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## NEWS RELEASE

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*Ensuring Justice for All*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **UTAH'S JUDICIARY IS HERE TO HELP USING TECHNOLOGY**

**Salt Lake City, UT**—The COVID-19 pandemic has forced some rapid changes in our state, but Utah's courts stand ready to serve.

Travel and group gathering restrictions have been put in place by state and local government entities to protect public health and safety. Utah's Judicial Branch has been working hard to ensure that the wheels of justice keep turning, ensuring people's rights are protected by moving many hearings and services online or by telephone.

#### **Hearings**

Utah's courts have been rolling out equipment and staff training to allow essential hearings, as outlined by the [Chief Justice's Administrative Order](#), to move forward. These include criminal in-custody matters, bail hearings, sentencing, domestic violence cases, and child safety/welfare hearings, to name a few.

It is now possible for a judge to hold a remote hearing with a defendant, their attorney, the prosecutor, and the judicial assistant – all from different locations, and on the record. Judges are also holding remote hearings with unrepresented parties.

The Utah Supreme Court and Utah Court of Appeals are now also holding hearings online and [live streaming their proceedings](#).

Much of this is made possible due to years of technology investment and innovation by the courts. Some of those innovations include e-filing, a 100-percent digital case management system, and [Online Dispute Resolution](#) that has made Utah a model for courts across the nation.

#### **Services**

Even if it becomes necessary to physically shut down courthouses, courts across Utah will still

be active and open for business.

Patrons are encouraged to contact their local courts either by phone or email. We have provided a [COVID-19 web page](#) with information on court contacts and services. Those looking to [file for a protective order or injunction](#) can now file their petitions by email. [Documents to be filed in an existing case](#) can now also be filed by email. Those who need to begin a case are encouraged to [contact their local court](#).

The courts' website has information on a wide range of legal topics, as well as forms. Patrons can use [Online Court Assistance Program \(OCAP\)](#) to prepare documents for protective order, divorce, parentage, and guardianship cases; just to name a few.

[Utah State Law Library](#) staff can provide information about court processes by phone, email and text. Attorneys at the court's [Self-Help Center](#) can provide information in more complex legal situations by email, text and phone. Both services are free. Court staff cannot provide legal advice, but can provide information about free and low costs ways to get legal advice.

### **Staff and Judges**

In keeping with orders by the Chief Justice and Utah's Governor in limiting unnecessary travel and social distancing, court personnel have been encouraged to work remotely where possible. Staff members continue to work on cases, serve patrons, set calendars, process petitions, and facilitate hearings. Court staff can still be contacted by phone or email during normal business hours.

Through this pandemic period, Utah's Judicial Branch will remain here and ready to serve.

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