

## **The Judicial Branch is Expanding its Remote Capabilities**

(updated 5/28/20)

### **Supreme & Appellate Courts**

Connecticut's Supreme and Appellate Courts are hearing oral arguments remotely.

### **Civil**

All civil pretrials, trial management conferences, and status conferences are currently being conducted remotely. Civil short calendar is being managed entirely remotely, with the exception of a small number of motions where one of the parties requests oral argument.

### **Criminal**

Criminal courts are using [video conferencing](#) to allow for social distancing during arraignments. The participants in the criminal arraignments (the state's attorneys, the public defenders, and the bail staff) are all able to appear before the court and present information remotely via video conference from within their offices. Those individuals with new criminal charges also appear remotely before the court by video conference, either from the lockup or from a second courtroom with appropriate social distancing guidelines established. These matters are heard in an open court session and still allow for the media and victims or their family members to attend the proceedings.

The criminal courts are also proceeding on 54-56d matters (competency to stand trial) by way of [video conferencing](#), which allows for the transition of individuals with mental health issues to be placed back in a community setting with appropriate mental health care set up for them by the forensic evaluation team. These matters are heard in an open court session and still allow for the media and victims or their family members to attend the proceedings.

The criminal courts and the Branch's Court Support Services Division are working to finalize pre-sentence investigations for cases that are awaiting disposition after a guilty plea. The courts will then conduct sentencing hearings and are setting up procedures for all parties to participate in person or through remote means. These matters are heard in an open court session and still allow for the media and victims or their family members to attend the proceedings.

The criminal courts will also focus on cases in which a person is detained in custody on a pretrial matter. The court will conduct remote meetings with a judge, a prosecutor, and the defense attorney to see if an agreement can be reached in these matters and, if so, have it docketed for plea and disposition.

### **Adult Probation & Bail Services**

Bail service staff is requesting phone screens at police departments that have defendants held on bond during non-court hours.

Adult probation officers are [connecting with clients via telephone contacts](#). Additionally, some CSSD vendors are providing tele-health services.

Pretrial Alcohol Education and Pretrial Drug Education and Community Service clients may complete their education program requirements via tele-health evaluations and remote group sessions.

Court Support Services Division's clients may attend Mothers Against Drunk Driving Victim Impact Panels remotely.

## **Family**

Parties who [have non-adversarial divorces or a temporary agreement](#) may have their family court cases approved and ordered.

The Judicial Branch implemented a new procedure for the [remote filing of temporary restraining orders](#).

Parties who have [a final agreement](#) may have their family court cases [resolved without having to come to court](#).

[Family pretrials and status conferences are being conducted remotely via video or phone](#) by judges and Family Relations Counselors with parties and/or attorneys, with the goal of conducting such a conference in every pending unresolved family case.

Litigants who have e-filed their dissolution of marriage or legal separation case may remotely request a [qualified domestic relations order](#), which applies to the division of retirement assets.

Parties in [gestational carrier agreements](#) may request approval of their agreements, and the entry of pre-birth orders, without coming to the courthouse for a hearing.

## **Juvenile**

The juvenile courts and the Court Support Services Division are working to finalize pre-dispositional studies for cases that are awaiting disposition after an adjudication of delinquency. Clinical Coordinators are working remotely to provide forensic clinical assessments for juveniles in detention.

In terms of child protection cases, the juvenile court is accepting stipulated agreements regarding orders of temporary custody, thereby negating the need for parties to appear. Juvenile court is remotely processing agreed to permanency plan matters and other types of agreements on priority 1 and nonpriority 1 matters.