

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

Meetings with info included below:

Topeka 2

Total attendance: by-invitation – 15, public - 7.

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. Transcriptionists could be regionalized and sent a recording by email to transcribe.

b. Keep at local level

1. County courthouses and hearings need to stay in counties as many indigent defendants are not in jail and do not have funds to get to a county seat other than their own.

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. Video conferencing capabilities should be made in all of the courts across the state and KBI has invested in video conferencing to not send forensic scientists out on the road for a short 5-10 testimony.
2. Expressed concern with technology with respect to the physical safety and privacy of victims.
3. Could see benefits such as safety to video conferencing by not having face-to-face confrontations to further the intimidations and could see advantages as far as transportation and travel.
4. Recommends a more widespread utilization of video conferencing and teleconferencing technology for non-critical stage hearings.
5. To save money immediately and with minimal expense, video conferencing equipment should be put in all courthouses and juvenile detention facilities across Kansas.

b. E-everything:

1. E-filing would free up staff in the courts and free up money to litigants by attorneys not having to always go to the courthouse.

c. Anti-technology:

1. Does not believe video conferencing should be performed at critical stages (preliminary hearing, trial and sentencing) of any criminal proceeding because the defendant has the right to face their accuser.

d. Other

1. FullCourt should be required to be used by all courts to ensure consistency and accessibility.
2. An automated call system to remind defendants/respondents of upcoming hearings may help reduce failures to appear.
3. Cameras and better acoustics in the courtrooms are necessary to hear all individuals, including jurors.

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

a. Consolidate/Share

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

c. Other

1. Consolidating juvenile court services supervision under the authority of JJA.

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

a. Access to Justice/Timeliness

1. Excessive continuances of juvenile cases are costly.
2. Require evidence based assessments at the pre-disposition stage in juvenile cases.

b. Process changes

1. Believes an appearance fee should be made available in advance to defendants appearing in court as they do not always have funds available to get to court. Those fees could then be assessed at the conclusion of the case.
2. Before changing processes for PFA and PFS cases, please consider the safety of the victims and the accountability of the alleged perpetrators.

c. Money/Vacancies

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. How do you maintain access to justice when those litigants don't speak English and interpreters are needed to facilitate that.
2. Emergency access to courts is very critical to domestic violence victims.
3. Concern was expressed for not having more cases, especially post-divorce, getting placed with mediators and case managers who are not educated or experienced with domestic violence.
4. Courts should be a system of justice and not a system of costing as high as the user can afford.