

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI
AT KANSAS CITY**

**In Re: SUSPENSION OF JURY TRIALS DURING WEEKS OF JANUARY 10, 2022
AND JANUARY 18, 2022¹ DUE TO INCREASED SPREAD OF COVID-19**

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2022-004

WHEREAS, in light of the ongoing threat to public safety presented by the COVID-19 virus, this Court has employed numerous strategies designed to prevent the spread of the virus and continues to do so; and

WHEREAS, during the past several weeks, the Omicron variant of the COVID-19 virus has surged into the area served by the Court, resulting in significant increases in the area's number of positive COVID-19 cases, positivity rates, hospitalizations and deaths, among not only citizens served by this Court, but members of the Court's staff and their families, and detainees of the Jackson County Detention Center; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the unique and changing circumstances existing at this time and after considering guidance provided by local public health officials and recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC") regarding the nature and extent of the current surge and the length of its anticipated impact on the area served by the Court, the undersigned has determined that it is necessary for the Court to consider taking temporary steps beyond those already in place to protect the health and safety of employees of the 16th Judicial Circuit, judicial officers, attorneys and parties to cases pending here, and citizens summoned for jury duty; and

WHEREAS, while judicial officers conducting hearings and related proceedings other than jury trials can and do react to changing COVID-19 conditions in the community by taking appropriate steps to mitigate the virus's spread – such as staggering dockets to reduce the number of people assembling in their courtrooms and adjacent areas, conducting hearings by telephone or via videoconferencing technologies such as WebEx, and employment of other related strategies – criminal and civil jury trials necessarily must generally be conducted in person, involve the assembling of jurors and other participants in larger numbers and in more confined spaces, and are otherwise not appropriate proceedings in which to utilize such tools; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 478.240.2 RSMo, and Article V, Section 15 of the Missouri Constitution, the Presiding Judge has general administrative authority over all judicial personnel and court officials in the Circuit as well as administrative authority over dockets of the Court and the administrative and discretionary authority regarding the manner in which any hearings are conducted in the Court,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED as follows:

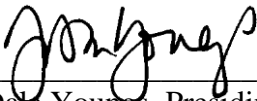
¹ The 16th Judicial Circuit will be closed on January 17, 2022 in observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

1. The Court Administrator shall suspend the impaneling of all jurors for the weeks of January 10, 2022 and January 18, 2022. All jury trials scheduled for those weeks are hereby continued, and shall be rescheduled to a later date.

2. Divisions rescheduling jury trials in accordance with this Administrative Order shall ensure that jury requests for the dates to which cases have been continued reflect that the rescheduled case was continued pursuant to the provisions of this Order.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

January 5, 2022
Date



J. Dale Youngs, Presiding Judge

Certificate of Service

This is to certify that a copy of the foregoing was e-mailed to the following on January 5, 2022.

16th Circuit Court Judiciary and Staff
Betsy AuBuchon, Clerk of the Missouri Supreme Court
Frank White, Jr., Jackson County Executive
Hon. Daryl Forte, Jackson County Sheriff
Diana Knapp, Director, Jackson County Detention Center
Troy Schulte, Jackson County Administrator
Member of the Jackson County Legislature
Mary A. Marquez, Court Administrator
Tracy Smedley, Deputy Court Administrator, Jury Supervisor
Jean Peters Baker, Prosecuting Attorney
Ruth Petsch, District Defender

Angela M. Lopez