

## COMMISSION SURVEY ANALYSIS FOR PROBATE JUDGES

N=7

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

<b>Adjudicative</b>	<b>Finance: 1</b>
<b>Case Administration: 1</b>	<b>Education:</b>
<b>General Court Services</b>	<b>Jury Services</b>
<b>Managerial: 5</b>	<b>Other: 3</b>
<b>Technology: 1</b>	

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### Summary of Responses

#### **Adjudicative**

#### **Case Administration**

Current process is efficient. Probate forms are on line

#### **General Court Services**

#### **Managerial**

Conflict between who covers certain expenses should be resolved - should be one system

Regional courts are not a good idea – required travel will decrease access to the courts

Payroll time sheets and expense sheets should be submitted electronically

Statistical reports should be submitted electronically

All court staff should be state employees

#### **Technology**

Computer systems and networking among courts could be significantly improved and unified

#### **Finance**

Control of county budgets by assistant judges exacerbates the problems

#### **Education**

#### **Jury Services**

#### **Other**

It is vital to maintain a “full presence” at the county level

NO – (no services can be performed regionally etc.(x2))

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**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 Reponses**

<b>Adjudicative: 1</b>	<b>Finance</b>
<b>Case Administration: 2</b>	<b>Education</b>
<b>General Court Services: 1</b>	<b>Jury Services</b>
<b>Managerial: 1</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Technology: 2</b>	

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**Summary of Responses**

**Adjudicative**

A publically accessible spread sheet type program to prepare guardianship, trust and estate annual accounts

**Case Administration**

Consistent case management technology should be available on a state wide basis with state funded/ furnished hardware and software support  
County based disparities should be eliminated

**General Court Services**

System to down load forms could be improved

**Managerial**

The probate courts should be connected to the state system for the District and Family courts

**Technology**

Technology will not improve access to the Probate courts  
Technology presently used seem appropriate

**Finance**

**Education:**

**Jury Services**

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**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 Reponses**

<b>Adjudicative: 7</b>	<b>Managerial: 9</b>
<b>Case Administration</b>	<b>Technology</b>
<b>General Court Services</b>	<b>Finance</b>

**Education: 1**  
**Jury Services**

**Other**

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**Summary of Responses**

**Adjudicative**

Utilize probate judges in other areas  
Require probate judges to be attorneys  
Remove judicial functions from side judges (x2) and utilize pro bono acting judges for small claims  
Consolidation of Probate Courts in the Southern District is reasonable (x2)

**Case Administration**

**General Court Services**

**Managerial**

We should support other districts with judge time or staff (temp reassignment)  
There should be fewer courts state wide  
(Use Addison County as an example) one courthouse cross trained staff  
Reduce centralized administration  
Probate Judges are dealing with county officials who do not provide the necessary tools  
All court facilities and employees should be state employees  
There should be consistency in job classifications across the courts  
Increase staff in the severely understaffed probate courts should be implemented.  
Consider the elimination/ reconfiguration of the smallest counties if done with respect to all courts

**Technology**

**Finance**

**Education**

Develop one training system for GALS

**Jury Services**

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- 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: 10**

**Finance**

**Case Administration: 1**

**Education:**

**General Court Services**

**Jury Services**

**Managerial: 3**

**Other: 1**

**Technology**

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**Summary of Response****Adjudicative**

Combine trust jurisdiction

Make mandatory that Probate judges be attorneys and eliminate do novo appeal to Superior court (x2)

We should expand the jurisdiction of probate courts to create Elder Courts

All issues with respect to trusts and guardianships should be consolidated in the Probate Courts

Move all trust cases from superior court to probate court

Move all title 18 guardianships from family to probate- eliminate statutory differences between title 14 and 18 in terms of notice to family members and monitoring

Eliminate Environmental court - return its caseload to superior – utilize civil rules

Place in effect all motions will be deemed granted unless written opposition is filed in advance of scheduled hearing date.

**Case Administration**

Require all probate matters be on the record

**General Court Services****Managerial**

I do not support unification of the probate and family courts regarding minor guardianships and adoptions

I do support the reduction of the number of courts statewide in all branches.

Give probate courts access to same pool of trained court recorders

**Technology****Finance****Education:****Jury Services****Other**

I don't see how; each court has enough of its own work...

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**5. Please suggest other ideas that would enhance the efficient and effective delivery of judicial services to Vermonters.****Categorized Reponses****Adjudicative: 7****Case Administration****General Court Services: 1****Managerial: 1****Technology****Finance****Education:****Jury Services****Other: 2**

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**Summary of Responses****Adjudicative**

Create fast track for divorce in family court the avoids mandatory conferences

Eliminate assistant judges

Require all Probate judges to be attorneys(x2)  
Appeals from Probate Court to be decided on the record  
Appoint Probate judges  
Establish Elder courts  
Statutes should be revised to eliminate Registrars as acting judges

**Case Administration**

**General Court Services**

Develop/ enhance availability of on-line resources

**Managerial**

Uniformity and consistency among all probate courts

**Technology**

**Finance**

**Education:**

**Jury Services**

**Other**

Less personnel and more centralized delivery of services is NOT in the interest of these litigants, or the system

Keep in mind a “unified” court does not necessarily mean a single trial court.....it may simply mean unified management of personnel, equipment, technology, and facilities.