

## **What values and principles are driving our work?**

Accountability  
Common sense  
Compassion  
Curiosity  
Equity  
Ethics  
Fairness  
Inclusivity  
Mindfulness  
Objectivity  
Openness  
Patience  
Prudence  
Respect  
Safety  
Sustainability

## **How will we work together?**

*We will:*

Make certain that the actions we take make VT a fairer place.

Be values and mission-driven.

Ensure that we hear all parties and all sides of an issue. Bring stakeholders to the table and help to chart the course forward. Dig deeper to continue asking who else needs to be part of the conversation. Be as effective as possible at getting input.

Question the frame and assumptions that are being presented on an issue; push back on the rhetoric of “we’ve always done it this way” as needed. Be creative; embrace what’s possible versus what is. Stay open to what seems counterintuitive. Provide checks and balances.

Make time for a deliberative process. Ask *why* we are taking action. Look for common ground and agreements.

Ensure that our input is just, fair, and appropriate. Be forthright and direct. Welcome and offer feedback.

Be responsible. Avoid overreach. Exercise caution to be sure that our work is constitutional and will stand up in courts. Avoid legislating to the lowest common denominator. Be mindful of unintended consequences.

Pay attention to evidence and research, over emotion; be “data driven, not data hostage.”  
Identify best practices.

Bring a strengths-based perspective; *what can we do more of that is going well?*

Understand how our work intersects with other systems.

Separate the public perception of our work and reality; ask ourselves if our work makes sense outside of the legislative “bubble.” Make sure the direction of our work is understandable.

### **What are we working for?**

*Public Safety for all.*

*The Judiciary committee:*

#### **Provides functional input and oversight:**

Influences the state approach to preventing and responding to harm. Makes the laws that the executive branch implements, law enforcement enforces, and courts oversee. Influences sentencing and criminal justice response. Protects and promotes the rule of law as a fundamental democratic principle. Ensures the constitutionality of our work.

Repairs and replaces problematic statutes. Brings laws up to date and responds to emerging needs. Clarifies our work when it is not interpreted as intended. Works to modernize enforcement strategies.

Makes sure that courts are functioning properly. Tests whether the legislature’s work will overburden the court system.

Ensures consistency with other committees, by applying the Judiciary committee lens to bills that include fines, penalties, crimes. Addresses constitutionality in the work of other committees.

Acts as an ambassador for the resources that the court system needs to function. Addresses questions relating to court costs and spending. Makes responsible recommendations about spending. Works to make court costs transparent for justice-involved Vermonters; ensures that people know what fee-based expectations and requirements are.

Adapts to the COVID-19 crisis and analyzes implications and lessons learned for future policies, operations, and laws.

Recognizes the role of statewide officials – e.g. Governor, Attorney General, Auditor, etc. – in helping to balance access to justice.

### Prioritizes access to justice for Vermonters:

Works to ensure geographic justice. Addresses the differences between counties.

Works to meet the needs of the most vulnerable and those most in need of protection, drawing on our individual and collective knowledge as community representatives. Advocates for children, as victims of crimes, in family court settings, and beyond. Assists victims and survivors of crimes.

Addresses inequities in the justice system. Recognizes that different backgrounds and situations can lead to very different interactions with law enforcement and courts. Works to level the playing field, to ensure equal treatment for all people who come into the criminal justice system.

Brings a user experience lens. Emphasizes user-friendly, customer service-driven approaches in the court system. Provides a blueprint for justice system interactions, so people know what to expect and have a fair experience with the legal system, regardless of prior experience. Works to make the court system more flexible, with an emphasis on helping people.

### Supports healing and rehabilitation:

Asks what alternatives exist to address and resolve harm outside of the Judicial system. Remains curious about less adversarial approaches in other jurisdictions. Embraces restorative approaches that prevent and heal harm for all parties.

Believes that a sentence should end after an individual has served their time and met conditions and restitution requirements.

Investigates the impacts of our work on Vermont's economy. Understands sound justice policy as a form of workforce development.

Supports a trauma-informed justice system and brings this lens to our work. Belives that criminal justice should not be a direct response to a mental health crisis or substance use disorder. Seeks to understand the social conditions that bring people into court settings.