



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 17-6196, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

CALLING FOR COOK COUNTY PUBLIC SAFETY STAKEHOLDERS TO WORK TOGETHER ON A COURT UTILIZATION STUDY

WHEREAS, based on Clerk of the Circuit Court for Cook County data for 2016 and 2017, there has been a 47.8% decline in new court cases over the last 10 years across all case types. More specifically, there has been a 35.4% decline in civil cases, a 56.8% decline in criminal cases, and a 49.5% decline in traffic cases; and

WHEREAS, this continued decline in case volume suggests that the Circuit Court of Cook County's 333 courtrooms, originally built to handle the large case volume of the 1970s and 1980s, may currently have excess capacity; and

WHEREAS, the Cook County Circuit Court Branch Court locations are in some of the poorest physical conditions of any Cook County court houses, needing \$25.3 million in repairs over the next 10 years; and

WHEREAS, the Cook County Criminal Justice Stakeholders are working continuously and cooperatively to safely reduce the financial burden of operating the criminal justice system upon Cook County taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, effective reforms may be instituted only with the support of comprehensive data, accessible to and acceptable to all of the stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, in light of the need for functional and safe courthouses for the efficient operations of the Cook County Circuit Court System as well the aging facilities, there is a need to determine what resources will be needed in the future and what alternatives are available to secure those resources; and

WHEREAS, a courtroom utilization study should be performed so that the use of the Cook County Circuit Court courtrooms (including Branch Courts and District Court Houses) may be maximized, with court calls correctly sized and scheduled based on a complete understanding of when, for how long and in what ways, courtrooms are used; and

WHEREAS, such a study should be obtained from an appropriate vendor, capable of providing a brief but comprehensive report outlining the best practices and recent trends. The scope of the study should include but not be limited to:

- A review of the existing documents and reports prepared by the Bureau of Asset Management including but not limited to space utilization plans and Facilities Building Assessment reports;
- A review of the needs for the judicial system and its' associated spaces;
- A review of the organizational needs for each of the public safety offices;
- Proposed solutions for reallocation & reorganization; and
- Probable cost(s) for the work proposed.

WHEREAS, the commissioned study shall also at a minimum include a break downs of the following:

- Number of cases heard;
- Types of cases heard;
- Length (time) of each hearing(s); and

- Location of hearing.

WHEREAS, the selected vendor, in coordination with the Bureau of Asset Management, will work with Department of Budget and Management Services, Sheriff's Office, and Office of the Chief Judge to establish a formal process and reporting mechanism to ensure that all stakeholders understand roles and responsibilities as well as project deliverables, budgets and schedules for the Project Team; and

WHEREAS, in partnership with the Bureau of Asset Management and Department of Budget and Management Services, all the public safety offices including the Office of the Chief Judge, Sheriff's Office, Public Defender's Office, State's Attorney's Office, Clerk of the Circuit Court's Office and the Justice Advisory Council shall participate in the planning process and provide any and all necessary data and evidence needed for the study, excluding any data and evidence limited by law; and

WHEREAS, time is of the essence and to the extent possible the project should be completed as quickly as possible but no later than May, 2018; and

WHEREAS, the courtroom utilization study will provide valuable guidance for further consideration of the investment of general revenue in the operation as well as repair and rehabilitation of courtrooms used by the criminal justice stakeholders and the buildings in which such courtrooms are located.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Cook County Board of Commissioners that the public safety stakeholders work collaboratively with an external vendor managed by the Bureau of Asset Management on a Court Utilization Study and that they be prepared to brief the Board on their progress and final results of the study.