



CUYAHOGA COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS  
DIVISION OF DOMESTIC RELATIONS

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ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE  
HON. LESLIE ANN CELEBREZZE

COURT ADMINISTRATOR  
JAMES S. ZAK

JUDGES  
HON. DIANE M. PALOS  
HON. ROSEMARY GRDINA GOLD  
HON. FRANCINE B. GOLDBERG  
HON. TONYA R. JONES

April 20, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cuyahoga County Domestic Relations Court Receives Technology  
Grant for Video Conferencing

The Cuyahoga County Domestic Relations Court has been awarded a grant from the Ohio Supreme Court to allow judges and judicial hearing officers to conduct divorce and domestic violence hearings remotely. The funds will be used to purchase videoconferencing software and equipment that can be used to facilitate hearings while protecting the security of court records and sensitive financial and medical information. The system is expected to be fully operational over the next two weeks.

The Court received almost \$52,000 as part of \$4 million in emergency technology funds offered by the Ohio Supreme Court to help Ohio courts maintain continuity of operations in the wake of the novel coronavirus. Conferencing by telephone and video in lieu of in-person appearances are now broadly permitted under the Supreme Court's March 27, 2020 Administrative Action.

Reacting quickly to curb the spread of the virus, the Domestic Relations Court reduced on-site staff and postponed hearings except for domestic violence and other urgent cases, as it instituted safety protocols for restricted public access and limited contact in collaboration with other courts, the Clerk of Courts, and the Cuyahoga County Sheriff. The Court has maintained regular business hours from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with staff working remotely.

"Keeping our customers and our staff safe during this health care crisis is our highest priority while also keeping the court accessible to all of our customers," said Administrative Judge Leslie Ann Celebrezze.

Since mid-March, the Court has conducted hearings, evaluations and mediations by telephone conference, initiated by court staff. Up-to-date information about court functions has been posted on the Court's dedicated COVID-19 webpage along with COVID-19 related administrative orders.

“We appreciate the efforts of the Supreme Court in enabling us to continue to address the needs of our community. “In uncertain times, it is important that people can rely on their courts, and this grant make this possible.”

The Court is making plans to handle dockets efficiently as things gradually get back to normal. “With the economic uncertainty and pressures forced on people by the health emergency, we expect a surge in filings. Lives have been on hold, and we want things to be as smooth as possible, so we are trying to get ahead of the curve,” said Judge Celebrezze.