

Blue Ribbon Commission
Feedback from Community Meetings
(based on the 4 questions asked by the BRC)

Meetings with info included below:
Overland Park

Total attendance: by-invitation – 21, public - 22.

1. Are there things the courts do locally that could be performed regionally or at one central statewide location to improve their efficiency?

a. Regionalize

1. Suggested Kansas Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing could coordinate all services to the court when a sign interpreter is needed.
2. Believes that E-filing could be possibly be regionalized.
3. There is more success with finding forms that have already been drafted by the Judicial Council.

b. Keep at local level

1. Need to have local legal aid offices in each county.

2. How could the courts use technology to make their operations more cost-effective or improve access to the courts?

a. A/V Technology

1. Have Wi-Fi connection for interpreters to use a webcam or laptop when needed.
2. Video conferencing saves the county money by not having law enforcement transport prisoners for first appearances.

b. E-everything:

1. E-filing would make jobs in the court easier, especially for clerks, and it will save money for the court system and county funding.
2. Video conferencing is preferred over Skype because there are more options (i.e. zoom in and out, less pauses, more clear).
3. E-filing saves significant time to process cases and saves money for file folders, paper, outside agencies driving to courthouse to view files, storages costs, etc.

c. Anti-technology:

1. Actual presence of judge and court staff during PFA or PFS during hearing reduces the risk to the victim and can increase the victim's confidence and ability to speak about the violence and fear.
2. Concerned that trust between interpreter and client would be lost if interpreter is in different location than judge or client.
3. Concern with "swearing in" witness with video arraignment because of the belief that the witness had to personally be in front of the person being sworn to have valid oath.
4. Video conferencing for PFA and PFS cases would not be a good idea.

d. Other

3. How can the courts become more flexible in the use of people and facilities as workloads and funding fluctuate?

a. Consolidate/Share

1. Consolidation of districts is fraught with problems and the concerns of dealing with multiple county commissions.

b. District Magistrate Judges (DMJs) & District Court Judges(DJs)

1. All judges should be law-trained.
2. All urban judges should be district court judges.
3. There is a disparity of pay between urban judges and district attorneys.
4. Judges should not be elected and the merit selection process should be kept.

c. Other

1. Specialty courts like, such as veteran, family or drug, should be looked into.
2. Suggested a benefit to judges having access to opinions of other district judges that do not necessarily go through the Appellate Court.

4. What other ideas, issues, or concerns do you want the BRC to consider?

a. Access to Justice/Timeliness

b. Process changes

c. Money/Vacancies

1. BRC needs to recognize geographical and demographical locations across the state with respect to salaries.

d. **Legislature**

e. **One judge per county**

f. **BRC**

g. **Furloughs/staffing**

1. The use of law clerks or research attorneys could save expenses for the state and for the county.

h. **Other**

1. Commission on Judicial Performance needs to be expanded to people to see the courts.