Administering Criminal Courts During the Pandemic: Next Steps

Thurs., Oct. 29, 3-4 pm EDT

Hosted by CCJ/COSCA’s Rapid Response Team

Moderator:
- Brian Ostrom, Principal Research Consultant, NCSC

Speakers:
- Laurie K. Dudgeon, State Court Administrator, Kentucky Court of Justice
- Chris Gaddis, Court Administrator, Pierce County Superior Court, Tacoma, Washington
- LeRoy K. Martin, Jr., Presiding Judge, Criminal Division, Circuit Court of Cook County, Chicago, Illinois
- Honorable James R. Orlando, Criminal Division Presiding Judge, Pierce County Superior Court, Tacoma, Washington

Details:
In the past eight months, criminal courts have responded to the demands of the Covid-19 Pandemic by prioritizing emergency operations, shutting down court facilities, reducing pre-trial jail populations and transitioning from in-person to virtual business processes. New policies and procedures have been developed for re-opening courthouses and safely conducting court business. Although many criminal courts have not yet initiated them, some courts have begun to hold criminal jury trials on a limited basis.

This webinar will address the current status of criminal court operations midstream in the pandemic, identify strategies and adaptations that have been made and explore challenges and unanswered questions courts face moving forward from here.

Topic areas include:
- Case management in an environment without firm trial dates.
- Strategies for managing and reducing criminal case backlog.
- Implications for judicial empathy and procedural fairness in virtual hearings.
- Balancing privacy and transparency in virtual court hearings. State supreme court and local court rules and policies that best support court operations in the current environment.
- Factors that shape the speed at which a court can effectively restart essential court proceedings.
- Addressing the impact on judges, staff and justice partners of administering criminal courts during the pandemic.

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