



# COVID-19 Update

## **STATEMENT FROM CHIEF COURT ADMINISTRATOR PATRICK L. CARROLL III WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2020**

The Judicial Branch last week implemented a mitigation plan that has greatly reduced the daily business at every court location statewide. Consistent with guidance we have received from the CDC and other public health officials, the next step in our mitigation plan is to further shrink the number of people in our facilities each day to further assist in the effort to halt the spread of COVID-19. Both Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson and I have concluded that it is necessary to implement the following unprecedented measures to protect the public, the bar, our employees and judges.

Effective Thursday, March 19, 2020, the Judicial Branch will implement these changes:

- One building in each of the 13 Judicial Districts will be designated as the location at which only Priority 1 functions (as defined in our Continuity of Operations Plan) will be handled.
- Juvenile Matters will be heard in the Hartford and Bridgeport juvenile courthouses.
- The Branch's Executive Directors will reach out to their respective employees to determine who will staff these locations and conduct all other vital functions such as information technology, human resources and payroll.
- All other staff will remain at home. Those whose jobs allow them to work at home will do so.

These are extraordinary times and require extraordinary measures. Our overarching challenge throughout the crisis has been to balance the constitutional obligation of the courts to remain open with protecting the health and safety of every individual who enters a state courthouse. Ultimately,

we have determined that the plan announced today is the best option to achieve this balance.

As we implement these extraordinary measures to stem the spread of COVID-19, I am simultaneously asking each Judicial Branch employee to consider what they might be able to do, safely, within their own communities to aid in the concerted effort to fight COVID-19: donate blood; call the local food bank or homeless shelter to determine what can be contributed; offer to shop for elderly or sick neighbors; or mobilize groups of Branch employees to donate coffee, doughnuts or pizza to the health care workers in our hospitals. There is much that we can and should do as the Judicial Branch community – I've seen them all do it countless times before.

[List of Courthouses That Will Remain Open](#)

### COVID-19 Updates

The Judicial Branch has implemented various measures as a result of concern over the spread of the COVID-19/Coronavirus and in recognition of the public health emergency declaration Governor Lamont issued. It is also important to note, in the clearest terms possible, that **the courts of the State of Connecticut are open and will remain open.**

These measures are:

- Under the terms and provisions of the Judicial Branch's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), the courts will schedule and hear only those matters identified as "Priority 1 Business Functions."

The following matters are Priority 1 Business Functions:

- Criminal arraignments of defendants held in lieu of bond and all arraignments involving domestic violence cases;
- Juvenile Detention hearings;
- Family orders of relief from abuse;
- Civil orders of relief from abuse
- Civil protection orders
- Ex parte motions
- Orders of temporary custody (Juvenile Matters)
- Orders to appear (Juvenile Matters)
- Emergency ex parte order of temporary custody
- Juvenile detention operations for detainees held for juvenile court

- Termination of parental rights
  - Domestic violence victim notification
  - Civil and family capias mittimus execution and bond reviews
- With the exception of jury trials already in progress and criminal jury trials necessitated by the filing and granting of a speedy trial motion, all jury trials, civil and criminal, are suspended.

If jurors have any questions please contact Jury Administration by:

- Going on the Judicial Branch's [website](#)
- Speaking with jury administration through the [Live Chat](#) feature, or
- By calling jury administration at 1-800-842-8175

### **Update on Housing Matters including Evictions and Foreclosures**

Judge James W. Abrams, Chief Administrative Judge for Civil Matters, has issued an order to reschedule all [foreclosure sales](#) scheduled for this Saturday (March 21, 2020) and next Saturday (March 28, 2020) into mid-May to prevent a potential gathering of individuals at the auction site. Additionally, Judge Abrams, in consultation with the Chief Court Administrator, has ordered an immediate stay of all issued executions and ejectments through March 27, 2020. Finally, all civil short calendars have been cancelled until further notice.

### **Law Libraries Closed**

Effective on March 16, 2020, the Judicial Branch's courthouse [law libraries](#) will be closed until further notice.

Law Librarians will continue to provide services remotely through those programs currently managed and maintained by the librarians: JB Feedback, [Ask Us A Question](#)", ["Ask a Librarian"](#), and ["Live Chat"](#). Telephone and email assistance and response will also be available by contacting a [law library](#). The Law Librarians will perform administrative duties and tasks, as usual, and staff will continue to update and enhance valuable online resources offered to the public via the Law Library Services' web page. We look forward to continuing to serve the needs of our patrons.

### **Changes Related to Bid Opportunities**

Due to the current issues related to COVID-19, the Judicial Branch has changed its procedures as it relates to Bid Opportunities. All changes are applicable for 30 days, beginning on March 17, 2020 and ending on April 17, 2020, unless modified in writing. For more information, please read the [notice](#).

**Posters**

Posters have been placed at all entrances of Judicial Branch's facilities urging people who are at risk of spreading or contracting COVID-19 to avoid entering the facility.

**Reduce the Number of People Entering our Facilities**

Consistent with guidance offered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Connecticut Department of Public Health, these measures are being taken to reduce the number of people entering our courthouses in an effort to mitigate the potential for spreading of the virus.

**Connecticut Supreme Court oral arguments has been postponed**

To promote public and personal health during the COVID-19 crisis, the Connecticut Supreme Court has postponed oral arguments in cases scheduled to have been heard between March 24-April 2, 2020. These matters will be heard at a future date and time to be determined.

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