**Recommendation 1: Redesign the *Our Courts Arizona* (“OCA”) interactive civics program, nominate a court liaison to Arizona’s K-12 statewide educational program committee(s), and expand the judicial branch’s community outreach.**

1. That the AOC empanel a “redesign team” to redesign the structure of OCA and develop ways to best leverage OCA to provide support and assistance to the many organizations that offer civic education resources throughout the state. It is recommended that the “redesign team” be comprised of members who reflect diversity of judicial experience on and off the bench and diversity of educational and presentation experience. For example, the team should include diverse representation from rural, metro, Limited Jurisdiction, General Jurisdiction, Tribal and Appellate courts; current or retired judicial officers; court administrators or other executive leadership. The redesign team should develop and implement a structured, standing OCA committee, with the mission of collaborating with other agencies that offer similar educational opportunities and include a method to track and efficiently coordinate the actions of OCA, such as speaking engagements, mock trial assistance, trainings, and presentations;
2. That the redesigned OCA recommend a liaison to the Arizona Council for Social Studies and the Arizona Department of Education’s Civic Education Community Engagement Program or any other body whose mission fits with the mission of OCA; and
3. That OCA coordinate with K-12 schools, universities, community groups, and other youth and adult programs to present information about courts, the judicial branch, and how media literacy protects democracy.

**Recommendation 2: Establish in-person and web-based court contacts and outreach to help the public and the media understand the role of the court and the function of the judicial branch, and to help counteract and respond to disinformation at the local level.**

4. That individual courts designate a person or people to serve the function of a PIO who will be the liaison between an individual court and its judicial officers, court employees, local justice partners, the media, and the public;

5. That every court establish and maintain a court-specific website or webpage to provide accurate information and access to justice 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through local or statewide resources;

6. That every court establish and maintain at least one social media account, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or YouTube, to keep the public and media informed about court events; to notify the community quickly and efficiently in emergencies; and as a tool to timely counteract disinformation, to provide accurate information, and to help the public better understand court policies and procedures. Even if an individual court cannot immediately use these social media channels, it should secure them to prevent the name being taken by others.

7. That the AOC conduct court-led learning events for the media and that individual courts do so to the extent possible.

8. Producing court-based educational videos regarding media literacy and misinformation and disinformation in the courts and justice system. The videos could be aired to prospective jurors, placed on court websites, distributed through social media, broadcast for tour groups or at court-based speaking engagements, and provided to schools. The production of these videos could be through the AOC, the AZFLSE, individual courts, grant-funded projects, or others’ content approved for republication.

9. That, where available, courts include media literacy messages on their telephone on-hold messages. For example, encouraging listeners to contact courts directly to verify information.

10. Preparing a court employee guide giving suggestions for when and how to respond to disinformation and identifying when responding might accentuate or further broadcast inaccurate information and cause more harm or confusion than good. Resources for producing this include a court’s internal education and training division, if any, the AOC’s education services division, the NCSC, or CCPIO.

11. That courts have a way by which the public and court staff can offer feedback on what they find troubling, misleading, or inaccurate about a court or its procedures. A designated court staff member, in consultation with judicial leadership, should resolve legitimate concerns and use the opportunity to clarify the fundamental concept of the role of justice and courts in society. An anonymous submission option is recommended.

12. That the AOC create a court-based “playbook” incorporating the concepts in this Report. Like a continuity of operations plan, this playbook could include sample response language, templated “letters to the editor,” guidance for social media postings, guidance on interacting with the media in response to a disinformation incident, and contact information for the AOC, NCSC, local bar associations, CCPIO, ABOTA, and others. Information from the playbook could be taught in judicial education classes and included in learning materials. Arizona’s playbook should incorporate work done in this field by the NCSC and the ABA’s 2018 publication, Rapid Response to Fake News, Misleading Statements, and Unjust Criticism of the Judiciary which contains tips and recommendations for responding “rapidly and appropriately” to “inaccurate, unjustified, and simply false criticism of judges.”

13. Incorporating information from the resources in this Report into an online and print mini guide to recognizing misinformation and disinformation as it applies to the judiciary. The mini guide should be made available at law libraries and public libraries, self-help centers, and through community partners. It should provide tips for researching and verifying information received through social media and daily news broadcasts and publications, online or otherwise. A helpful outline for developing a mini guide appears in Jeanne Mejeur’s 2013 article, How to Score a Perfect 10.

14. That where individual courts can do so, they develop and implement court-wide standards and guidelines for court documents and communication, commonly called “branding” or “brand identity.” Branding provides a consistent, unique collection of fonts, colors, and seals applied to court-provided communication. Branding makes fake or fraudulent documents and records easier to identify as inconsistent with court standards. A city or county’s communications division can often help the court design its branding.

15. That the AOC and individual courts add prominent language to standardized court forms and other court-produced documents directing people to verify information from official court records. For example, a header or footer with language such as: “To verify the accuracy of this document, contact the court named above/below.”

**Recommendation 3: Modify the Arizona Code of Judicial Conduct (“ACJC”) to specifically address personal attacks against judges.**

16. Rule 2.10(E): Subject to the requirements of paragraph (A), a judge may respond directly or through a third party to allegations in the media or elsewhere concerning the judge’s conduct in a matter or to false, misleading, or unsubstantiated allegations or attacks upon the judge’s reputation from whatever source in writing, via social media or broadcast media or otherwise.

17. Rule 2.10, Comment 3: Depending upon the circumstances, the judge should consider whether it may be preferable for a third party, rather than the judge, to respond or issue statements in connections with allegations concerning the judge’s conduct in a matter or to false, misleading, or unsubstantiated allegations or attacks upon the judge’s reputation.

**Recommendation 4: Establish a “Rapid Response Team” to address situations where disinformation targeting a judicial branch individual, a court, or a court system occurs and publish a comment to the ACJC Rule 2.10 to provide guidance as to how and when such instances should be addressed.**

18. That a Rapid Response Team be coordinated through a law school clinic, bar association, or other entity familiar with court-related issues and that would be in contact with courts and judicial branch individuals, but with independent authority and controls. The recommended makeup of a Rapid Response Team would include attorneys; public, non-attorney members; academics; members of the media; court public information officers or the clerk, administrator, or other designee who fills this role; and retired judges; or other disciplines as appropriate.

19. That a comment to Arizona Code of Judicial Conduct Rule 2.10 should be published to provide guidance as to when and how such instances should be addressed. (See Recommendation 3 above).

**Recommendation 5: Establish a Local/National Disinformation Study Network**

20. That the AOC encourage and seek the participation of the NCSC to investigate the scope and the possibility of establishing a multi-state Local/National Disinformation Study Network consisting of cooperating groups from several states.

**Recommendation 6: Establish a national, centralized point of contact to assist in identifying disinformation and having it flagged or, if warranted, removed while respecting the expression of individual opinions and the exercise of First Amendment rights.**

21. That the AOC extend its partnership with the NCSC and establish a workgroup specifically tasked to work with them in this critical endeavor.

22. That the AOC partner with ABOTA in countering disinformation in Arizona’s courts.

23. That Task Force members stay involved in the work required to bring the NCSC, ABOTA, and Arizona’s courts together in establishing and pursuing these efforts.

**Recommendation 7: Monitor technology and resources that can identify disinformation campaigns early enough to counter them with accurate information and gather public contact information to improve courts’ outreach and responsiveness.**

24. That the Task Force continue monitoring the ongoing technology developments and long-term solutions for identifying and countering disinformation campaigns.

25. That the AOC, and individual courts if applicable, establish an opt-in system for the public to provide contact information such as email addresses or a phone number to receive text messages, thus allowing Arizona’s courts to more easily and quickly share information and to correct inaccuracies or disinformation.

**Recommendation 8: Make federal public information available in Arizona regarding registrations as foreign agents under the Foreign Agents Registration Act, 22 USCA § 611, et. seq. (“FARA”).**

26. That the AOC approach an Arizona Executive Branch agency by March 2021 to secure a commitment that they compile publicly-available registration information from the USDOJ and publish Arizona-related information to that state agency’s website. The Task Force identified the Arizona Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Public Safety as potential agencies to post this information, as both are statewide agencies responsible for monitoring and protecting the state’s security interests. The Arizona Secretary of State’s office was identified as another option, given its statewide responsibilities for elections and registering lobbyists.

**Recommendation 9: Extend the term of the Task Force on Countering Disinformation through December 2021.**

27. That the term of Arizona’s Task Force on Countering Disinformation be extended through December 2021.