

COMMISSION SURVEY ANALYSIS FOR COURT MANAGERS AND SUPERIOR COURT CLERKS

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?

Categorized Responses

Adjudicative: 6

Finance: 9

Case Administration: 11

Education: 1

General Court Services: 5

Jury Services: 6

Managerial: 6

Other: 4

Technology:

Summary of Responses

Adjudicative:

- Repeal assistant judge statute/ constitutional provision (x2)/ Assistant judge should not
- Hear small claims, magistrate or traffic court *centrally or regionally*
- Judge sharing on a *Regional* basis
- Probate court absorbed within Family Court and Superior Court Dockets (x2)

Case Administration:

- Electronic hearing notices to all attorneys
- Sending orders by faxing (electronic)
- Regional staff utilization i.e. data entry, "Court Shares"
- Centralize* the assignment of contract counsel
- Regionally* docketing of motions or *central* filing location
- Regionally or Centrally* keep track of attorney's schedules to avoid scheduling conflicts
- Handle *small claims/ collections cases regionally or centrally*
- Electronic e-filing – filed *centrally* then electronically notify court, etc.(x2)
- Regional courts house 2-3 counties depending upon size
- Expungements of records *regionally* with notice to county to shred

General Court Services:

- Better communication from CAO so special projects not done simultaneously
- Regional Legal Clinic for Pro Se
- Court services at County best performed at County
- Record checks at *central* location (x2)

Managerial:

- CAO should be better organized regarding statewide operational functions of managers.
- Compile statistics *centrally* along with other general "*administrative items*"
- More definitive in what State vs County pays for/ no split responsibilities
- Regionally* order supplies (x2)
- Move County Clerk responsibilities to county move Superior Clerk back to State

Technology:

Finance:

- Central Finance Department – reduce number of bank accounts – bail (x2)
- Finances could be handle *centrally*
- Statewide VISION deposit function (x2)/ quarterly and monthly financial reports also
- Centrally dispense juror checks (x3)
- Collection of fines *regionally*

Education:

Fully crossed trained staff

Jury Services:

- Superior Courts with time/staff send our jury summons for District Courts
- Centrally dispense juror checks and summons (x3)
- Central or Regional jury pool
- Automation in preparation of Juror Master Pools eliminate manual tasks

Other

- Centralize* judicial system to take advantage of group rate, insurance, standardized pay, buying supplies
- County services are fine, any change would inconvenience constituents
- Regionalization means talented staff in one court....
- Greeny doing great job no need to fill position

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?

Categorized Responses

Adjudicative: 2

Finance

Case Administration: 16

Education:

General Court Services: 4

Jury Services: 1

Managerial:

Other: 1

Technology: 14

Summary of Responses

Adjudicative

Video arraignments and status conferences done properly (x2)

Case Administration

Scanning capabilities statewide to reduce printing, postage, and material costs (x2)

Email portal for each court to receive filings

VCIC, DMV and Dept of Health forms sent electronically

Track Statewide attorney schedules

Ability for notices/ informations, divorce complaints, parentage complaints juveniles petitions, etc. filed electronically(x8)

Greater use of email, FAX and scanners for communicating with attorneys, litigants, etc.

One docketing system for all courts.

Mobile filing sites (e.g. DMV or Judicial Burea)
Electronically send dispositions to VCIC/ DMV

General Court Services

Better utilization of Court Shares "U" drive
Better access to statistical information
Provide public access computer terminals/ kiosks – if going to e-filing(x2)

Managerial

- Batch reporting electronically transferred

Technology

New case management system is suppose to save \$
Investigate ways in which courts can communicate with each other
Windows based operating system allow cut and paste
Proper phone systems installed in every courtroom/ allow for conference calls (>1incoming line) (x2)
Every courtroom should have hearing assistance transmitters (x2)
Every courtroom needs FTR and decent computers (x2)
Require Superior Courts to be part of VTADS & CITRIX
Docketing system written for each docket
Easier access to the Judicial computer system to allow working from other locations
Smart boards, cameras tvs to accommodate realtime video streaming from court to court and office, etc.
Court recording equipment would eliminate court reporting

Finance

Education:

Jury Services

Electronically issue juror payments

Other

Instituting more technology reduces human contact which is an important part of the process

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?

Categorized Responses

Adjudicative 12

Finance: 1

Case Administration: 4

Education: 8

General Court Services

Jury Services

Managerial: 18

Other : 15

Technology: 1

Summary of Responses

Adjudicative

Get a floater Judge - one for the north/ south (x2)

Divide probate work between family and superior courts OR regionalize probate courts
e.g. 4 for the state (x2)
Utilize acting judges for collection and landlord/tenant cases
Have Lawyers serve as acting judges/ mediators (small claims/ traffic)
Magistrates handle traffic hearings on 5th day of week
Superior court judges hear contested probate matters (other than juvenile guardianships and TPR - Family Court Judges would hear.
Uncontested probate certified by registrar
Probate matters to Superior Court
If Assistant Judges are to be maintained - use them
Eliminate side judges

Case Administration

End ability of attorneys to have contracts in multiple counties or part time attorneys assigned to full time courts
The new case management system will allow more flexibility allow staff to be more efficient
Move non-criminal motor vehicles to Superior Court including civil suspensions
Currently "we" are very efficient perhaps small claims and collections may be best place to look

General Court Services

Managerial

One court manager with oversight for all courts in the county
Expanding the roles of the Case Managers in Family Courts
Give administrative arm of the judiciary control of ALL aspects of the judiciary - system too fragmented
Keep list of employees who can help out other courts for possible alternate assignments(x6)
County level - one single location for all courts in each county(x2)
Court manager and court staff all state employees (x4)
Evaluate job descriptions to ensure all employees are contributing regardless if court is in session.
Redesign case manager position - establish uniformity in the position
Suspend classification requests - reduce ftes only through attrition

Technology

Expanding ability to use CITRIX from other locations

Finance

Determine cost to operate trial courts in order to evaluate efficient operation

Education:

Cross train staff (x8)

Jury Services

Other

Regionalize certain courts, i.e. all criminal one location all family for a region in another county
Combine Probate Courts so that no counties have more than one -smaller counties share

Move Judicial Bureau and Environmental Court hearing to central location allow appearances by phone if deemed appropriate
 Limit the number of committees
 You can't shift people from one county to another
 Four day work weeks.
 Job sharing two people share one full time position (x2)
 Flexible schedules for employees (flex- time) (x2)
 Regionalize operations of the court(x3)
 Move more repetitive activities to a Central Service Center
 Utilize NCSC weighed caseload results

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?

Categorized Responses

Adjudicative: 13

Finance

Case Administration: 2

Education:

General Court Services

Jury Services: 1

Managerial: 5

Other

Technology

Summary of Response

Adjudicative

Consider uniting Probate into Family Court or review their current distribution(x4)
 Environmental Court could be absorbed into Superior Court
 Regionalize small claims have competent law trained magistrate to hear
 Regionalize or centralize juvenile case (contract attorney - more available)
 Offer(mandatory?) TPR mediation
 Take traffic appeals out of District Court
 Traffic, Fish & Game, Snowmobile tickets should go to Judicial Bureau

Case Administration

Currently juvenile docket is taking up majority of family court time
 Foreclosure case can be filed centrally

General Court Services

Managerial

Many building should be reviewed to better utilize available space
 One courthouse in each county run by one manager
 One probate court per county
 Arrange the schedule a couple days per month in Superior Court so that a one day District can be held
 Superior Courts could be merged with District Courts

Technology

Finance

Education:

Jury Services

Combined jury draws with Superior and District Court

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

Categorized Responses

Adjudicative: 2

Case Administration: 3

General Court Services: 2

Managerial: 4

Technology

Finance

Education: 3

Jury Services

Other: 4

Summary of Responses

Adjudicative

Better use of magistrates expanding their ability to heard multiple issues in the family
Floater Judges

Case Administration

Amend service requirements in Family Court cases
Mandatory ADR for family cases (X2)
Create uniform forms for civil cases

General Court Services

Materials available for pro se litigants (handbook, necessary forms)
A central/regional repository for cases would also provide guaranteed statewide
responses after hours/edo's/bail.

Managerial

Make staffing the trial courts a priority (x2)
Use money saved eliminating assistant judges and hire real judges to hear cases
Keep employees informed everyone thinks their job is on the line

Technology

Finance

Don't overlook the resources provided by the Counties. They are operating more
efficiently than the state

Education:

Public education regarding the courts(x2)
Provide staff with adequate training and advancement opportunities

Jury Services

Other

Hold employees more accountable for lack of performance
Shift resources and cases Do not regionalize consitutents would suffer having to travel
30-50 miles for court services
Let's don't base decisions on current economy things, will get better
Serious thought should be given to the possible loss of small claims filing fee and
payments by the towns that directly fund judicial services.