

COMMISSION SURVEY ANALYSIS FOR CHITTENDEN COUNTY
N= 32

- 1. Are there court services or administrative activities currently performed at the county level that could be performed regionally, centrally, or electronically, to improve the efficiency or cost-effectiveness of court operations?**

Responses:

- 1 Not as far as I know of, at least nothing that would benefit my clients particularly.
- 2 Electronically. Putting in place an electronic filing system as is the case in the federal system and some other states would be a huge step forward.
- 3 All courts should be on line.
- 4 I believe that the filing of documents and service of orders could be done electronically as it is done in the Federal Courts. Though it sounds feasible to reduce costs by centralizing the operations of the courts into regional locations, it would be difficult to assess the overall costs savings if more staff were needed to deal with the larger load of work. Theoretically it sounds like it would provide a cost savings to the state, but may increase the cost to the general public.
- 5 No. (x2)
- 6 Yes, all pleadings and motions could be filed electronically.
- 7 I think email would be a good way to communicate about logistics (scheduling of status conferences, etc). The very small rural courts need to be open sometimes, but perhaps not all the time and court operations there could be centralized with other counties. I don't think the very rural courts could close and we could have an effective system of justice, particularly for low income people.
- 8 If court forms for small claims were all handled centrally, it would reduce the time that individual courts seem to spend developing their own forms.
- 9 Yes. There is no reason we have a state system and a county system. It is very inefficient and unnecessary. We need a professionally run court system, which having this multiple court system run by different jurisdictions does not support.
- 10 I believe that the courts are well organized currently, though perhaps SOME probate courts could be regionalized. I am adamantly opposed, however, to eliminating the probate courts. I have a significant adoption practice, and to have these proceedings moved to the family court as I have heard has been suggested, would be a travesty. The

family courts have enough to do, frankly, and I greatly fear that adoption cases would be lost in the shuffle in family court.

11 All of them. No benefit perceived from the provision of services at the county level.

12 I am not aware of any.

13 If an electronic filing system were utilized, it may be wise to centralize it; certainly in the federal system I have noticed the need to call the administrator occasionally when something out of the ordinary comes up, and if the current county system were otherwise maintained a county-by-county electronic filing system runs the risk of lack of complete uniformity. If there were a single, unified system for state court filings and issuance of rulings, which would be helpful.

14 Electronic filing has become the norm in the federal courts. Vermont state courts should at least make some provision to allow the parties to file their pleadings/ motions electronically. This should ultimately prove to be a cost-saving measure, both for the courts and for litigants. Chittendensuperiorcourt.com's on-line docket entry viewing system should be extended to other counties and courts.

15 Court conformed copies of filings could be PD Fed and e-mailed to counsel of record, eliminating the need for costly copying and mailings of court conformed copies. Electronic filings like the federal system.

16 Electronic filing of documents, when that is available, will improve efficiency, reduce court storage space needs and save postage and paper costs. Access to information about all cases in all courts the way the Chittenden Superior Court presents it would also reduce the inquiries to the court.

17 The filing of pleadings could be done centrally, or electronically, and then scanned to the applicable court. The scheduling of hearings could be done centrally, and thus avoid the frequent conflicts that arise between courts.

18 Consolidate superior courts where geography and caseload make it economically advantageous to do so. (Ex: Lamoille County cases to Washington County; Grand Isle cases to Chittenden County).

19 All could be done regionally. Many, such as scheduling and making the docket and files available, can and should be done electronically whether by county or regionally or centrally.

20 While I am not an attorney practicing in Chittenden County (I practice in Franklin County, 30 miles to the north of Burlington), I understand that one of the proposals under consideration is the consolidation of Franklin County (and other county) courts into the Chittenden County courts. Court operations in my opinion involve the resolution of

disputes. Typically, they involve the filing of pleadings, hearings, and decisions. With reference to filing of pleadings, I don't have much of an opinion, but electronic filing might improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness. With reference to hearings, Chittenden County courts are busy every day, 8:30 to 4:30. The Franklin County Family and District Courts are also busy every day, 8:30 to 4:30. There simply is too much activity in these courts to consider any consolidation. With reference to the Franklin Superior and Probate Courts, they are not busy all day every day, but when we are given a judge, they are. In any event, the Chittenden Superior and Probate Courts do not have sufficient facilities to take on another county's caseload.

21 With the new law and increased attention to improving juvenile operations, the juvenile docket (abuse and neglect) has increased needs. The juvenile bar is fractious with lawyers for parents and children driving from court to court, creating little opportunity for clients to meet with counsel outside of court. There is a need to look at regionalizing juvenile representation to meet the needs of the families.

22 There should be a state wide calendaring system, so that courts do not have to waste time scheduling hearings that then need to have continuances requested because the attorney's are already scheduled in another court.

23 A central on-line docket for all courts would be helpful. Eventually, the statewide capability to file electronically would be efficient and cost-effective.

24 No, the more centralized services become, the fewer users friendly, and the more future budgets cuts will cause greater pressure on access and service.

25 Is there a reason why Superior Court deals with passport applications?

26 This is a small thing but centralized scheduling might provide increased efficiency. It is not unusual for me to receive notices for appearances in two different courts at the same time or at times that will not allow me a sufficient amount of time to finish one hearing and then travel to the other. The result is that court will receive a motion for a continuance that will have to be dealt with by the court or court personnel. Court calendars for individual attorneys are already online. A mechanism that would prevent schedule conflicts and the resultant waste of time should be a relatively simple and inexpensive step.

27 Yes, particularly Superior Courts.

28 An electronic/interactive scheduling system of the family court would be very helpful if that is possible.

29 A great deal of effort and money would be saved if the central calendaring system would be electronically statewide; the cost and time associated with motions to continue due to hearings scheduled in other counties is not efficient.

2. Is there technology that could be introduced into the court system that would make judicial operations more cost-effective or improve access to the court system, while at the same time, maintaining the quality of justice services?

Responses:

- 1 Yes, all cases should be online, similar to the federal court system.
- 2 Online access of court filings and information as in the Federal System would reduce the need for parties to take up court time accessing and copying files. There has also been talk about allowing for a medium claims procedure which would provide more discovery than a small claims action, but could proceed faster than a Superior Court Action. The issue here would be if that would require a plaintiff from giving up the right to a jury trial if they request this procedure, though the Defendant could still request a jury trial and thus it may not produce much savings.
- 3 Electronic filing of documents, orders and notices sent via email.
- 4 Yes, the Environmental Court should adopt electronic filing even if the Superior Courts do not.
- 5 I don't think that video appearances are effective. I think they are a real mistake- it leaves people more cut off from the system and it is very hard to understand what is going on through video. As a professional I have given trainings through interactive video. I have also participated in interactive video public hearings, and interactive video meetings. Some very articulate people completely shut down in a video. It is hard for me to tell when to talk and when to be quiet. It is hard for me to read how what I say is being received by others. I am assertive, and fairly intelligent. If I have these problems, how will less educated, less assertive people be able to tell their story to a camera, or understand what is going on through a "television".
- 6 Access to all pleadings via VT Courts Online would reduce the amount of time used in getting court staff to copy files and mail them out.
- 7 We need a uniform technology system so that all court can accept electronic filing and can be accessed on line, at least for docket purposes. Chittenden Superior Court has a reasonable system; Franklin Superior Court is proud of the fact that it is not part of the state system, which makes not sense at all.
- 8 Electronic filing of documents with the courts would be a huge improvement. We've been doing it in Federal Court for some time now; not sure why the State is so far behind in this area. Also, for attorney scheduling purposes, all of the courts' calendars should be linked so that conflicts can be caught immediately as hearings are scheduled.

9 An electronic filing and document retrieval system like the CM/ECF system in the federal courts.

10 Yes. For example, arraignments could be done via closed circuit video on the internet with the defendant at the Correctional Center.

11 Yes, e-filing similar to the system used in the Federal Courts.

12 1) All arraignments and status conferences (criminal cases) should be done by video link with the jail. This would save tens of thousands of dollars. 2) All court records that are public records should be scanned and posted on the internet so that they will be readily available to the public. 3) All pleadings should be filed electronically. 4) Memos should be filed electronically with hyperlinks to sources.

13 Electronic Filing (x4)

14 I have been very impressed with ECF in the federal system; it works well, is easy to use, and increases efficiency from the law office end tremendously.

15 I am sure that there is technology that would allow for the electronic mailing of hearing dates, entry Orders and even decisions or final orders.

16 Yes. Use the Environmental Court model of conducting status conferences by telephone calls initiated by the Court rather than the default requirement (absent a request to do otherwise) being attendance in person.

17 The model is the federal system where filing is electronic and all court filings and schedules are available online.

18 I am not a computer technician. Therefore, I do not know.

19 The courts should become more technologically up to date. - For example accepting emails and faxes of Motions and court filings that can then be followed up with signed copies. In addition, there is a great deal of time wasted with Status conference - much more should be done over the phone - but with quality technology allowing all parties to participate.

20 The electronic document filing system at the federal court is very impressive. While it would no doubt be very expensive to implement a system like it, I can see a number of specific advantages for the Vermont courts that could come from the use of some electronic records. Provide notice of hearings to attorneys by e-mail. We are all supposed to have e-mail accounts now so that part of the process is already in place. By providing notice of hearings by e-mail the court system could reduce the cost of postage, envelopes and the time it takes people to print the notices on paper, fold them and stuff them into the envelopes. Electronic notices of the granting or denial of routine motions,

of the nature normally handled by a motion reaction form, might also produce a cost saving.

21 Electronic filing including mandatory electronic forms where appropriate (Family Court, evictions)

22 If all of our court schedules could be entered on a secure statewide database, scheduling hearings would be much more efficient (through block scheduling more than one case with the same attorney) and there would be significantly less continuance motions. Phone status appearances should be more routine in all civil matters.

23 Online filing of pleadings for all jurisdictions (similar to the federal bankruptcy procedures) may be an alternative.

3. What can be done to allow more flexibility in the use of judicial resources (people, facilities, dollars), particularly as workloads and funding levels increase and decrease?

Responses:

1 Increase the limit in small claims court to \$20,000 - a statutory change I realize. Eliminate side judges.

2 Re-evaluate the priorities of legal aid. Perhaps our IOLTA funds could be better spent on other ways to improve the judicial system.

3 If the paperwork were electronically filed, judges from other counties could help with overflow such as responding to motions for summary judgment, etc, without the cost of transferring files, etc.

4 Get rid of side judges. In the last five years, in the 30 or so cases that I have had in front of them, I have not heard a peep out of them, question of comment. I can not tell what they are doing there.

5 I am not convinced that the Small Claims mediation programs are a good use of judicial money. They do save judge time by reducing the number of trials, but I'm not sure this ends up saving money. If the mediation takes, for example, twice as much time as a judge trial, and if there are two mediators (as there have been in most small claims mediations I've seen), then this only saves money if the judge is paid four times the amount the mediators are paid. And there are the additional costs of coordinating the mediation program.

6 Eliminate the automatic positions of court clerk or manager for each court and consolidate some courts (by court and/or geography) as needed under one manager or court clerk. Some courts do need an individual clerk or manager and would be fine under a manager who ran several courts. The present system is wasteful and inefficient.

Moreover, county officials should not be hiring employees for the Superior Courts. Let the state do it. Consolidate superior courts in counties where there is not enough business to support at least one full time. Grand Isle, Essex and Franklin Counties come immediately to mind (although they would not be joined together). In the federal courts in Vermont jurors often have to travel 70 miles one way. Consolidating the courts so that Grand Isle County cases were handled in all respects in Burlington or St. Albans would be a great saving all the way around. Eliminate the side judges. They make us a laughing stock and are a complete waste of money. Bring all security under the state system so that it can be flexed where and when needed - and provide uniform security. Allocate judges based upon workload, not geography. There should be two full time judges in Chittenden Superior Court.

7 I think that closer attention needs to be paid to backlogs in particular courts, and allow for the movement of more judges to those courts until backlogs are reduced. Perhaps more use of acting judges for minor matters would help in this regard, so that the "real" judges can spend more time dealing with more complex cases to keep them moving through the system.

8 A unified court system.

9 Give judges more administrative power over the court clerks.

10 Court clerks should handle all status conferences. Judges should only be called in as "enforcers" of the schedules agreed on by the clerks and lawyers.

11 Force attorneys to comply with time periods prescribed by the rules.

12 I would be in favor of consolidating courts with smaller dockets - I understand the access to courthouse issues, but would suggest limited consolidation, such as Grand Isle to St. Albans perhaps. I routinely practice in Superior Court, not District Court, and I fear that my suggestion is less attractive regarding Dist. Court - but at the civil/Superior Court level, such consolidation would help efficiency and cost, I'd think. Single judge assignment also may help - some time is lost on civil cases when there is the lag (either in filing on the attorney end or on the court end) between the judge leaving and the judge coming in. More regular adherence to discovery/case management schedules also would help - although this isn't a "flexibility" issue, I do feel that if counsel litigated with schedules in mind we'd get better overall efficiency compared to the current system.

13 Consolidating county court operations could be an option for counties with under-utilized courthouses. Essex county cases could be venued in Caledonia. Grand Isle cases could be heard in Franklin.

14 We may be at the point that we can't have a court in every county all the time. I don't know if staff could work at more than one court. The judges certainly do. We should also be cross training staff so that there is always something that they can do if workloads decrease.

15 Eliminate side judges and increase use by Superior Court judges of assigning special masters to conduct fact finding hearings and issue findings and conclusions.

16 Combining court operations in other areas of the state would conserve resources and use them efficiently. This does not necessarily mean closing courthouses, but they could be available only on selected days for hearings, etc. while the clerk operations could be consolidated with other court's operations.

17 We could consider night court, though I would be personally opposed to it, as I already work a 40 hour plus week.

18 The county court structure can no longer be justified in light of shrinking resources. Having the county clerk hired and supervised by the side judges, when everything else is structured on a state wide system, with accountability at the state level, is difficult to justify other than historically. County government is a relic.

19 I know that security is important, but I think that we have overkill - it hardly seems necessary for there to be 4 security people in Chittenden District, with 2 people wanting you at the same time. It also is a mystery to me why Chittenden District requires you to remove your watch and even your blazer when no other court has the same requirement.

20 The Superior Courts require greater resources. As the other specialty courts have constituencies fighting for time, money and resources, Superior Courts continually get the short end of the stick. Restricting court funds doesn't hurt the lawyers; it hurts our clients, who are citizens and taxpayers.

21 It all comes down to staffing. Flexibility means having the right people in place at the right time.

22 There must be consolidation in the probate courts. In counties with significantly less criminal, civil and probate case volume, there must be consolidation of the administrative personnel necessary to handle the different courts' activity. The job descriptions should be less important than the maximum personnel necessary to handle the workload of the business of the entire county court, regardless of which court.

23 Float the Court staff like the Judges/security rather than fully staff all the courts all the time.

- 4. Are there ways in which the types of cases heard in our various courts (superior, district, family, environmental probate, judicial bureau) could be reallocated in a way that would increase the effectiveness of judicial operations or improve court efficiency?**

Responses:

1 It might be a good idea to transfer jurisdiction for evictions to district court.

2 Merging the superior, district and family courts into one court and then establishing divisions (civil, family and criminal) and assigning judges with the requisite experience and expertise to those divisions.

3 I think the distribution is fairly logical now.

4 Streamlining cases to specific judges to hear the same issues should improve efficiency as judges working in a specific field need less time to research issues which may arise repeatedly. Thus by consolidating the courts, judges would not be called upon to handle multiple areas of litigations such as criminal, family and civil matters all at the same time. This would not make much difference in counties where they already have multiple judges, so the goal would be to reduce the number of locations where one judge sits on multiple courts.

5 I don't think so. There was an efficiency achieved several years ago in the superior court when the divorce docket was removed to family court, but that required the creation of a new court. It is questionable whether increased specialization results in lower costs.

6 It is hard for me to see very sleepy probate courts, even in the busy counties, and extremely busy district and family courts. I think the Probate courts and judges are wonderful, and give excellent, excellent service. But with limited resources, they should be consolidated with Superior and Family Court. Plus, there are few happy stories in Family Court, and Probate Court does get some happy stories!

7 The allocation of types of cases to the various types of courts seems reasonable. However, consolidating the administration would go a long way toward a better operation of the system overall.

8 The probate courts are well suited to the work they do, but some regionalization may be appropriate. Some probate courts do not seem very busy to me, while Chittenden, Addison, Rutland and Franklin seem to have their hands full already.

9 A judge or panel of judges that specialize in commercial cases.

10 The Superior Courts need continued support for civil litigation. The Superior Courts are rapidly becoming the State's worst courts. They are getting shabby and run-down. The clerk's offices are inadequate. There are no functional computer networks. Judge time is inadequate. The newer court facilities are for the most part devoted to the Family Court and District Court, which also have the first priority for judge time in many counties. Compounding the problem is the refusal of Superior Court judges to allow the attorneys to govern the schedules for discovery and other pre-trial matters. We are in the absurd position of being forced to adhere to arbitrary pre-trial deadlines for discovery,

motions and ready-for-trial only to find that the courts are unable to rule on our motions for months or years in some cases, and cannot provide a trial for our ready-for-trial cases for a year to 18 months after they forced us to complete discovery. This "hurry up, or else and then wait" is very difficult to explain to clients.

11 Assigning defined tracks for typical cases such as landlord/tenant disputes and other common cases so that the schedule is set and requires special cause to modify.

12 The criminal and family law dockets are the two dockets that Vermonters heavily and routinely rely upon for efficiency and effective deliver of services; although the superior court where I routinely practice seems understaffed and without modern technology and resources, I would be very concerned at any reorganization that did not place a priority on improving efficiency in the district and family courts first - whether through creation of more specialized court (creating a family court system with specific judges, similar to environmental) or otherwise.

13 Rule 53 could be changed to permit the appointment of masters as a matter of routine (and not only in exceptional circumstances) over a party's objection.

14 We handle a lot of \$5K-\$15K collection matters against pro se and non responding defendants. There is a lot of wasted judicial and attorney time in the current system. Post judgment proceedings should be streamlined modeled on the small claims rules as currently a non responding party must be put through 1) post judgment interrogatories 2) motion to compel 3) order to compel 4) hearing on order to show cause 5) order to show cause 6) hearing on mediums 7) mediums 8) hearing/examination upon arrest. Steps #2, 4, 6 and 8 all require court time. The rules should automatically set a judicial summons for a post judgment financial examination for a defaulted party under supervision of the court which would save hours of judicial and attorney time.

15 Is there a way for courts to communicate their workloads to each other so that, for example, if Addison County has a backlog of civil cases and Rutland is slow, the Judges can move around? I know that in Chittenden at the Costello Courthouse, the Judges run up and down the stairs to cover different cases but is it possible to move people between counties?

16 Not that I can think of. The unified family court is an improvement, for example, of New York's system that puts divorces without children in Supreme Court and cases with children in Family Court.

17 Look at whether moving small claims to the Jud Bureau would produce a savings.

18 Yes, combining them; but that would require some more travel of lawyers and parties. While some travel is acceptable, too much infringes on access to justice.

19 This is a funny question. The Superior Courts used to handle most civil matters, all family matters, and all environmental matters. The powers-that-be decided it would

be more efficient to create more courts. Are those same powers now considering elimination or consolidation?

20 Adoptions should be in the family court to insure continuity of juvenile operations. All other issues now in probate court dealing with children should also be in family court to insure that the children issues are handled in a uniform manner regardless of the outcome sought.

21 I feel that it is very important that resources be allocated on county level, with the exception of a couple of very small courts such as Grand Isle. Transportation is a major problem for Vermonters and citizens traveling to court should not be expected to travel over an hour to get to court, as would be the case if other counties were combined with Chittenden.

22 Basic landlord/tenant matters take too much Superior Court time, and could easily be handled in a more time-effective manner (by ALJs, magistrates, masters, etc.).

23 No, further consolidation might help efficiency, but all other values would suffer, i.e. effectiveness, user friendliness. If the Courts become like the DMV, there will be commensurate complaints and difficulties.

24 I would consider turning the Superior Courts into a single state trial court.

25 Consolidation of the lower volume, more rural probate dockets/personnel is inevitable.

26 A backup calendar that would allow for cases to fill continued or stipulated hearings? It seems a great deal of time is wasted when hearing times are not used because the parties show up at Court and resolve the issue. In addition - perhaps requiring ENE or mediation for all family cases upon filing and before a hearing?

5. Please suggest other ideas that would enhance the efficient and effective delivery of judicial services to Vermonters.

Responses:

1 Non-unanimous jury verdicts, at least in civil cases. Reduce the number of jurors from 12 to 8.

2 Scan and put case documents on line, as the federal court system does. Perhaps the judiciary, who sees all litigants represented by legal aid, can offer guidelines defining the types of cases and individuals who should receive free legal resources. Our IOLTA accounts fund legal aid, which apparently have no one overseeing their choice of cases and the litigants they help. Legal Aid attorneys often spend a lot of time helping litigants

who routinely abuse the judicial system, at the expense of others who genuinely need free legal advice. The system suffers as a result.

3 I think the judges are doing a good job with the resources that they have. The court staff may be helped by reducing the amount of paper they have to handle through electronic filing, email and other forms of communications. This would save money on postage for notices, etc.

4 Currently the Small Claims and Superior Court dockets are swamped with cases brought by debt buyer companies (e.g. Asset Acceptance, Midland Funding, etc). Often these companies lack proof that they have actually bought the debt they are suing upon. Virtually all of these cases are dismissed by the plaintiff if the defendant raises any resistance. Others are won when the plaintiff fails to respond to interrogatories or requests to admit. It appears that the judicial system is being bogged down by suits which the plaintiff lacks the ability or inclination to prove in court. Efficiency in the judicial system would be increased if such frivolous filings were reduced, leaving room for legitimate debt collection lawsuits. The high volume of filings by debt buyer companies could be significantly reduced if some basic rules were issued that required debt buyers to file, with the Complaint, basic documentation showing assignment of the account from the original creditor to the debt buyer. Sufficient documentation would be a copy of the bill of sale and the attached schedule of accounts referenced in the bill of sale, showing the account number sued upon.

5 I think I have described it well above. We need a system based upon effective court operations, not one based upon a system that was created when we needed a court house in every county because people had to travel by horse to get to the county seat. We do not need the multiple administrative staffs and courthouse. Close some of the courthouses in the smaller counties and consolidate operations in another courthouse.

6 Have real human beings, helpful, flexible people in the front lines at the various clerk's offices. We too often encounter an "it's not my job" mentality, and an attitude that they are doing us a favor by providing services.

7 I am unsure, but consolidating the Superior and District Courts so that some counties are left without active courts is a terrible, terrible idea. Many working poor people cannot take time to travel over an hour to attend a court. Many find traveling to a different city (like Burlington) intimidating. All citizens want to know - when they have the need - that there is a Court within their community that can hear their grievance.

8 The single most important factor in causing inefficiency in the courts is delay. There are no prescribed deadlines which, standing alone, are unworkable. Allowing attorneys to dictate the schedule compromises the integrity of the entire system. If deadlines and timeframes are routinely disregarded there can be no expectation of efficiency. The habitual extension of deadlines is unnecessary and, once established will increase the quality of work done by the bar and judiciary.

9 Any investment in technology upgrades would be welcome - for example, some but not all courts maintain online dockets; of those, not all are on the same system. Vermonters would have better and more efficient access to our courts if all state courts maintained online dockets at a "central" place, available to the public (with perhaps an online user password as presently utilized and charges if printouts are made - though the dockets should be available on line regardless).

10 I have practiced in other jurisdictions and I can say that there is unnecessary and inefficient Variation County to County and Judge to Judge from the Court. I have multiple examples of how pleadings or practices directed by one Superior Judge will be rejected by the next Superior Judge who is assigned to the case causing unnecessary delay and waste of time. Form pleadings that have been approved a hundred times without incident will be rejected by a new Judge or will not be approved in another Superior Court. This creates wasted time and could be solved by better coordination/information exchange by the Superior Courts. Court clerks have told me that when they meet on some of these issues, half the clerks will be doing something one way, the other half another way. It's confusing and time consuming for the practitioner.

11 Docket sheets on line Electronic filing

12 I used to practice family law in Washington State, which was a community property state, and also was form driven (with the matrix of all pleadings and orders provided by the court administrator), all of which made outcomes more predictable and divorces less contentious. While it must come at a considerable expense, in New York a court provided Law Guardian, who is a lawyer, is automatically appointed to every Family Court case involving children. The Law Guardian acts as a combined GAL and attorney for the child. NY also allows the Law Guardian and the Judge to meet in chambers with the child, if of a sufficient age. These combine to safeguard the interests of the child.

13 Electronic filings.

14 If the real issue is under funding, sometimes we might need to accept a deficit. As long as the deficit were covered in previous or subsequent years, nothing drastic should be required. If under funding is chronic, either costs need to be reduced, or income needs to be increased. There is a lot I don't know about the internal workings of the courts, so I won't suggest cost reductions. I don't know whether the court bureaucracy in Montpelier is necessary. Income could be increased through filing fees. If a client in Franklin County is asked whether he or she would prefer to pay twice as much in filing fees or to keep the filing fees as they are but pay more in their own travel time and their attorney's travel time, I believe they would prefer the former. It's far cheaper than the latter.

15 I do not believe that side judges are a useful expenditure when we have limited resources.

16 Greater use of computer technology. The Court's are behind the rest of the state.

17 Increase fees, raise the small claims court limit to \$10,000, Enlarge statewide the J. Katz \$50,000 limit, no personal injuries, summary civil trial by court docket with formal procedures and rules so that civil plaintiffs with modest claims don't have to wait two years + for resolution.

18 The Judges (especially in Family Court) could return to their statutory gatekeeping function and not allow the motion practice that appears to be clogging the Courts continue...i.e. A Pro se motion to modify PR&R gets two hours - a two-attorney case will get 1/2 an hour.