

COMMISSION SURVEY ANALYSIS FOR FRANKLIN/GRAND ISLE COUNTY
N=3

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

Responses:

1 No-and the "regional arraignments" demonstrate how detrimental regional activities are to victims.

2 (1) The idea of a regional court manager should be explored. One person, it would seem, could manage all of the courts in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. Presently, in Franklin County, there is no manager, only a Superior and District Court Clerk and a Probate Register. In Grand Isle, there is a manager who covers all three, without individual clerks or a register. (2) Most of the work performed by managers and/or clerks seems aimed at creating information for the Court administrator's office rather than to further the dispensation of justice at the County level. Huge savings could be obtained by reducing the size and complexity of that office. What, for example, does a Director of Judicial Education do that justifies such a large salary and support? It appears to be a job which incorporates the worst attributes of a travel agent and a tour director.

- 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-a scheduling program that can deal with the scheduling of attorneys and cases on a statewide basis.

2 Pro se litigants make up the vast majority of those persons appearing in Probate Court and, while I don't practice Family Law, I daresay they make up a very significant percentage of Family Court litigants. Since a huge number (per Dept. of Education records) of Vermonters are functionally illiterate, I believe it's a pipe dream that they're going to use a computer kiosk in the court lobby. Requiring attorneys to electronically file might be useful, though often technology simply increases the amount of work by stimulating those in control to provide more information. The idea should be to simplify and to do that requires changes in statutes (e.g., landlord/tenant) and rules of procedure (e.g., discovery should be strictly limited and available, as in Probate Court, with the Consent of the Judge after a showing of good cause and necessity). Often it is prescribed only to harass, increase the bill and delay. Requiring complaints to be sworn with real

Responses:

1 Additional Deputy State's Attorneys and Public Defenders. This would allow the offices to dedicator attorneys to the various courts. Consequently, case flow would improve and delays would be reduced in the district and family (juvenile) courts.

2 (1) Do not regionalize the Court system. Every Vermonter has the right to have his or her case heard in their respective County. (2) Reduce the size of the Court Administrator's Office - streamline that office and all else will come together. (3) Bite the bullet and make real and difficult changes in statutes and the rules of procedure. (4) Unify the Rules of Procedure.