



CDC: [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) ▪ Kentucky Public Health: [COVID-19](#) ▪ KCOJ: [COVID-19 and the Courts](#)

Update for March 24, 2020

Justices, Judges, Circuit Court Clerks and Kentucky Court of Justice Personnel:

Judicial Branch is providing essential services during pandemic

Last Friday, Chief Justice Bridget McCormack of the Michigan Supreme Court wrote an opinion piece for the *Detroit Free Press* that emphasized the importance of the courts staying open during this unprecedented time in our country. As Chief Justice McCormack stated: “When restaurants close, the public is urged to pick up takeout. But there is no such thing as takeout justice. While courts can postpone routine matters (like traffic tickets), judges and court staff must continue to provide essential services and protect public safety.”

The Judicial Branch provides essential, constitutionally mandated services to the citizens of the commonwealth. Unlike retail businesses, we cannot completely shut our doors to the public.

I spoke with Gov. Beshear on Sunday and he agrees that the Judicial Branch must remain open. He also appreciates the extraordinary and aggressive steps taken by the Supreme Court to protect our employees and the public we serve.

Over the last two weeks, we have:

- Restricted court dockets, jury trials and jury service until at least April 10.
- Required the use of videoconferencing to hold hearings and arraignments.
- Reduced in-person interactions by temporarily discontinuing driver’s license services.
- Implemented a 50/50 staffing schedule in the Offices of Circuit Court Clerk, Office of the Court of Appeals Clerk and Office of the Supreme Court Clerk to reduce by half the deputy clerks who are working on-site each day.
- Required court personnel to telecommute if their jobs permit it.

I appreciate your flexibility as we provide vital services during the pandemic. We will continue to adjust and make necessary changes to ensure access to the courts while also protecting the health and safety of our people and the public.



John D. Minton, Jr.
Chief Justice of Kentucky
Capitol Building
700 Capital Avenue, Room 231
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
Telephone 502.564.4162