



Hamilton County Juvenile Court

800 Broadway
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202-1332
www.juvenile-court.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Judge John M. Williams:

Hamilton County Juvenile Court Operational Plan in COVID-19 Outbreak

March 13, 2020

Cincinnati, Ohio- Under the leadership of Administrative Judge John Williams and Judge Melissa Powers, Hamilton County Juvenile Court is taking proactive steps to maintain essential services while mitigating the risk for infection and spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Effective Monday, March 16, 2020, measures addressing operations at both the 800 Broadway building and the Youth Center, a juvenile detention facility, are anticipated to remain in effect for the next 30 days to prioritize the safety and well-being of the families and children served in court proceedings, its workforce and the public appearing for hearings. These measures include the following:

- Hamilton County Juvenile Court will continue to conduct hearings for cases directly impacting the safety and well-being of children or the community, including cases that address shelter care, hearings for residents at the Youth Center, medical emergencies, juvenile protection orders, and children alleged to be in immediate danger and/or public safety.
- All hearings will be confined to the 800 Broadway building, including hearings normally heard at the Youth Center at 2020 Auburn Avenue.
- The elderly, immunosuppressed or anyone exhibiting symptoms of sickness are encouraged to remain at home. Juvenile Court will make good faith efforts to accommodate anyone who has an appointment with the Court or is a party to a case to participate via phone or video conference.
- All private delinquency and unruly complaints shall be filed at the Clerk's Office on the first floor at 800 Broadway, from 8 A.M. until 4 P.M. Monday through Friday. Only law enforcement officials will be permitted to file at the Youth Center.
- All other non-emergency cases for youth residing in the community will be scheduled out past this 30-day plan, including all diversion and unofficial dockets, community court hearings and Youth Court. Parties will receive notification for rescheduled hearing dates.
- The Custody and Companionship Clinic will continue to operate at normal hours and provide attorney access to families seeking legal advice and assistance for emergency situations.
- In accordance with guidance provided by Governor DeWine and the Department of Youth Services, the Court will suspend in-person visitation for residents at the Youth Center until further notice to protect the safety and health of youth in the facility. The Court will diligently work to provide accommodations to maintain contact between children and their families as well as essential third parties. All volunteer programming will remain suspended during this time.
- The Court will continue to work closely with the Hamilton County Health Department and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center to assist with prevention and intervention for residents.
- Juvenile Court community-sponsored activities will be rescheduled, including L.I.V.E. Cincinnati presentations and mediation appointments.

Designated phone lines have been identified to provide information related to this plan. Any members of the public with questions regarding upcoming Court hearings or information at the 800 Broadway building are encouraged to call (513) 946-9375. For questions related to the Hamilton County Juvenile Court Youth Center, the public is encouraged to call (513) 946-2623.

Hamilton County Juvenile Court will continue to monitor and assess its response to this pandemic. Additional updates will be posted on the Hamilton County Juvenile Court website: <http://www.juvenile-court.org>

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About the Court: Judge John M. Williams serves as the Court's Administrative Judge. Hamilton County Juvenile Court is entrusted to hear and decide all cases with children as the subject of a legal complaint. The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges has designated the Court as a model court whose best practices are worthy of replication by other court systems.