2020 Strategic Planning Survey: Summary Report

20th Judicial Circuit/Ottawa County Probate Courts
January 12, 2021

Prepared by:
Dr. Brenda J. Wagenknecht-Ivey
CEO, Denver, Colorado
1. Overview of External Partner Survey

2. Characteristics of Respondents

3. Results and Findings
   - Biggest Challenges/Emerging Issues in the next 3-5 years
   - Most Significant Barriers to Accessing the Courts
   - Most Wanted Changes/Improvements in the Next 3-5 Years
   - Greatest Strengths of the Courts
   - New COVID Practices that have Worked Well/Should be Continued
Part 1: Overview of External Partner Survey
Overview of External Partner Survey

1. **Purpose:** Gather feedback and suggestions from external partners to help shape the future direction, goals, and strategic priorities of the 20th Judicial Circuit/Ottawa County Probate Courts.

2. **Outreach Methods:**
   - 1 Survey was administered to external partners/ stakeholders
   - Judges and employees were surveyed at the November All-Staff meeting via Poll Everywhere
3. **Survey Administration:** The surveys were administered in December 2020 by PRAXIS Consulting, Inc.

4. **Number of Respondents/Response Rates:**
   - Response Rate = 46%
   - \( n = 239 \) (out of \( N = 525 \))
Overview: Survey Questions

Q1: Biggest challenges/emerging issues facing the Courts in the next 3-5 years. (select top 3 choices)

Q2: Most significant barriers/challenges to accessing or using the Courts. (select top 3 choices)

Q3: Greatest strengths of the Courts. (list your top 3)

Q4: Most wanted improvements/changes in the next 3-5 years. (select top 3 choices)

Q5: New COVID practices, policies, and/or procedures that worked well and should be considered for continuation post-COVID.

Q6: Additional comments/suggestions.

Demographic Questions
Part 2: Characteristics of Respondents

External Partners
External Partner Demographics: By Relationship to Courts (n=239)

- Private Attorney (n=113) 47%
- Prosecuting Attorney (n=10) 4%
- Court Appointed/PD Attny (n=15) 6%
- Law Enforcement (n=4) 2%
- MDOC/Probation (n=4) 2%
- Treatment Provider (n=30) 13%
- School/Community/Business (n=19) 8%
- County Admin (n=5) 2%
- Other Elected Officials (n=1) 0%
- Other (n=4) 4%
- Did Not Answer (n=34) 2%

Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.
External Partner Demographics: By Race (n=239)

- 73% White/Caucasian (n=174)
- 11% Prefer not to answer (n=25)
- 1% 2 or more races (n=5)
- 1% Black/African American (n=2)
- 1% Asian (n=2)
- 13% Did Not Answer (n=31)

Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.
External Partner Demographics: By Ethnicity (n=239)

- Hispanic/Latino/Latina (n=6): 16%
- Non-Hispanic (n=161): 67%
- Prefer not to answer (n=34): 14%
- Did not answer (n=38): 3%

Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.
Race and Ethnicity – Ottawa County 2019 (in percentages)

Ottawa County
- Hispanic/Latino: 10%
- White: 89%
- Other: 3%
- African American/Black: 4%
- American Indian: 3%
- Asian: 3%
- 2 or More Races: 1%

Michigan
- Hispanic/Latino: 5%
- White: 78%
- Other: 1%
- African American/Black: 3%
- American Indian: 3%
- Asian: 1%
- 2 or More Races: 1%

USA
- Hispanic/Latino: 18%
- White: 72%
- Other: 5%
- African American/Black: 6%
- American Indian: 3%
- Asian: 13%
- 2 or More Races: 1%

Part 3: Results and Findings
Biggest Challenges/Emerging Issues – Next 3-5 Years
(By rank order – most frequently mentioned – Top 7)

External Partners (n=239)

- Need for/access to treatment services (drug, mental health) 35%
- Access to courts (remote, physical) 30%
- Time it takes to resolve legal matters/cases 25%
- Costs of legal system 23%
- Fair and equal treatment (racial justice, DEI) 23%
- Public trust and confidence in the courts 22%
- Use of technology 21%

1 This was a multiple response question – respondents were asked to select their top three from a list. Percentages are based on number of respondents that selected the option.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need for/access to treatment services (e.g., drug, mental health)</td>
<td>#1 (35%)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to the courts (e.g., remote, physical)</td>
<td>#2 (30%)</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time it takes to resolve legal matters/cases</td>
<td>#3 (25%)</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs of the legal system (e.g., attorney fees, filing fees, court costs)</td>
<td>#4 (23%)</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair and equal treatment (e.g., racial justice, diversity, equity, inclusion)</td>
<td>#4 (23%)</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public trust and confidence in the court system</td>
<td>#6 (22%)</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of technology</td>
<td>#7 (21%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing demographics of users</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime – levels/types</td>
<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety/Security in courthouse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrating Evidence Based/ Restorative Practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships w/External Partners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most Significant Barriers/Problems Accessing/Using the Courts (by rank order – most frequently mentioned – top 5¹)

External Partners (n=239)

1. Difficulty understanding what one needs to do to complete court business: 57%
2. Costs of going to/using the courts: 51%
3. Difficulty doing court business remotely: 39%
4. Time it takes away from work/home: 29%
5. Distance people have to travel to get to court/difficulties getting to court: 27%

¹ This was a multiple response question – respondents were asked to select their top three from a list. Percentages are based on number of respondents that selected the option.
## Most Significant Barriers/Challenges to Accessing/Using the Courts – By Group
(by rank order, most frequently mentioned – Top 3 for each group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty understanding what one needs to do to complete court business</td>
<td>#1 (57%)</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs of going to/using the courts</td>
<td>#2 (51%)</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty doing court business remotely</td>
<td>#3 (39%)</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time it takes away from work or home</td>
<td>#4 (29%)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance people have to travel to get to court/difficulties getting to court</td>
<td>#5 (27%)</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty understanding where one needs to go complete court business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall lack of trust and confidence in the court system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most Wanted Changes/Improvements in the Next 3-5 Years (by rank order – most frequently mentioned – Top 7)

1 This was a multiple response question – respondents were asked to select their top three from a list. Percentages are based on number of respondents that selected the option.
### Most Wanted Changes/Improvements in the Next 3-5 Years (by rank order – most frequently mentioned – top 3 for each group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expand PS/specialty courts</td>
<td>#1 (46%)</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance access to the courts/reduce access barriers (cost, distance, hours, ability to do business remotely)</td>
<td>#2 (31%)</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand services &amp; programs for youth &amp; families</td>
<td>#3 (21%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater use of existing &amp; emerging technologies</td>
<td>#4 (18%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great use of alternative dispute resolution</td>
<td>#4 (18%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve timely resolution of cases/disputes (e.g., scheduling, case mgt., proc)</td>
<td>#6 (18%)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursue criminal justice system reform (e.g., bail/bonds, alternatives to incar.)</td>
<td>#7 (17%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve court facilities (location, space, safety/security)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater use of evidence-based practices/programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27%</td>
<td></td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance relations w/external partners (community, justice system, gov. officials)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on fairness (fair treatment for all, DEI)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand language assistance for court users/litigants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Greatest Strengths – External Partners
(not in priority order)

1. Excellent staff (helpful, courteous, professional, knowledgeable/competent dedicated, welcoming)
2. Excellent judicial officers (fair, impartial, dedicated, professional, follow the law, ethical, experienced)
3. Desire/commitment to continuously improve/try innovative things
4. Services & Resources (remote access, self-help, cust. service, website resources)
5. Facilities (clean, easy access, parking, Juv. Det., excellent, security/safety)
6. Use of technology (e-filing, remote hearings, embrace new tech.)
7. Court Leadership (well-respected, think/plan strategically, listen to others, good decision-making, good admin. of courts)
8. Programs & Specialty Courts (for youth/families, recovery & drug court, willing to try alt. treatment practices, counseling)
9. Relationships & collaboration w/partners (seek input/outreach, listen, good/prompt comm.)
10. Timely & efficient resolution (scheduling, good case mgt., eff. handling of caseload, use of ADR)
Practices, Policies, Procedures that have Worked Well & Should be Continued Post-COVID (not in priority order)

1. Remote/virtual hearings (pre-trials, motions, settlement confs., default/consent matters, probate matters, pro cons, oral arguments, uncontested matters)
2. Remote meetings/appointments
3. Online scheduling/docketing
4. Online access to court/case info., court records, court schedules
5. Online payment options
6. Email access to staff
7. Waive fees for file access; eliminate/reduce online user/payment fees
8. Increase access to online filing; simplify e-filing
9. Safety precautions/requirements (mask wearing, dividers, distancing)
10. Live stream hearings
11. Expanded bond options for defendants while waiting trial
12. Batch/slot scheduling
13. Staggered sentencings