



# MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH

## STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

### Minnesota Judicial Branch COVID-19 Preparedness Plan REVISED: March 17, 2022

Under Supreme Court Order No. ADM 20-8001 (March 3, 2022), the Minnesota Judicial Branch continues operations consistent with evolving conditions and public health guidance as more people become vaccinated against COVID-19, the number of positive cases declines, and the strain on the health care systems subsides. The Minnesota Judicial Branch's top priority continues to be protecting the health and safety of judicial officers, staff, and court users. This plan outlines the health and safety parameters that every court facility must maintain to the extent possible and as appropriate, as in-person operations continue to increase. It is based on guidance from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and on the monitoring of three key indicators:

1. **Positivity Rate:** The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) releases a 7-day rolling average positivity rate for COVID-19 statewide Monday through Friday. Due to reporting lag time this rate is 7-10 days behind current trends.
2. **Employee Case Rates:** The Judicial Branch utilizes a SharePoint reporting form to capture reported positive cases of COVID-19.
3. **Juror Postponement Rates:** The Judicial Branch initiated the COVID-19 Postponement Code in WebGen to track the number of jurors granted a postponement due to COVID-19.

This Preparedness Plan identifies mitigation efforts supported by the Branch in our on-going efforts to minimize the effects of COVID-19 on Branch operations:

**Stay Home When Feeling Ill:** As judicial officers and employees return to their workplaces, they are encouraged to do a daily personal health check and to stay home when feeling ill. People must stay home when sick or [experiencing symptoms of coronavirus](#). If a household member or close contact has tested positive for COVID-19, people not [up to date](#) on COVID-19 vaccines must stay home per [CDC guidelines](#). People who are fully vaccinated or have had COVID-19 within the past 3 months, do not need to quarantine unless they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

**Reporting Cases of COVID-19:** Judicial officers, employees, jurors, justice partners, and contractors are strongly encouraged to report all cases of COVID-19 or COVID-19 symptoms that result in impacting the operations of the Branch (NOTIFY HR (judicial officer and employee) and/or LOCAL COUNTY COURT ADMINISTRATOR (non-judicial officer and employee)).

**Face Coverings:** Face coverings are not required, except as provided in the Chief Justice's March 3, 2022 order, No. ADM20-8011.

**Signage:** Signage must be posted at exterior entrances to court facilities to remind customers and justice partners NOT to enter if they are experiencing any COVID-19 related symptoms, have recently been exposed to someone with COVID-19, or are otherwise feeling sick. This signage should direct them to a location, i.e., a webpage or a call-in number, with instructions on what to do if they cannot enter.

**Jury Practices:** Adjusted jury practices will be maintained as appropriate, including, but not limited to:

- a. Individual voir dire
- b. Jury deliberations in the courtroom
- c. Staggering jury/juror times
- d. Implement social distancing where possible
- e. Eliminate communal food and drink opportunities

**Distancing Measures:** The Judicial Branch will maintain a reasonable amount of distancing between people within court facilities and courtrooms, as practicable.