

# PRESS RELEASE

New York State  
Unified Court System

Hon. Paula L. Feroletto  
Administrative Judge  
Eighth Judicial District

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## Virtual Court Operations to Commence in 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District

*New York State Courts Remain Open for Business,  
Maintaining All Essential and Emergency Proceedings*

**NEW YORK**– As the New York State Courts continue to calibrate and adjust operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Eighth Judicial District Administrative Judge Paula L. Feroletto, under the guidance of Chief Judge Janet DiFiore, Chief Administrative Judge Lawrence K. Marks and Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Vito C. Caruso, today announced that the District will begin holding “virtual” court proceedings in all Supreme, Surrogate, Family, County, City, and Town and Village Courts for essential matters to minimize courthouse traffic and contain the spread of the virus. Proceedings will be conducted remotely via Skype for Business starting in Erie County on April 3, 2020, and expanding to the District’s other counties—Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans and Wyoming—on April 6, 2020.

On March 17, 2020, Judge Feroletto announced that, per Administrative Order, all non-

essential functions of the Eighth Judicial District were postponed until further notice and that the District's court operations would be consolidated into a centralized court location as designated in each of the District's eight counties.

An amendment to this Order allows judges, defendants/litigants, attorneys and some court staff to appear by video-conferencing capability.

Essential virtual court proceedings shall be conducted only from the central courthouse location as designated by Administrative Order. In the event one of the eight central courthouse locations in the Eighth Judicial District is relocated to a backup facility, essential virtual court proceedings may be conducted at the backup facility.

In all essential court proceedings, all parties, attorneys, and judges will participate by videoconferencing using Skype for Business. In the event of technical issues, telephonic appearances will be permitted for all essential matters other than criminal cases.

A minimal core team of essential staff will remain at each central courthouse location to ensure the ability to intake papers, operate video conferencing equipment, process orders, keep the court record, answer telephones and conduct other essential court functions. The Virtual Courtroom Protocols that were developed apply to all categories of essential court functions and have been distributed to stakeholders.

While the proceedings will be open to the public, uniformed staff will strictly monitor and may limit access to maintain appropriate social distancing in accordance with current public health authorities' guidelines and the occupancy limit of the courtroom.

Individuals with court-related questions are encouraged to call their designated county courthouse. Contact information, as well as information related to postponements, is available online for all courthouses in the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District at <http://ww2.nycourts.gov/courts/8jd/index.shtml>.

In addition, due to the suspension of civil statutes of limitation by the Governor's Executive Order 202.8, all new court filings, either e-filed or hard copy, that are not

essential matters, will NOT be accepted.

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