation and arbitration services within the court facility when required by the program. Requirements for these functions may vary considerably depending on anticipated volume of usage. In larger jurisdictions with formal ADR programs, consider multiple rooms of various sizes and capacities. For sizes refer to Table 2.2. If provided, space for these functions may include the following:

Mediation and Arbitration Rooms

Provide one or more conference rooms for mediation, arbitration, and settlement conferences to accommodate a minimum of six participants. Each room must accommodate a mediator, parties, and attorneys. In addition provide a caucus room. Provide a duress alarm in each room and at the reception counter.

Mediator's Office

Provide area for a workstation, file storage, and a small conference table or seating area. Positioning of the elements is per mediators' collective preference for security and comfort.

Mediation and Arbitration Coordinator's Office

Provide area for a workstation for the individual responsible for scheduling and coordinating attorneys and clients.

Reception and Waiting

Provide an area with seating for six to eight people, where attorneys and litigants can be seated while waiting for a mediation room. This area can serve one to four mediation rooms and may be increased in size according to the number of additional mediation rooms required.

7.6 MULTIPURPOSE ROOMS AND OFFICES

Provide multipurpose rooms, to be assigned by the trial court to related justice agencies or others, the character and quantity of rooms shall be determined during programming. Locate rooms adjacent to the public corridor, potentially with controlled access to the restricted circulation system; provide keypad locking so the Superior Court can re-assign the use easily; provide telecommunications infrastructure separate from the trial court's LAN. Representative uses of multipurpose rooms include:

- Related justice agency drop-in offices: rooms suitable for installation of modular workstations, for staff use while at the courthouse. Staff may use the room to prepare and read court papers, make telephone calls, and conduct other court-related activities.
- On-site drug testing room: a room used for drug testing adjacent to the courtroom.
- Attorney convenience center: a work and waiting area, with power and data communications for laptop connections, similar to drop-in offices for related justice agencies
- Multi-agency and volunteers convenience center: workstations for volunteers. In larger counties with comprehensive or centralized volunteer programs, provide a coordinator's office. May be located on a semiprivate corridor.
- Law enforcement and waiting: Law enforcement waiting areas must be located off public corridors near courtrooms. Access to the law enforcement waiting area must be secure. Provide couch, chairs, and a table.
- Victim waiting: Victim waiting areas must be located off public corridors near courtrooms. Provide chairs and a table. This room may be used for remote testimony to the courtroom. Provide power, lighting, and configuration to allow audiovisual equipment to obtain proper images for victim to testify remotely.
- Court interpreters convenience center: Interpreter waiting areas must be located off public corridors

near courtrooms. Provide bullpen with lockers, carrels, tables, manager's office, shared phones, secure storage, and a TTY machine.

- Blood draw/DNA swab room at family court: Provide a chair and locked cabinet.
- Fingerprinting: Provide a pass-through to the family law clerk's area. Provide a desk and a camera area to take headshot photos. Locate adjacent to criminal court, with a secured door.
- Government attorneys: Local child support agencies often meet with litigants before and during child support calendars to try to reach stipulations. Given the high volume of these calendars, a large conference room should be with computers and printers available to calculate child support and print out agreements.
- Paralegal: A drop in center to assist families with child support issues requires room for a desk, file storage and 3-4 guest chairs.
- Resource room for Social Services: Locate near courtrooms so that litigants who are referred to social services can get immediate assistance for problems such as substance abuse.

7.7 OFFICES FOR RELATED JUSTICE AGENCIES

Certain trial court buildings may include office suites for related justice agencies to improve access to justice, trial court efficiency and public service. Such office suites may accommodate multiple administrative and professional staff as well as public services, are in general differentiated from the trial court, to reinforce the independence of the judicial branch, and shall use the public circulation system, and the main public building entrance, not the restricted or secure circulation systems.

These office areas shall have the same structural dimensions as other parts of the building, to allow future conversion to court space; the telecommunications LAN and infrastructure shall be separate from that of the trial court. The amount of public visitation to a related justice agency shall be considered in determining the location of the suites in the building and in the elevator service calculations.

These Facilities Standards shall not apply to the interior development of the related justice agency offices; however the Architectural, Structural, Mechanical, Automatic Controls, Electrical, and Fire Protection sections shall apply to the basic building infrastructure and services for these suites.

Description	Size (NSF)
Court Set	
Multipurpose Courtroom	1600–1750
Large Courtroom	2100–2400
Arraignment Courtroom	2100–2400
Chambers (incl. private toilet)	400
Reception/Waiting	50–80
Staff/Reception/Wait - 1 person	100–140
Staff/Reception/Wait - 2 person	140–200
Copy/Workroom/Supply Area	100
Court Reporter's Workstation	64
Research Attorney Work Area	80–150
Staff Toilet Room	60
Jury Deliberation Room	350
Jury Toilet Room	60
Attorney Interview Room	100
Entry Vestibule	64
Law Enforcement Waiting Room	100
Courtroom Exhibit/Evidence Storage	50
Jury Assembly Facilities	
Entry Queuing Area	14/juror (25% of jury call)
Reception/Registration	0–300
Jury Assembly Room	12–20/juror
Forms Counter	5/juror (10% of jury call)
Coffee and Snack Area	115
Mail Center	50–200
Call Center	60
Staff Toilet Room	60
Court Administration	
Public Counter Queuing	14/person
Records Viewing	24/person
Training Room	
Large	1200
Medium	800
Small	400
IS Workroom and Storage	150–300

Description	Size (NSF)
Active Records Storage	*
Inactive Records Storage	*
Mail Center	150–300
Staff Break Area	150–300
Lactation Room	50
Private Office	
Executive/Director	240–300
Large	225
Medium	150–175
Small	100–120
Mediator	225
Workstation	
Large	100
Medium	64–84
Small	48
Counter Workstation	40–48
Conference Room	
Large (18-20 people)	360
Medium (8-12 people)	240
Small (6 people)	150
Family Law Facility/Self-Help Center	
Waiting	14/person
Reception/Sign-in	40–60
Orientation Room	150–200
Workshop	375–400
Mediation Room	250–400
Child Waiting	120 + 15/child
Security Station	50–80
Equipment Storage	100
Alternative Dispute Resolution	
Reception/Waiting	150
Mediation/Arbitration Rooms	200–400
Caucus Room	100
Related Justice Agency Spaces	
Multipurpose Rooms	150
Attorney Convenience Center	150–300
Volunteer Workstation	50–80

Table 2.2 Space Standards

**Per programmatic, technology, equipment, or code requirements*

ing: courtrooms, conference rooms, training rooms, media rooms, and jury assembly. Signal from these rooms would be distributed initially through a floor serving telecommunications room. The baseband AV equipment rack could also house CATV distribution, allowing baseband AV signals from anywhere in the building to be modulated and distributed facility-wide on the broadband cable system.

MATV, CATV, and Broadband Uplink

Broadband is a high-speed, high-capacity transmission medium that can carry signals from multiple independent network carriers. This is done on a single coaxial or fiber-optic cable by establishing different bandwidth channels. Broadband technology can support a wide range of frequencies. It is used to transmit data, voice, and video over long distances simultaneously. Provide space and structural accommodation on the roof for satellite dish antennas with southern exposure. Provide infrastructure for two 18" to 24" wide dishes for each court building. Signals from these antennas shall be routed to receiving equipment in the equipment room baseband and broadband distribution rack. The rack would include channel strippers and modulators to allow court-created programming to be viewed on the CATV system. If the trial court and related justice agencies share occupancy of the court building, the CATV system described here shall be dedicated to use by trial courts only.

Media and Press Area

In larger court facilities the courthouse baseband audiovisual distribution system shall route to an exterior connection monument, so that electronic news gathering (ENG) vehicles can receive signals generated by the courtroom audiovisual systems. In urban areas where an exterior location is not feasible,

COURT AREAS

	ALS	Analog Phone Line	Audio Recording	CATV	Equipment Rack	Language Interpretation	Microphone & Audio Re-inforcement	Projection Screen	Real-Time Transcription	Touch Panels	Videoconferencing	Video Feeds	Video Projector	Video Recording
Courtroom	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Jury Deliberation Room														
Large Conference Room		•		•				•			•		•	
Chambers Suite		•		•								•		
Family Courts/Mediation			•								•	•		•
Training Room	•	•		•	•		•	•		•	•		•	
Jury Assembly	•			•	•	•	•	•					•	
Holding Cell												•		
Attorney Interview Room		•												
Media/Press							•					•		
Public Lobby														•
Self Help Center/Mediation											•	•	•	•
Staff Conference Room											•	•		
Witness Waiting Area												•		

Table 17.5 Court Systems Minimum AV Requirements