



INDIANA SUPREME COURT

251 N Illinois St | Suite 1600
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Office of Judicial Administration

COURTS.IN.GOV

March 11, 2020

Your Honors-

As the spread of the COVID-19 virus continues, the Supreme Court and Office of Judicial Administration are taking additional steps to protect our staff, our partners, and you. The CDC says risk to the general public of exposure remains low, but it is incumbent upon us to respond appropriately as events evolve. I want to share the steps we are taking with you.

First, we are increasing our social distancing measures. Effective immediately and lasting until at least Monday, May 4:

- All meetings with external stakeholders will be held remotely. This includes Judicial Conference committee meetings as well as Court committee meetings. Our staff will be in contact with impacted chairs and members.
- All out-of-state work travel for our staff is cancelled.
- All in-state work travel—like certification visits, technology deployments, etc.—will be reviewed by our managers on a case-by-case basis. And approval will require confirmation from the remote sites (which could be your county) that in-person attendance is necessary and permitted.

These measures impact several of our more significant events this spring: our Spring Judicial College, the Justice Services Conference, and the District Meetings. Those events will not be conducted in-person. We are developing alternative methods for delivering that content to registrants; information on that will be forthcoming. And materials for the Spring Judicial College's plenary session on emergency planning and COOP will be the immediate priority.

The Indiana Supreme Court and Office of Judicial Administration—including the Appellate Clerk's Office—are open for business, and the Supreme Court continues to hear oral arguments as scheduled.

Second, we have reviewed and enhanced our current telework policies to allow greater flexibility for employees who cannot—or should not—be in the office. We will support and encourage compliance with mandatory preventative measures like quarantines and isolations, protect potentially vulnerable staff, and be prepared for tangential impacts on personnel like school closings. And most importantly, it will allow the Court and OJA to continue operations with minimal disruptions.

Your individual courts and counties likely already have policies to address these sorts of matters, but I share ours in case it is helpful to you and your planning:

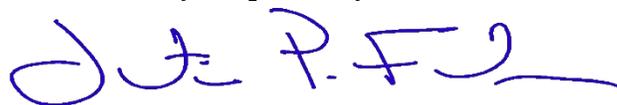
- Employees under official quarantine/isolation orders are authorized to work from home without further approval needed.
- For employees tangentially affected by COVID-19 by things like school closures—or who might be in vulnerable demographics or have underlying health conditions, etc.—who cannot or do not wish to be in the office, the presumption is that they will use benefit time to cover their absence from the office. But managers have the discretion to authorize those employees to work from home, considering the following non-exclusive set of guidelines:
 - Age and capacity of children affected by school or childcare closures;
 - Availability of additional spouse/family support;
 - Underlying medical conditions or vulnerabilities;
 - Availability of benefit time;
 - Nature of the employee’s job and ability to be performed remotely;
 - Availability of resources to support remote work by the employee.

Employees are not *required* to work from home—they may still use benefit time if available and desired. Where necessary to the essential function of the Court and OJA, however, managers are authorized to require employees to work remotely.

Finally, we have created a page on the [Court’s website](#) where we will post updates on our operations as necessary and information you can use. Please feel free to direct court users to [this webpage](#) for State-level updates. We will also add resources and materials that may be useful to your operations as they become available.

I apologize for any inconvenience our additional measures may cause. But we believe these are responsible, proactive steps that our office can take to help curb the spread of COVID-19, protect our staff and you, and ensure the continued functioning of the Court and OJA. Please continue to coordinate changes in your court procedures with your local emergency management and health departments, and feel free to reach out to me or our office as issues arise.

Very respectfully,



Justin P. Forkner
Chief Administrative Officer