VERMONT JUDICIARY

Briefing for the Vermont Legislative Joint Information Technology Oversight Committee
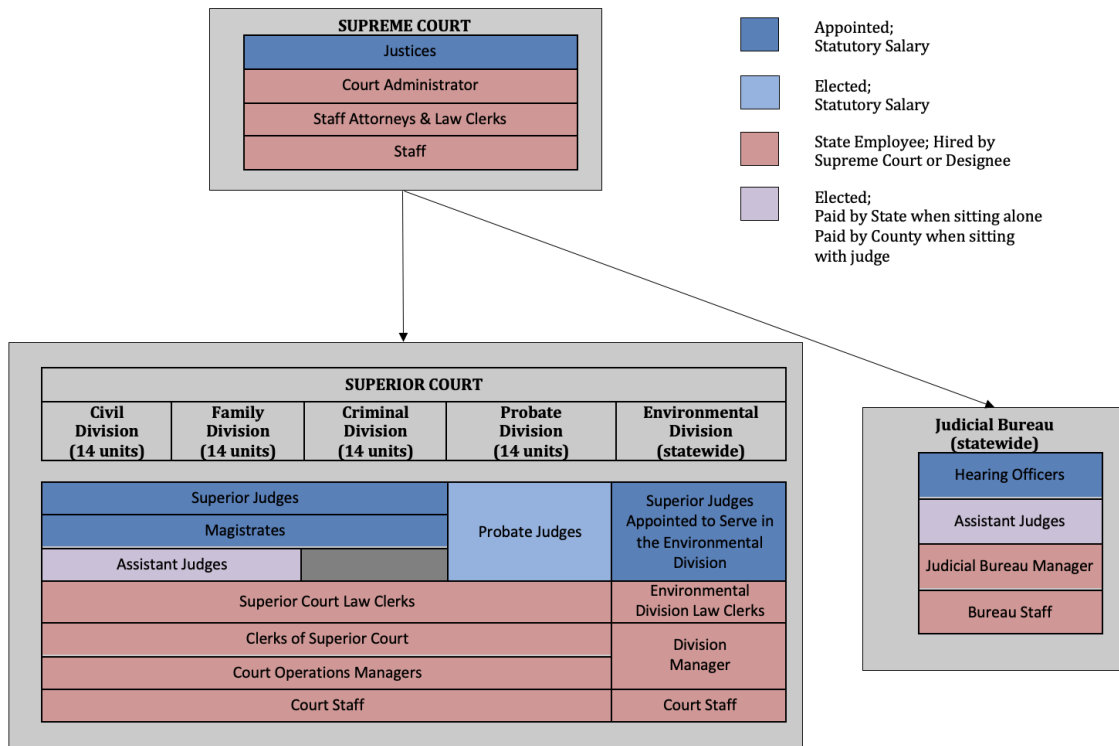**October 20, 2023**
Marcia J. Schels, Chief Technology Innovation Officer
Joe Paquin, Director of Infrastructure & IT Support Services

Mission Statement: The Vermont judicial branch of government protects the rights of all Vermonters. It does this by ruling on every case in a way that is fair, impartial, and timely. The role of the courts is to protect individual rights and to ensure everyone a day in court.
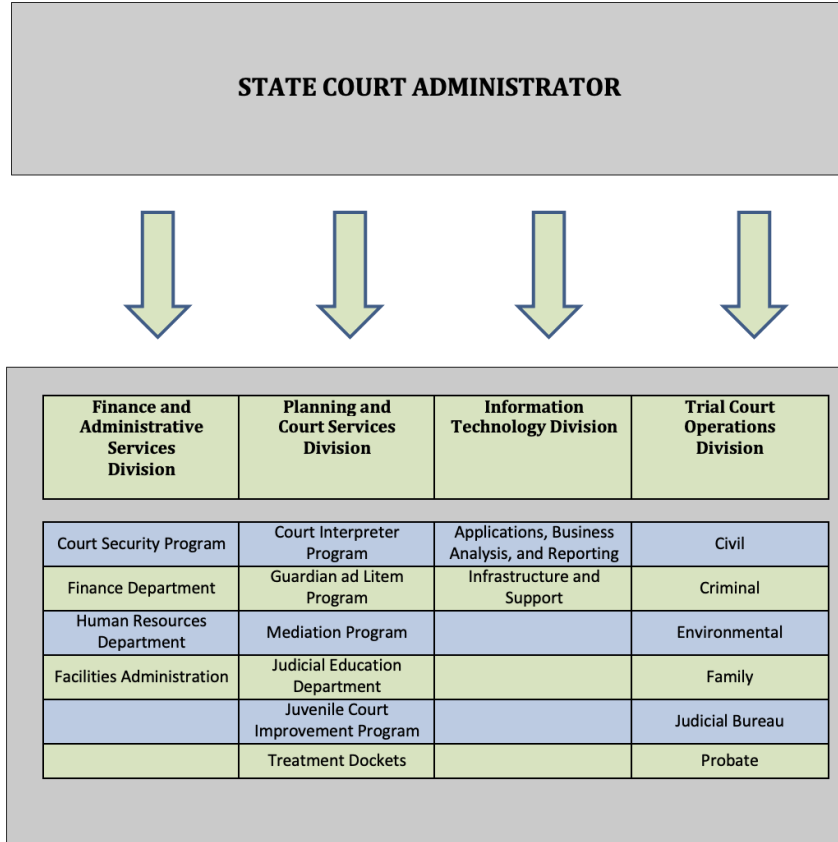
The Vermont Judiciary is a coequal branch of government. It is an important element in the balance of power among the three branches of government. This balance of power is essential to the vitality of our democracy.

The Vermont Judiciary consists of an appellate court, which is the Supreme Court, and a trial court, known as the Vermont Superior Court. There are 14 units of the Superior Court, one corresponding to each county. The Superior Court has 5 divisions: civil, criminal, environmental, family, and probate. The Judiciary also has a Judicial Bureau, which has statewide jurisdiction. Each of these courts has a distinct role in providing justice.

THE VERMONT UNIFIED COURT SYSTEM

THE VERMONT COURT ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR

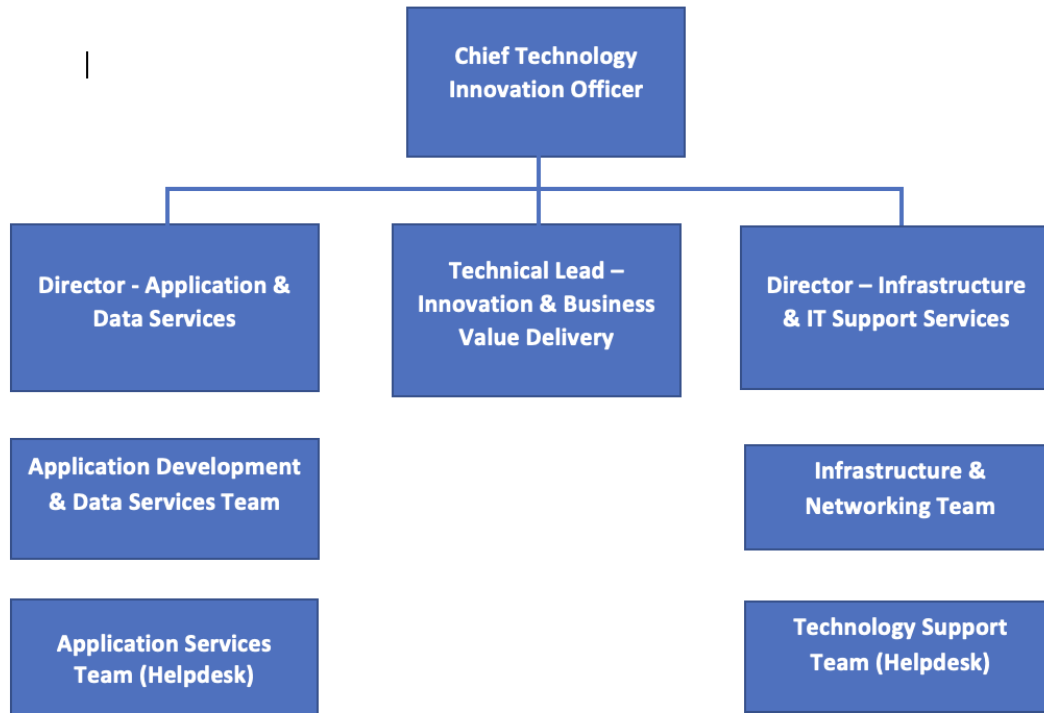| Finance and Administrative Services Division	Planning and Court Services Division	Information Technology Division	Trial Court Operations Division
Court Security Program	Court Interpreter Program	Applications, Business Analysis, and Reporting	Civil
Finance Department	Guardian ad Litem Program	Infrastructure and Support	Criminal
Human Resources Department	Mediation Program		Environmental
Facilities Administration	Judicial Education Department		Family
	Juvenile Court Improvement Program		Judicial Bureau
	Treatment Dockets		Probate

Information Technology Leadership

The Chief Technology Innovation Officer (CTIO) provides vision and leadership for developing and implementing information technology initiatives that support a workforce of approximately 400 people.

As a member for the senior management team reporting to the State Court Administrator, the CTIO serves as the executive level manager for all technology programs, services, and functions for the Vermont Judicial Branch, providing strategic planning, vision, and leadership for developing and implementing information technology initiatives to support the operations of the Judiciary.

The CTIO leads the Technology Services Center (TSC), comprised of 25 staff members. Responsibilities of the TSC include, but are not limited to, integrated case management systems, document management systems, electronic filing, data exchanges, applications development, application straining and support, implementation of voice and data communications, statistics and reports, technology training, budget development, cybersecurity, staff supervision, desktop and user support, and the management of technology in facilities across more than 30 locations (courthouses, correctional facilities, and administrative offices). There are 65 courtrooms in VT.

Vermont Judiciary
Technology Services Center (TSC)

```
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │  Chief Technology   │
                    │  Innovation Officer │
                    └─────────────────────┘
            ┌────────────────┼────────────────┐
┌───────────────────┐ ┌───────────────────┐ ┌───────────────────┐
│ Director -        │ │ Technical Lead –  │ │ Director –        │
│ Application &     │ │ Innovation &      │ │ Infrastructure    │
│ Data Services     │ │ Business Value    │ │ & IT Support      │
│                   │ │ Delivery          │ │ Services          │
└───────────────────┘ └───────────────────┘ └───────────────────┘

┌───────────────────┐                       ┌───────────────────┐
│ Application        │                      │ Infrastructure &   │
│ Development &      │                      │ Networking Team    │
│ Data Services Team │                      │                    │
└───────────────────┘                       └───────────────────┘

┌───────────────────┐                       ┌───────────────────┐
│ Application        │                      │ Technology Support │
│ Services Team      │                      │ Team (Helpdesk)    │
│ (Helpdesk)         │                      │                    │
└───────────────────┘                       └───────────────────┘
```

Major Business Applications
- Case Management System (Tyler Technologies' Enterprise Justice, formerly called Odyssey)
- Electronic Filing (Tyler's E-filing)
- Public Portal* (Tyler)
- Digital Evidence Management System (Omnigo)
- Jury Management (Jury+)
- Court Reporting (CORE) Business Intelligence application written in house with Microsoft SQL Server & Power BI, hosted in Azure.
- Courtroom Videoconferencing (CISCO WebEx)

*The Public Portal is a web-based platform that offers court users and members of the public customized role-based access to court records, hearing calendars and other data. The Portal also provides a convenient way to pay court fines online from anywhere on any compatible device.

User Base
- Judiciary – 400+
- External – 18,000+

Budget

- Judiciary General Fund (TSC Staff) vs. Tech Fund (Technology)

The enabling legislation that created the Tech Fund in 2007 provides as follows:

> *There is established the court technology special fund which shall be managed in accordance with subchapter 5 of chapter 7 of Title 32. Administrative fees collected pursuant to 13 V.S.A. § 7252 and revenue collected pursuant to fees established pursuant to sections 1105 and 1109 of this title shall be deposited and credited to this fund. The fund shall be available to the judicial branch to pay for contractual and operating expenses and project-related staffing not covered by the general fund related to the following:*
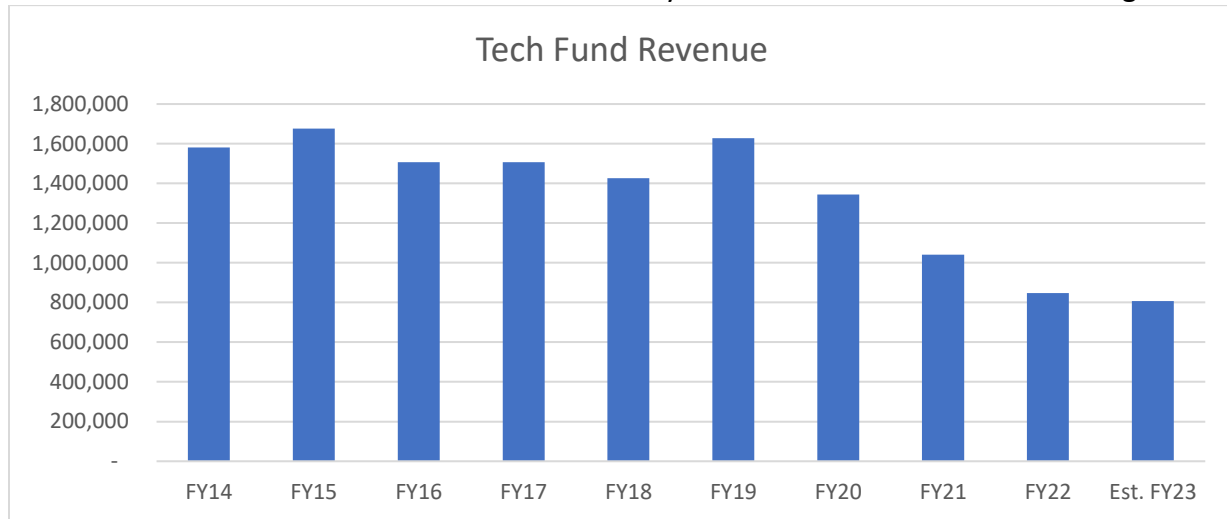> *(1) The acquisition and maintenance of software and hardware needed for case management, electronic filing, an electronic document management system, and the expense of implementation, including training.*
> *(2) The acquisition and maintenance of electronic audio and video court recording and conferencing equipment.*
> *(3) The acquisition, maintenance, and support of the judiciary's information technology network, including training.* 24 V.S.A. §27

The Judiciary is therefore permitted to use the Tech Fund for the ongoing support of its information technology needs, including the general operations of the Technology Service Center (TSC), the information technology unit of the Judiciary. The Judiciary has used the Tech Fund extensively for that purpose when General Funds were not available to support the entirety of their budget.

The three sources of revenue supporting this fund include:

- Administrative surcharge for civil violations ($12.50) under 13 V.S.A. §7252
- Failure to Answer fee ($20) under 4 V.S.A. §1105
- Failure to Pay fee ($30) under 4 V.S.A. §1109

The chart below illustrates the revenue collected by these three sources in FY14 through FY23.

Tech Fund Revenue

A bar chart showing Tech Fund Revenue from FY14 to Est. FY23, with the y-axis ranging from 0 to 1,800,000:
- FY14: ~1,580,000
- FY15: ~1,680,000
- FY16: ~1,500,000
- FY17: ~1,500,000
- FY18: ~1,420,000
- FY19: ~1,620,000
- FY20: ~1,340,000
- FY21: ~1,040,000
- FY22: ~850,000
- Est. FY23: ~800,000

It should be noted that the number of civil violations (primarily traffic tickets) has declined over time, and recent policy initiatives to restore driver's license privileges have weakened the leverage used to enforce collections.

As a result, collections of ongoing revenues have declined from a high of $1.6M to approximately $850,000, with all indications that this decline is permanent and will likely get worse (the estimate for FY24 is $800,000). This comes at a time when the Judiciary's technology footprint has expanded due to the implementation of a Commercial-Off-The-Shelf (COTS) electronic case management system, e-filing, a digital evidence management system, an upgraded jury system, and remote hearings. Such technology is vital to the operations of the Judiciary.

- Tech Fund Categories ($2.8M of Expenses Expected in FY25)
    - ADS Fees: Network, Software Licensing, Shared Services (Will be eliminated in FY25)
    - Infrastructure: Cloud, On-Prem, Network
    - Court Hardware (e.g., Cisco WebEx Equipment, Sound Systems)
    - Court Software (e.g., Enterprise Justice, Jury+)
    - Cybersecurity (e.g., Arctic Wolf Security Operations Center)
    - End-user Hardware, Cell Phones, Software (e.g., Laptops, Microsoft Licensing)
    - Services (e.g., DBA Support, Project Management)
    - TSC Software (e.g., DeskPro Helpdesk Software)

- FY25 Budget Requests
    - Addition of Base Funding for the Tech Fund ($2M in FY25) to Maintain Solvency
    - 5 Permanent Positions (4 are Limited Service today, 1 is Outsourced)
        - 2 Application Support Helpdesk Staff (~$180K)
        - 2 Desktop Support Helpdesk Staff & 1 Database Administrator (~$290K)

Branch IT Coordination
- Quarterly Meetings
- Communications on a Regular Basis including Problem/Incident Response

Case Management System (CMS) Upgrade
- Tyler Technologies' Odyssey application has been rebranded to Enterprise Justice.
- Upgrade to Enterprise Justice 2023 is in process.
- Support for the 2018 version of Odyssey ends 4Q 2023.
- Silverlight, a non-supported Microsoft product, is eliminated in this version, enhancing security.

Post CMS Upgrade
- Migrate Enterprise Justice to the Cloud (currently hosted in the Tech Vault Data Center)
- Replace the Public Portal with Tyler's ReSearch and Defendant Access Applications

Judiciary IT Modernization Program
- Network Replacement Project: Speed, Security, Reliability
  - Triple Redundancy at Every Courthouse
    - Wide Area Network (ELAN)
    - Broadband Network
    - Cellular Network (5G)
  - Wi-Fi (Public and Private)
  - Workstreams Status
    - Networking
    - Microsoft (Azure, Active Directory, M365 @vermont.gov -> @vtcourts.gov)
  - Deployment Plan Overview
- Re-Wiring (Internal) Courthouses
- Sound System Replacement
- Public Access Terminal (PAT) Replacement
- Jury+ Kiosk Configuration Upgrade

Cybersecurity Protections
- 24/7 Monitoring Security Operations Center as a Service – Artic Wolf (Implementation)
- Zero Trust Network Access (ZTNA) – Clearpass (Configuration)
- Threat Detection – Wildfire (Configuration)
- Endpoint Protection – Cortex XDR (Configuration)
- Endpoint Management – Intune (Configuration)
- Response and Mitigation – Palo Alto Networks Unit 42 (Procurement)
- Firewalling – Internal and External (Configuration/In Production)
- Infrastructure Monitoring – PRTG and UpTime.com (In Production)
- Security Auditing – Penetration Testing (On-Going)
- Air-Gap Protection – Rubrik (In Production)
- Retirement of Old Servers (In Process)