

From: [Swaim, Kurt \[SPD\]](#)
To: [Cook, Ed \[LEGIS\]](#)
Subject: Office of the State Public Defender Response to Request of State Government Efficiency Review Committee
Date: Wednesday, December 18, 2013 4:28:03 PM

To: Honorable Members of the State Government Efficiency Review Committee

Thank you for allowing this Office of the State Public Defender, and our employees, this opportunity to offer input regarding the important work of your committee. We share your goals of improving efficiency, modernizing processes, eliminating duplicated and outdated processes, reducing costs, and increasing accountability. We strive to work toward these goals every day in the operation of our Central Administrative Office and each of our nineteen (19) local offices.

Shortly after receiving your request for input, Sam Langholz, the State Public Defender, emailed a request to our employees informing them of the work of your committee. He also requested that each employee think about areas of state government that each encounters, including within the Office of the State Public Defender, the court system, the child welfare system, or any other areas of state government, and asked each employee to consider suggestions that we might offer to your committee. The State Public Defender also followed-up with an email to the Local Supervisors at the local offices asking the supervisors to discuss this request with the employees at their next regular staff meetings and encourage their staff to make suggestions in any other appropriate manner. At the request of the State Public Defender, I emailed a reminder to each of our employees, approximately three weeks after the initial request, reminding our employees of the initial request and again seeking their input on ideas to reduce costs and increase efficiencies in state government. I also emailed the supervisors in the local offices asking that they encourage their staff to submit any suggestions that anyone had. And, in early December, the State Public Defender, at the in-person Supervisors Meeting in Des Moines, again encouraged the supervisors to have their employees submit suggestions.

The solicitations for input invited employees to either submit their suggestions to the State Public Defender or the First Assistant State Public Defender for forwarding to your committee; or, if the employee preferred, to forward any suggestions electronically directly to your committee's public comment website. Of course, we do not know how many of our employees submitted their suggestions directly to your website, but a number of suggestions were forwarded to Mr. Langholz and me. For your convenience, I will summarize the ones we received directly.

First, one of the state appellate defenders suggested that post-conviction relief cases are ever increasing, that the increased expenses relating to post-conviction cases have an impact on many areas of state government and that efficiencies should be explored in this area.

Second, one public defender recommended restructuring or eliminating some of the statewide computer security safeguards in the system that he considered to unnecessarily decrease work productivity.

Third, one of our employees recommended exploring efficiencies in storage (reducing physical storage costs by increasing electronic storage); reducing postage, copying expense, office supplies,

and calendaring expenses (increasing reliance on electronic alternatives), and creating new administrative efficiencies with respect to the Department of Administrative Services and the sale of surplus state equipment.

Fourth, one employee recommended savings by increasing reliance on recycling, including reusing envelopes, file folders, and boxes.

Fifth, one employee recommended that we move to a four day work week to achieve savings in building energy use and other related savings.

Sixth, one employee recommended that employees have access to their emails while out of the office and suggested potential efficiencies in conducting conflict checks on the office case management system.

Seventh, one public defender recommended that the costs and efficiencies of the Batter's Education Program be reviewed.

Eighth, one public defender recommended the addition of another public defender to his office to allow the public defender office to accept more cases rather than referring the cases to court appointed attorneys in the private bar.

Ninth, one public defender recommended laptops for all public defenders, portable printers for outlying county travel, Microsoft templates, synchronization of internal office management system with Microsoft Outlook, expansion of the office by hiring an additional attorney and investigator and purchase of additional manuals to avoid the necessity of searches on the internet.

For the convenience of the committee, I have attempted to summarize these recommendations. Some of the suggestions relate to internal operations of our Office, and we will consider the feasibility and practicality of any of those suggestions internally. If you would like more detail or any additional information, please let me know.

The Office of the State Public Defender has no commissions or boards, so we have no recommendations with respect to the possible consolidation or elimination of boards or commissions within the purview of our agency.

Thank you again for allowing this opportunity for input. We wish you best in all your endeavors to improve state government. If we can be of assistance in any other way or if there is any further information we can provide you, please let me know. Thank you.

Kurt Swaim
First Assistant State Public Defender
State Public Defenders Office
4th Floor, Lucas Building
321 E. 12th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319
Phone: 515-242-6158

Fax: 515-281-7289

Email: kswaim@spd.state.ia.us