

## COMMISSION SURVEY ANALYSIS FOR STATE'S ATTORNEY

N=14

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: 1

Finance

Case Administration: 4

Education:

General Court Services: 1

Jury Services

Managerial: 2

Other: 2

Technology: 3

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### Summary of Responses

#### Adjudicative:

- Transfer of low end cases to judicial bureau

#### Case Administration:

- Schedule regionally
- All electronic database administration (the CRIMES system used by the SA's) could be performed from a central office
- All subpoenas, notices, and outgoing documents generated by that system could be similarly administered (electronically from central office)
- The opposite is true. As long as State's Attorneys are elected in each county, the court should not try to combine counties. The regional arraignment experiment is a good example

#### General Court Services:

- Certified record requests might best be handled from a central location

#### Managerial:

- There is some duplication of personnel that could be better utilized if the court staff personnel could be integrated- Addison County
- Closing of part-time courts, such as Essex County, and combining with another county, such as Caledonia and/or Orleans.

#### Technology:

- Send court notices electronically
- Using e-mail messaging serve to [comply with] certain requests for information, scheduling events and communicating with the court about clerical errors that may need relatively minor corrections.
- Electronic filing

#### Finance:

#### Education:

#### Jury Services:

#### Other:

- Merge Orleans County to 1 Courthouse and 1 Court Manager

- I think it's important to provide services locally, in each county. People should have access to local justice.

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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 Responses**

**Adjudicative**

**Case Administration: 1**

**General Court Services: 2**

**Managerial**

**Technology: 15**

**Finance**

**Education:**

**Jury Services**

**Other**

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**Summary of Responses**

**Adjudicative**

**Case Administration**

- Litigants should be encouraged to use email and/or a secure website to report the status of cases to the court clerk/judge, rather than having calendar calls and/or intermediate status conferences in person

**General Court Services**

- How about a web site which contains Defendants' criminal records, that can be easily accessed, by all parties and the court.
- ...access to computers/a wireless network, attorneys would not have to use up the clerk's time

**Managerial**

- (benefit)...greater mobility of court admin staff when needed, like when one court is experiencing a heavy caseload which is slowing their courts down

**Technology**

- Electronic notices would greatly cut down on the amount of paper used. X3
- Equipment to facilitate video conferencing (hearings) X6
- Electronic filing x5
- Vermont Courts Online needs to be expanded to include all Vermont Courts, and create a uniform method of case data entry

**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 Responses**

**Adjudicative: 5**

**Finance**

**Case Administration: 2**

**Education:**

**General Court Services**

**Jury Services**

**Managerial: 2**

**Other: 1**

**Technology: 1**

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**Summary of Responses**

**Adjudicative**

- Send DLS cases to traffic court
- Consider a special DWI court, for a more consistent approach to resolving these cases
- Consider allowing for less than unanimous jury verdicts
- Consider a group of cases (misdemeanors?) which would be resolved by court trial only, not jury trial
- Transfer of cases to judicial bureau

**Case Administration**

- Reducing the number of arraignment days per month would open up more court days for contested matters requiring judge time
- The amount of paper used by the court to schedule ghost hearings could be reduced by waiting a few months (scheduling cases out 6 months)

**General Court Services**

**Managerial**

- Perhaps moving to more flex time, as the federal government does, would allow more flexibility in terms of keeping the courts open
- Perhaps assistants and support staff could work from a centralized office location to allow them to "float" between the more busy and less busy offices . (For example, staff a central Montpelier/Waterbury office with various support staff and assistants needed to process data and cases in various SA's offices throughout the state)

**Technology:**

- Invest in videoconferencing technology

**Finance**

**Education**

**Jury Services**

**Other**

- We need a unified court system.

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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: 9**

**Finance**

**Case Administration: 2**

**Education:**

**General Court Services**

**Jury Services**

**Managerial: 2**

**Other:**

**Technology**

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**Summary of Response**

**Adjudicative**

- Merge courts in various units to permit allocation of judge time in response to the volume of cases
- Have DUI civil finals conducted by either acting judges or traffic court hearing officers
- Perhaps it would streamline things to have a DV court that combines two counties and a drug court that combines two counties (would love a drug court in our county)
- Fine-only misdemeanors (fish & wildlife cases other than "big game" violations, municipal ordinances)... heard in the judicial bureau.
- Collection actions ("show cause hearings") handled outside district court (magistrate / judicial bureau / collection agency)
- Designate "juvenile law judges" who could travel from court to court hearing cases,
- Ask retired judges to handles these types of cases, or to confer authority to magistrates to handle juvenile cases.
- Restitution should be referred to a hearing officer for an "arbitration-like" proceeding without counsel
- No more juries for traffic tickets

**Case Administration**

- Strict time limits on hearings, and an absolute requirement of the presence of counsel and clients at the specified time
- The courts need to place more of the burden of moving cases forward on the attorneys

**General Court Services**

**Managerial**

- No, Vermont has a "good division of labor" when it comes to court cases.
- Grand Isle and Essex County's courts and SA's offices should be absorbed by Burlington and St. Johnsbury, respectively

**Technology**

**Finance**

**Education:**

**Jury Services**

**Other**

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

**Categorized Responses**

**Adjudicative: 3**

**Case Administration: 43**

**General Court Services:**

**Managerial: 1**

**Technology: 1**

**Finance:**

**Education**

**Jury Services**

**Other:**

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**Summary of Responses**

**Adjudicative**

- Civil Suspensions and PCR proceedings may be better dealt with as administrative hearings.
- Domestic violence docket concept here (with a focus on counseling and prompt resolution) should be expanded to all misdemeanor cases
- A judge who moves among different counties resolving the misdemeanor cases and taking pleas (federal court model of a magistrate judge).

**Case Administration**

- Judges may need to carve out time prior to Jury drawing to become actively involved in resolutions when counsel cannot agree
- Meaningful but realistic scheduling of events - more discipline in preparing for cases
- Out of county arraignments should be stopped, because Defense counsel frequently invokes the 24-hour rule for such arraignments
- Enforced punctuality. Windsor routinely runs 2 hours late, which causes other departments (State's Attorneys, DOC, public defenders) to, in turn, run less efficiently
- Better scheduling practices

**General Court Services**

**Managerial**

- Court furlough days should be scheduled for either Mondays or Fridays, in order to achieve maximum energy savings for building heating and cooling
- Heating and cooling systems should be effectively maintained and upgraded

**Technology**

- Upgrading the (available technology) tools and training us in their proper use would be helpful

**Finance**

**Education:**

**Jury Services**

**Other**