
FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

March 23, 2020



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JUDICIAL BRANCH — COVID-19 RESPONSE: MARCH 2020

Judicial Branch Response. Iowa Supreme Court Chief Justice Susan Christensen has issued several orders related to the COVID-19 impact on Judicial Branch services. The orders are available on the Judicial Branch [website](#). The following information is current as of March 20, 2020.

Judicial Branch and Clerk of Court Offices. The Judicial Branch building is closed to the public as of March 18. All staff members of the Court of Appeals will be authorized to work remotely. Oral arguments scheduled in April and May will be continued by separate order. Provisions will be made for the acceptance of permissible nonelectronic filings at the building entrance. All 100 Clerk of Court offices are remaining open to the public during regular business hours to provide certain services. Clerk of Court offices and courtrooms are open for criminal and emergency cases that cannot be conducted by videoconference or telephone.

Continued Court Services. The Iowa Supreme Court issued orders permitting new ways to access courts to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The orders contain a variety of actions, including the following items:

- All jury and nonjury trials (criminal and civil) not already in progress are postponed. All criminal trials are postponed until April 20 or later, and all civil trials are postponed until May 4 or later.
- Any party, including the prosecutor, defense counsel, defendant, victims, and/or witnesses, may appear remotely by videoconference or telephone for many court procedures.
- Judicial officers are encouraged to consider pretrial release options available under Iowa Code chapter [811](#).
- District courts will continue to conduct in-person trials and hearings already in progress.
- Criminal and emergency cases that cannot be conducted by videoconference or telephone will be conducted in person. These emergency matters may include proceedings such as:
 - Substance abuse treatment hearings
 - Hospitalization proceedings
 - Child removal proceedings
 - Elder abuse proceedings
 - Dependent adult proceedings
 - Protective orders
 - Motions to quash garnishments
 - Forcible entry and detainer proceedings in which the tenant poses a clear and present danger
 - Any proceedings that constitute an emergency as determined by a judicial officer

Additional Information. For further information and updates related to the Judicial Branch COVID-19 response, visit the Judicial Branch [website](#).

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