

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI
16TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, STATE OF MISSOURI**

In Re: Establishment of Alternative Filing Practices for Pro Se Litigants

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER 2020-208

WHEREAS, beginning in the spring of 2020, the covid global pandemic prompted the alteration of many aspects of society, business, and government; and

WHEREAS, in response, the Missouri Supreme Court issued several Orders and Operational Directives clearly stating that the courts of this State are open and shall perform their constitutional responsibilities. Further, the Missouri Supreme Court, through those Orders and Operational Directives, has encouraged courts, clerks, and judges to utilize all available technologies to conduct Court business and activities remotely; and

WHEREAS, the Court Administrator was ordered to establish procedures and processes to permit pro se litigants to access the Court remotely and without the requirement to personally visit a courthouse. Those procedures and processes have been established and have proven effective and have achieved the intended objective; and

WHEREAS, the 16th Judicial Circuit Court (“Court”) recognizes and acknowledges the benefit that the patrons of the Court have received from this improved ability to access the Court; and

WHEREAS, the Court intends to continue to provide remote access to the Court for pro se individuals beyond the time of the conclusion of the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the Missouri Court Automation Committee, in cooperation with various other entities, establishes procedural guidelines and requirements for electronic communication and processes within the Missouri Court system; and

WHEREAS, the following divisions of Court Administration accepts court filings from pro se litigants:

(1) The Department of Civil Process, located at 1311 Locust, Kansas City, MO 64106;

(2) The Department of Civil Records, located on the third floor of the Kansas City Courthouse, 415 East 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106 and on the first floor of the Eastern Jackson County Courthouse, 308 West Kansas, Independence, Missouri 64050;

(3) The Department of Criminal Records, located on the first floor of the Albert Riederer Community Justice Complex, 1315 Locust, Kansas City,

Missouri 64106 and on the first floor of the Eastern Jackson County Courthouse, 308 West Kansas, Independence, Missouri 64050;

(4) The Department of Probate Records, located on the ninth floor of the Kansas City Courthouse, 415 East 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106 and on the third floor of the Eastern Jackson County Courthouse, 308 West Kansas, Independence, Missouri 64050;

(5) The Record Writers Unit, a subsection of the Department of Support Services, Family Court Division, located at 625 East 26th Street, Kansas City, Missouri, 64108.

These five units are hereby collectively referred to as the “Records Departments.”

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, effective immediately and continuing until rescinded, amended, or modified in a subsequent Administrative Order, as follows:

1. The Court Administrator has previously established procedures for pro se litigants to deliver and/ or file pleadings and other documents with the Records Departments as an alternative to filing said documents personally at the courthouses. Those procedures, or variants thereof, shall remain in place. Those alternative methods of filing may include, but are not limited to:

(a) The placement of drop boxes at the entrances to designated buildings. Those designated buildings currently include the Kansas City Courthouse, the Eastern Jackson County Courthouse, and the Albert Riederer Community Justice Complex. Drop boxes can also be placed at additional buildings as determined to be appropriate;

(b) The establishment of email addresses for each Record Department which may be used by pro se litigants to file pleadings and other documents;

(c) The acceptance of pleadings and other documents via fax machine;

(d) The acceptance of case initiation documents, as well as other documents, via mail;

(e) The acceptance of certain pleadings, such as petitions for orders of protection, via telephone.

2. The Court Administrator shall establish processes and procedures for the invoicing of fee-requiring documents filed using any of these alternative filing methods.

3. The Court Administrator shall make public the information regarding these alternative filing methods, and shall publish the email attachment requirements that are consistent with the specifications set forth by the Missouri Court Automation Committee and various other

entities charged with establishing those criteria. This information shall be made available on the website of the 16th Judicial Circuit.


4. The Court Administrator may modify or supplement these alternative filing methods in a manner consistent with advances in technology or changes in the specifications set forth by the Missouri Court Automation Committee, the Missouri Supreme Court, local rule, or other authority. Such modification or supplementation shall be consistent with the intent to provide remote access to the Court for pro se individuals. The Court Administrator shall not cease the provision of remote access to the Court for pro se individuals absent further Administrative Order.

5. The Municipal Courts located in different cities throughout the 16th Judicial Circuit and which are part of the 16th Judicial Circuit shall develop similar procedures for pro se litigants.

THIS ORDER MAY BE AMENDED, RESCINDED, MODIFIED, OR EXTENDED AS CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRE.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

December 2, 2020
Date



David M. Byrn, Presiding Judge

Certificate of Service

This is to certify that a copy of the foregoing was emailed to the following on December 4, 2020.

cc: All Judges and Commissioners
Mary A. Marquez, Court Administrator
Scott Brinkman, Legal Counsel
Tracy Smedley, Deputy Court Administrator-Circuit Court
Theresa Byrd, Deputy Court Administrator-Family Court
All Directors and Assistant Directors
All Division Staff
Nicholas Purifoy, Assistant Legal Counsel

Angela Lopez