

The overall question is:

**'How well is government serving Vermonters and how could we be doing better?'**

In the case of the justice system, **"How equal and how satisfactory is Vermonters' access to justice?"**

**What do we do?** (e.g. family court, civil court, criminal court, DV court, rapid intervention, DG services, State's Attorney Services). This is the general overview of the justice system.

Are these services/programs equally available to Vermonters through the state?

Which services/programs are only available in certain counties?

Are there services we don't provide?

### **How well do we do it?**

What are the wait times or caseload backlogs in various courts/services or various counties?

What's causing those?

What has been tried to alleviate them?

What are some examples of success stories? Are there counties or processes in the different types of courts (criminal vs family) that are working better than others? What's causing that success and how do we replicate it?

What can we do to improve Vermonters' experience?

\*The standard answer here will likely be more judge time, better computer system, more money, more \_\_\_\_\_. All of that is true, but it also implies that the system is running at optimum performance and they only need to do more of what they are already doing perfectly. That's doubtful. To dig into this, some possible lines of questions are:

Walk through each step in the process to figure out what needs improving and what's preventing improvement from taking place? (for example, what would it take to establish more rapid intervention options throughout the state? What are the steps in going thru a TPR case and which ones are the stickiest? What are the hard parts of scheduling cases? ...whatever the thing is that we could do better). Where the bottlenecks? What's the chain of command that makes the decisions on changing the process? Are there ways the legislature could help?

### **Are we better off?**

Are Vermonters getting a good return for their investment? How would we know? What measurements would tell the story of success?

Who is better off and who is being left behind or falling through the cracks? What percentage is falling behind? What percentage is falling through the cracks?

### **On prioritization:**

What does your committee think are the more pressing needs of Vermonters where our justice system is concerned?

What are the most important steps can we take this year to improve the justice system? (That could be in legislation or in the budget or just by encouraging/pressing the courts or justice partners into one or two improvements and holding them accountable with regular progress updates)

Where will Vermonters get the biggest results/returns for additional investments in the justice system (the entire system, beyond the judicial branch)?

**These are some questions specifically about RBA and the (very few, but slowly growing) areas of state government that are currently being measured.**

Who are our customers, clients, people we serve?

How can we measure if our customers/clients are better off? (Performance measures about client results – e.g. percent of children with good literacy skills)

How can we measure if we are delivering service well? (e.g. client staff ratio, unit cost, turnover rate etc.)

How are we doing on the most important of these measures? Where have we been; where are we headed? (baselines and the story behind the baselines)

Who are the partners who have a potential role to play in doing better? (e.g. State's Attorneys, members of the Bar Association, Defender General)

What works, what could work to do better than baseline? (best practices, best hunches, including partners' contributions)

What do we propose to do? (multi-year action plan and budget, including no-cost and low-cost items)