



Chief Justice Loretta Rush Statement Press Conference with State Leaders - Thursday, March 19

The Indiana Judicial Branch has essential and emergency court operations working **at all levels**. Indiana's courts have technology that enable social distancing measures. We've had a quarter of a million e-filings since last week. That means a quarter of a million fewer visits to Hoosier courthouses. I want to thank the executive and legislative branches for supporting court technology that allows our courts to continue to do business. We are following the guidance of the State Department of Health to reduce exposure of the virus. We want people to contact their local court before showing up, visit mycase.in.gov. For legal help and assistance, visit Indianalegalhelp.org.

State Level

At the Supreme Court, we held an oral argument today, we're discussing cases, and we're accepting filings. Like everyone else, we are adjusting. Our courtroom was nearly empty this morning because we closed the hearing to the public and encouraged others to watch the [live webcast](#). Our next arguments are scheduled for April 7, but we will continue to assess.

The Indiana Supreme Court and the Appellate Clerk's Office remain open, with appropriate adjustments in place to protect the health and well-being of employees and the community. Since Monday, March 9, our courts have had about 245,000 e-filings—more than 240,000 in the trial courts and more than 1,200 in the appellate courts. Our Office of Judicial Administration has telework options for employees—with about 90% of our staff working from home and only essential employees coming to the office.

Trial Courts

Our trial court judges across the state are focused on ensuring essential court functions continue while being mindful of the safety of their communities. I've ordered trial courts to implement their Continuity of Operations Plans. We've asked the judges to work with local health and emergency management officials.

The adjustments across the state vary. Generally, courts are postponing jury trials, allowing for remote hearings, keeping only essential staff working in the courthouses, and holding only necessary and emergency hearings.

Trial courts are being directed to petition the Supreme Court through what we call Administrative Rule 17. AR 17 provides the framework for trial courts to put operational changes in place in the face of an emergency.

I've already signed dozens of orders allowing for those adjustments to court operations as requested by counties. Nearly every county in the state has filed a petition for the Supreme Court to review, and of course, we are prioritizing those petitions. We have a single website with guidance and messages to courts, the bar, and staff, providing details on the Judicial Branch's response to this pandemic. Please visit courts.in.gov/covid.