

**Information Requested by the Appropriations Committee at the
Informational Forum Held on July 6, 2020
with the Judicial Branch**

1. How many cases are being processed remotely (motor vehicle, dissolution of marriage, small claims, etc.) (Rep. Walker)

The Judicial Branch has processed over 15,000 remote civil, criminal, family and juvenile events and proceedings as referenced in our initial submission to the Appropriations Committee.

Divorce Remote Processes:

Since the end of April (when the Judicial Branch obtained the authority to do so) through today, we have granted divorces in approximately 475 cases. None of the parties in those cases were required to appear in court. It is reasonable to estimate that if our authority remains as it is under the current Executive Orders, we could assist the parties in a minimum of 2,000 cases per year, very likely more, without any need for any party to the divorce to come to court.

Motor Vehicle Infractions:

30,458 people have participated in the on-line ticket review program since the program began in 2018, with incremental implementation by Judicial District. This means that over 30,000 people did not need to come to court to get their infraction resolved, saving them the time and expense of traveling to the courthouse.

Small Claims Matters:

Since April 7, 2020, when remote processing of small claims matters began, 11,576 cases have been processed remotely by staff and judges. We anticipate that the volume of remote processing will continue to increase.

2. Please provide an outline for how the call center will work, funding, staffing, etc. (Rep. Walker)

The call center is modeled on an extremely effective program operating in New Hampshire. The project will redeploy existing staff from clerks' offices throughout the state, which are often crowded, out-of-date, and inefficient by modern standards, and relocate them into a dedicated facility designed and constructed to safeguard their health and safety pursuant to federal and state guidelines. The call center will provide the public with essential services while helping to reduce foot traffic in all of the State's court facilities through more effective use of technology.

Current planning estimates show the call center handling approximately 650,000 calls statewide during its first year of operation. The ability to reduce a substantial portion of this volume of courthouse activity by decreasing the number of individuals previously required to be physically present in a courthouse represents a significant step forward in preventing the spread of coronavirus.

The Judicial Branch originally envisioned funding the call center with Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) for Phase 1 and Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funds (CESF) for Phase 2. Following the rejection of the CESF grant application, the Judicial Branch is now pursuing CRF funding for all call center costs.

Call center costs: The total cost for the call center is \$266,859. The total budget includes funding for call management software and equipment (printers, copiers, PCs and monitors, headsets), chairs, workstations, phones and phone lines.

3. Please identify all COVID-19 funding programs that the Judicial Branch could qualify for. (Rep. Walker)

The Judicial Branch has solicited funding from the following sources:

1. Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF)
2. Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funds (CESF)
3. FEMA Public Assistance Program

In addition, the Judicial Branch took advantage of the opportunity to reprogram federal Court Improvement Funds (CIP) grant funds, that would have otherwise lapsed, to support telework and video-conferencing equipment and software that will allow judges to continue oversight of child dependency matters during the pandemic.

4. Budget request details (Sen. Osten)

Please see the attached chart entitled, Connecticut Judicial Branch: Current and Future COVID-19 Future Expenditures (dollars).

5. Staff breakout by demographics for the agency and for the residential facilities (Sen. Osten)

Please see the attached chart entitled, “EEO Comparative Table 2019,” showing the demographics of Judicial Branch employees.

Additionally, please find attached the chart entitled “Racial Breakdown of JB-CSSD Residential Program Staff,” which shows the demographics of the Judicial Branch’s community-based contracted residential providers.

Finally, the chart below depicts the demographics of Judicial Branch employees who work in the Hartford and Bridgeport Juvenile Detention Centers. These numbers include our Central Transportation Unit as well. The “Other” column includes Asian, Native American, Multi-Racial, and Unknown. We have more unknowns in recent hires since Human Resources made racial/ethnic identification optional a few years ago. We believe that we have higher numbers in this table because of the higher turnover rate in our two juvenile detention centers and many new hires. For your convenience, here is the percentage breakdown of employees who work in the two detention centers: 46.9 % Black, 13.1 % Hispanic, 18.9% White and 20.9 % Other.

	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	Total
Male	102	28	38	46	214
Female	37	11	18	16	82
Total	139	39	56	62	296

6. COVID-19 related costs. Is there anything you won’t be able to do if the \$3.1 million isn’t reimbursed? (Rep. Lavielle)

There would be projects that would not be able to go forward as we would have insufficient “Other Expenses” funding, such as:

- Cybersecurity initiatives totaling approximately \$1 million including offsite backups and hardening our end user (Microsoft Windows) computing environment and security services, which is essential right now as COVID-19 is requiring a remote workforce using home computers
- Creation of a remote Court Service Center program, modeled after the successful, court-based centers located in Judicial District courthouses, to provide on-line, remote assistance to court patrons by Judicial Branch staff
- Public access kiosks in courthouse lobbies to provide case and docket information, and other resources
- Continued renewal of the COVEY training program for Judicial Branch employees of all levels; this program delivers remote, on-line learning modules to support career growth and opportunity, and to enhance job satisfaction and performance

- Develop web-based education to enhance personal and professional development, utilizing national standards for instructional design in a virtual platform for The Learning Center, a component of the Employee Education and Development Unit

7. What is being done to assist domestic violence victims, especially those needing emergency housing? (Rep. Dathan)

Judicial Branch Family Relations Counselors (FRCs) review every domestic violence arrest and engage victims in the risk assessment process. FRCs consider all information obtained and make protective order recommendations to the Court with the goal of enhancing victim safety. In addition, FRCs work very closely with the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV), court-based victim advocates who engage and provide services to victims of domestic violence. CCADV operates a 24/7 hotline that provides victims with safety plans, basic needs, and temporary housing assistance and information. CCADV advocates access the domestic violence shelter network for victims who require housing assistance in addition to the 211 housing network, Coordinated Access Network. FRC's can also access basic need housing resources through the Judicial Branch's Alternative in the Community network when necessary.